“A lot of it is too subtle to actually demonstrate”:

A study of social pedagogy skills with Camphill practitioners who work with young people.

A dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MRes in Social and Educational Research at the School of Education, University of Aberdeen

John Ralph

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I declare that this dissertation has been composed by myself, that it has not been accepted in any previous application for a degree, that the work of which it is a record has been done by myself, and that all quotations have been distinguished appropriately and the source of information specifically acknowledged.

Signed: John Ralph

Name: John Ralph
Date: 25 September 2014

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Abstract

This dissertation reports on an ethnomethodological study of social pedagogy skills with experienced practitioners in Camphill School Aberdeen, within the naturalistic inquiry paradigm of Lincoln and Guba. The insider researcher gathered experiences and perspectives from a sample of five experienced practitioners in semi-structured interviews. Data was analysed using inferential grounded theory methods and provisional findings were reviewed with participants. Practitioners described skills holistically. Pedagogical spaces for young people with learning disabilities were created in which open attitudes, or Haltung (see Appendix G), were maintained that allowed a variety of activities to become the medium for developmental learning. Spaces were created on an organisational level that empowered the development of inexperienced and experienced practitioners to develop tacit communication skills with which they learned to understand young people collaboratively. The subtle nature of these skills made demonstration for inexperienced practitioners ineffective, and lack of explicit language to describe them was perceived by some practitioners to be lacking, which inhibited the passing on of significant practice skills and wisdom. This study will be of interest to social pedagogy practitioners within and beyond Camphill.

Keywords: ethnomethodology, naturalistic inquiry Camphill, social pedagogy skills, common third, Haltung
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Chapter 1: Introduction

This dissertation reports on an ethnomethodological study of social pedagogy skills with a small sample of experienced practitioners in Camphill School Aberdeen. Naturalistic inquiry methods were mobilised to gather idiographic accounts of practitioner understandings of skills used within a mature community of practice in transition.

This study is a post-graduate apprentice piece that was conducted and reported during a period of 5 months, and envisaged as the first phase of a longer investigation of skills used by social pedagogy (SP) practitioners working in Camphill. The Aberdeen community of practice have demonstrated high standards of practice, yet there is no research detailing what skills are used, and how they are understood by practitioners. Hämäläinen (2003: 77) claims that the skill does not lie in SP methods but in the thought going into the choice of methods. The aim of this inquiry was to elicit practitioner’s experiences, thought streams and perceptions that inform their skills, which will be of interest to practitioners in and beyond Camphill.

Findings that participants had the opportunity to review in provisional form are reported here. No overall pattern of skills has been identified in the data, but an initial grouping is suggested. Participants described skills holistically, and analysis identified complex tacit skill clusters, that were not initially articulated. Practitioners evinced the capacity to create an inner space of welcoming hospitality in themselves, and to develop subtle sensitivities for non-verbal communication. Themes of communication and intrapersonal skills were reviewed with participants, which revealed a gap in the practice language that was not able to express skills that are too subtle to be perceptible by many inexperienced practitioners.

This study opens up a range of possible routes for further research. It would appear that if subtle skills that offer essential communication with young people remain tacit, this will negatively impact the education of new practitioners and possibly even the future of Camphill.
Chapter 2: Contexts and Literature

The naturalistic paradigm of Lincoln and Guba (1985) demands rich context in which the idiographic findings are located and orientated. This chapter draws historical factors together with the current situation. The philosophical background of Camphill practice is described first, followed by an outline of some relevant Scottish social care policy. This is followed by a survey of social pedagogy (SP) which has been promoted as a means of restoring some of the elements that are perceived by some to have been lost from UK welfare practice (Hatton, 2013: v). Although SP practice includes significant work beyond the services provided in the researched organisation with children and young people, the literature review focuses on aspects of SP relevant to the field of inquiry. As the research paradigm of natural inquiry calls for inferential and inductive methods, caution has been exercised in introducing theoretical sources that are not current within the culture of social pedagogy (SP) practice and education.

The naturalistic paradigm axiomatically asserts that research is bounded by the researcher’s values (Gray, 2009: 25), so contextualisation of the researcher’s horizon concludes the chapter.

Literature pertaining to Camphill communities was drawn from the British Library EThOS service and the newly established Camphill Research Archive, including Snellgrove’s (2013) review of Camphill research. No additional relevant sources were identified from other databases. Literature on social pedagogy was located in Camphill libraries and selected from an automated Google Scholar alert over 18 months. Additional books and papers were identified by tracing references in these sources.

2.01: Camphill

The study was conducted in Camphill School Aberdeen (CSA), an independent non-profit service provider, which offers a variety of provision for children and young adults with learning disabilities. Social pedagogy (SP) practitioners include long term career volunteers, employees and short term volunteers from across Europe and beyond. The researcher has lived and worked as a volunteer in CSA for 25 years.

CSA covers 3 estates with residential houses, school and therapy buildings in farm, gardens and wooded areas. Camphill began in Aberdeen in 1940 and communities have spread across the UK and around the world, mostly as residential villages for vulnerable adults.
Throughout the twentieth century two defining features characterised Camphill: the work and community structure was founded on Rudolf Steiner’s anthroposophical research (the community was called Camphill Rudolf Steiner Schools) and all co-workers were unwaged volunteers. Today ‘Rudolf Steiner’ has disappeared from the entrance sign, and many co-workers are now employed with contracts. These changes are relatively recent and are part of the changing landscape of Camphill and the experience of its community of practice, which continues to work with children and young adults who are socially vulnerable, many with learning disabilities such as sensory hypersensitivities and autism. The working practice has developed for over 70 years, informed by European traditions of curative education, and more recently social pedagogy, so the question arose of what skills were being currently used and passed on to new generations of co-workers. How are these skills understood by experienced practitioners?

2.02: Camphill’s Philosophical Roots in Anthroposophy

CSA began as an intentional community when a small group of war refugees from Austria, led by a paediatric doctor, Karl König, opened a residential care home in 1939 (Monteux in Jackson, 2006: 21ff). In 1940 the group moved into Camphill House in Milltimber, outside Aberdeen, and the Camphill Rudolf Steiner Schools community was born. The intention was to create facilities for people with different kinds of special needs, and to promote public understanding of those special needs (Costa, 2008). The pioneer group had formed in Vienna, united by their common enthusiasm for anthroposophy, which was developed by Austrian philosopher and polymath Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), based on the theory of knowledge for which he earned his philosophical doctorate (Steiner, 2007). Steiner had been influenced by the phenomenological methodology of Goethe, and called his epistemological philosophy of freedom and spiritual activity ‘moralische individualismus’ (Steiner, 1995), which I translate here as ‘ethical individuality’ to distinguish it from the ethical individualism of Emile Durkheim (Hawkins in Pickering, 2001: 223).

Steiner advocated an holistic worldview, discerning body, soul and spirit in his understanding of the social human being. His researches resulted in social, ecological, cultural and medical initiatives in Europe and across the world. Steiner described his methodology, anthroposophy, as “a path of knowledge, to guide the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the universe.” (Steiner, 1973: 13).
Steiner disseminated his spiritual research, with the plea to test it out in life and not to blindly believe it or regard him as an authority (Rose, 2013: 28). It appears that relatively few of Steiner’s supporters were able to duplicate Steiner’s faculties of insight by means of his published methods, but many took his research as trustworthy advice that could be applied practically for social and ecological benefit. An exception was König who advanced Steiner’s research with his own, and developed holistic medical and social understandings with others through practice, research and study so that those who followed after him could continue to develop the practice and understanding of curative education (see 2.05 below), as the working practice in CSA was called until recently.

Camphill Aberdeen was perceived as a community of belief or religious faith by McKeganey (1984) following several months of ‘living in’ as a co-worker and researcher. Some 20 years later, in a personal conversation, the writer asked one of the community elders, now gone before, about the place of Steiner’s philosophical studies in Camphill, and why relatively few co-workers were familiar with the ontological and epistemic principles. He responded by characterising Camphill as a community where the wisdom of the will was developed, and that self-education through the will, learning by doing, was a different path to that beginning with pure thinking, as advocated in Steiner’s philosophical writings. It was not the aim of this study to investigate Steiner’s perspectives, which are especially contested in the realm of education (e.g. Hansson, 1991; Mayes and Nordwall, 2014). The intention was to investigate practitioners’ perspectives that have arisen from, and currently inform the community of Camphill practice.

2.03: Previous Camphill Research

Snellgrove (2013: 1) suggests that Camphill research is in its infancy. Pietzner (1966: x) regretted the lack of descriptive accounts of both “the detailed educational work done at Camphill” and the work with adults. Camphill School Aberdeen (CSA) has hosted several studies (McKeganey, 1982, 1984; Cushing, 2008; Walter, 2010; Costa, 2008), and provided contributions for two books about the community’s work (Hansmann, 1992; Jackson, 2006).

Since Jackson’s (2006) book on Camphill practice, the skills of curative education have been integrated into the wider practices of social pedagogy and the allegiance to Steiner’s anthroposophical perspectives has been broadened to include an eclectic theory-base drawn from Denmark, Germany and international Child and Youth Care sources. In the writer’s view,
the original anthroposophical intentional community has followed the developmental stages of voluntary organisations described by Billis as associative and bureaucratic (Rochester, 2013). CSA has become an inclusive post-anthroposophical community of practice.

The Camphill movement has developed its own style of anthroposophical community and its significance and distinctiveness is explained through everyday practices (Snellgrove, 2013: 8). It is therefore likely that Camphill has developed its own culture of practice that understands and utilises skills in specific ways. A consistent feature of recent years has been the high standards reported in CSA inspection reports (Barrie, 2014; Alfred, 2014), acknowledged in a motion supporting Camphill presented to the Scottish Executive in 2012. It is evident that valued skills and skilfulness live in CSA that may be of interest to other communities of SP practice within and beyond the Scottish Camphill movement.

Jackson (2011) suggests that, from the beginning, influences other than Steiner were instrumental in shaping Camphill’s holistic spiritual perspectives but, in the writer’s experience, these influences were tacitly subsumed into perspectives informed by intensive studies of anthroposophy. Costa (in Jackson, 2011: 39) describes how a strong collective myth can resist community change and development, and Barth (1969 cited in Snellgrove, 2013: 5) observes that unchanging nature of community can be viewed as insular and defensive, wary of ‘outsiders’ and reluctant to embrace modernisation. However Camphill has had to respond flexibly to the changed landscape of social services provision in Scotland, particularly the growth of ‘for profit’ service providers (Jackson, 2008: 42). In its adoption of the theories and practices of social pedagogy in 2010, Camphill has made a public declaration that we have taken up the challenges of social activity that, as Lorenz (1994: 97) suggests, extends beyond any distinct institutional setting and instrumental interest, and which is based on the communicative and reflective abilities of practitioners as the key to competence (Crociani-Windland, 2013, 131).

CSA has responded to the policy contexts that shape the work with vulnerable people have developed in recent years, and diversified the services offered. These changes contextualise the current inquiry, so policy and societal attitudes will be outlined before looking in more detail at curative education and social pedagogy.
2.04: Social Care Policy

Camphill practice is regulated by the Scottish Social Services Council. The diversification of Camphill School (CSA) provision responded to authority placement strategies and policies that value local mainstream provision over specialist services, especially residential care (Jackson, 2008: 44). These developments follow on from the Europe-wide adoption of integration and inclusion policies (AIEJI, 2010: 6) following UK ratification of the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (AIEJI, 2010: 11). In Scotland the policy of Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), promotes child-centred interagency collaboration, and is in process of being enshrined in legislation (Scottish Government, 2012).

The high-profile public disclosure of abuse in residential institutions, and the tragic deaths of vulnerable children, known to social services (Crociani-Windland, 2013) has challenged the current safeguarding policies for vulnerable people. Such failings of social services have led to calls to adopt the person-centred and reflective practices of social pedagogy to address the challenges of refocussing and reengaging with the radical perspectives of social practice (Hatton, 2013: 96). Lorenz (2008: 625) advocates “the necessity for professional social work, under whatever title it is practised, to critically observe and contribute to the shaping of social policies in order to regain the professional initiative”.

Camphill has been active in Scottish consultations on social care policy, but that has not turned the outflowing tide of diminishing residential placements. Idiographic accounts of crucial turning points in SP practice read very persuasively, but this study does not aim to influence policy by instrumentalising the experiences of service users, rather to value Camphill practitioner skills and understandings. The intention is to make a contribution towards describing practitioners’ experiences within a mature practice culture that enriches the quality of young people’s life experience. The contribution of curative education to Camphill practice will be discussed next.

2.05: Curative Education

Anthroposophical curative education is practiced worldwide in organisations and communities informed by an anthroposophical worldview (McKanan in Jackson, 2011: 89). The term is a literal translation of the German word, Heilpädagogik, which preceded Steiner’s contributions to the field of practice. König (Pietzner, 1966) quotes Asperger’s definition:
“We will call curative education that science which, based on biological knowledge concerning abnormal child-personalities, seeks predominantly educational means of treating intellectual and sensory defects, nervous and emotional disturbances of childhood and youth. Affording a human being the right guidance based on the best possible knowledge of Man can, we believe, have a most decisive beneficial influence...” (Asperger quoted in Pietzner, 1966: 4)

König emphasises that a scientific practice depends on “true knowledge” and that curative education is supported by psychiatry, paediatrics, psychology, sociology and education (ibid.: 4). He takes pains to emphasise that curative education needs to be soundly based on scientific knowledge, in his case a thorough study of Steiner’s scientific and philosophical writings as well as a wide range of other authors, as evidenced by his eclectic library.

Following Hatton’s (2013: 51) lead, on 24 June 2014 several members of CSA were asked to define curative education for this dissertation. This elicited a broad agreement that it involves three elements:

- recognising the child, their current situation and where they come from,
- understanding the obstacles to developing their potential,
- helping them overcome obstacles and supporting them to fulfil their potential.

Jackson (2006: 65) has proposed that the curative educator is a social pedagogue who has chosen to work with children with special needs. This might suggest that practitioners in CSA utilise a sub-set of social pedagogy skills or have developed specialised skills that may not utilised by SP practitioners in other settings. Jackson observes that curative education is based on three concepts: mutuality, rhythmicity and spirituality (ibid.: 65). These ideas will be discussed later in relation to findings (Chapter 5), but the concept of spirituality within anthroposophical curative education needs explanation.

Spiritual wellbeing is embedded in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989), and can be defined as a sense of good health about oneself as a human being and as a unique individual (Jackson and Monteux, 2003: 52). The anthroposophical perspective of the human spirit considers the spiritual essence in each person to be eternal and carrying a ‘divine spark’ that is not affected by illness or disability (ibid.: 53). Jackson and Monteux continue by asserting that Camphill schools have never subscribed to the deficit model of disability, for each child is seen as unique and possessing a potential which it is the task of curative education
to develop. Garel (2008) sees this perspective as contributing to a social model of disability, citing Weihs (in Pietzner, 1966: 38-39), who described the spiritual essence as actively striving for equilibrium, and Muller-Weidemann (ibid.: 45), who characterised the human spirit as the bearer of individual potential, towards which the curative educator works with the child. What Muller-Weidemann conceptualised as a spiritual recognition is referred to by Vaisanen (in Hatton, 2013: 95) as expertise in the social potential of the young people. In a study of spirituality in Camphill, Swinton et al. (undated: 4) characterise spiritual experience as “sensing the extraordinary in the ordinary”, and suggest that the awareness of spirituality involves a different form of language, as spiritual experience is difficult to articulate.

Spirituality has an individual and social perspective in Camphill. Taking up Steiner’s recommendations on social health and development have been understood to bring a therapeutic influence beyond that of individual co-workers, and Camphill life was structured so as to embody a beneficent community spirit that developed from and through the mutual intentionality of the community (author’s perspective from various personal conversations). A sense of community spirit is also found in Scott Peck’s (1987) writings on community as a means of overcoming social ills. In the author’s view as an insider, such encouraging points of agreement have inevitably drawn Camphill life from anthroposophical exclusivity towards inclusive diversity, and therefore the transition to social pedagogy could be accepted as a natural development.

The shift in Camphill practice to social pedagogical perspectives can be seen as a broadening of the horizons of practice within longstanding ethical values. König emphasised the critical significance of unprejudiced human relationship in curative education.

“Only the help from man to man – the encounter of Ego with Ego – the becoming aware of the other person’s individuality without inquiring into his creed, world conceptions or political affiliations, but simply the meeting, eye to eye, of two persons creates the curative education that counters in a healing way the threat to our innermost humanity.” (König in Jackson, 2006: 22)

The increasing tolerance and integration of other epistemic perspectives into the originally anthroposophical culture of Camphill was an inevitable consequence of living such a purposefully inclusive ideal.
2.06: Social Pedagogy

Camphill’s work was called curative education until 2010 when the BA in Social Pedagogy was developed from the BA in Curative Education at University of Aberdeen. As the BA developed its scope, Scottish Camphill communities began to apply the term, social pedagogy (SP) to their practice. Although there are broad agreements on fundamental values and principles (Cameron and Moss, 2001: 36), definitions of SP vary. Hämäläinen is often quoted.

*The basic idea of social pedagogy is to promote people’s social functioning, inclusion, participation, social identity and social competence as members of society.* (Hämäläinen in Hatton, 2013: v)

“...social pedagogy is based on the belief that you can decisively influence social circumstances through education” (Hämäläinen in Stephens, 2013: 3).

*Social pedagogy is not a method, nor even a set of methods. As a discipline it has its own theoretical orientation to the world. An action is not social pedagogical because certain methods are used therein, but because some methods are chosen and used as a consequence of social pedagogical thought.* (Hämäläinen, 2003: 77)

In his CRISP practice model of SP, Hatton (2013: 30) asserts that creativity is essential. Hämäläinen (2003: 72) points to the diversity of concepts of human individuality and society, as well as different ontological, epistemological and axiological perspectives. Kornbeck (2013) argues for the adaptation of SP to local contexts. Such adaptation is reflected in Camphill’s transition from curative education. The question of how this study could be conducted to reflect a diversity of understandings without becoming embroiled in contested issues led to the pragmatic perspective of what practitioners do, and how they understand their actions. Petrie cites Badry and Knapp:

*Social pedagogy is brought to life through the relationship between the professional and the subject. Their relationship is defined through the task of social pedagogic action within a given setting, which gives purpose to their relationship.* (Cameron and Moss 2011: 42)

This inquiry is located in a culture of practice negotiated between practitioners and service-users. As Storø (2013: 3) writes: “It is the content of what is practised, not the places where the practice is carried out, that determines what it is.” So this study focussed on the skills through which SP thought translates into situated practice.
2.05: Skill and Skills

Useful conceptual frameworks of relational skills had not been located prior to data analysis. The analytical tool of theoretical sensitivity (Glaser, 1978), required a means of orientating skills and skilfulness, so the following reflexive conceptualisation of skill and skilfulness contextualised the insider researcher’s understanding of skills, which informed his theoretical sensitivity.

Stephens (2013: 27) asserts that social pedagogy (SP) practitioners apply pedagogic solutions to social problems. The attendant competences are enumerated as a conceptual framework by the International Association of Social Educators (AIEJI, 2009). The initial assumption was that competences are the outcomes of skills. Polanyi’s (1962) exposition on personal knowledge argues that there are tacit elements in personal understanding and skills. For example, the writer does not talk his way through coffee making or walking but just does it, often while thinking of other concerns. Neither does he move his lips while reading, so he can read faster than he can talk, thus the skill of reading includes an unspoken process of interpreting the marks on the page that is hidden under the mental stream of language.

The concept of tacit mental processing associates with the psychological concept of conation, implicit in self-determined action (Gerdes and Stromwall, 2008). Conation is the mental process that activates and directs behaviour and action (Huitt and Cain, 2005: 1), which may or may not be inwardly expressed. Conation is embodied in the practitioner’s mental processing and informs agency. Agency is the capacity to do differently (Slife, 2005 in Stephens, 2013: 16), therefore potential to make a difference. Tacit agency may include elements unknown, unnoticed, unintended or forgotten.

In a practical skill, such as daily chores or crafts, mental processing is stimulated when the agent notices a dynamic between current situation and a potential situation that may lead to reactive or responsive actions or behaviour (Fritz, 1994: 30). In a relational skill this mental processing involves awareness and relationship of self and another person or group. The skill is performed and reflective observation communicates how precisely the intention has been realised and what happened next. Conscious action involves sensitivity to the resistance that is encountered during the process, for example when lifting heavy objects or the thickening of stirred porridge. This sensitivity entails an interactive dialogue that involves noticing feedback and adaptive tact which can be called deftness, expertise or skilfulness. Acumen and
discernment are suggested as apt terms for deft theoretical sensitivity. These can be perceived as dialogical.

Bakhtin (1993) articulated a complex conceptualisation of dialogical action that here is condensed and distorted into brevity: there is always an influential reader in the writing process and there is always a recipient of a pedagogical action who informs conation. In reflexive action or intrapersonal skills, the recipient is located in the agent’s self, although that is not the whole dialogue. For example, tacit others may read the writer’s report, who may respond with self-determined actions. This suggests that the horizon of social action can be extensive and uncertain.

In relational skills, agency may be followed by a response or another event, which occasions the application of conative processing towards the next action or decision not to act. So a skill may involve cyclic action, as suggested by Storø (2013: 107), or sequential actions or coordinated combinations of actions, which commences with conative decision and concludes with a conative decision. The beginning of the agent’s conscious involvement in a skill involves noticing a need or opportunity to make a difference, which starts a decisive conative process.

There are useful terms for articulating skills. The belief that one can achieve a result by use of a skill can be called ‘self-efficacy’ (Stephens, 2013: 12). Ingenuity is preferred to the Aristotelian term, phronesis for ‘knowing what can be done’. Ingenuity involves expertise, acquired through experience and learning, coupled with creativity to deal with novel situations. Skilfulness is preferred to the Aristotelian term, techne for ‘knowing how to do something effectively’. Skilfulness involves dexterity or, in the case of relational skills, tact. In my experience conative processes and dynamic sensitivity in action are not articulated in language. It is therefore my assumption is that what Polanyi (1962) calls tacit knowledge extends into ingenuity and skilfulness. For this reason I deemed it fruitless to ask practitioners direct questions about skills, but to approach skills indirectly through reports of practitioner experiences.

Chu and Tsui (2008: 53) suggest that practice wisdom is a good term to describe the nature of knowledge involved in social work practice, citing Polkinghorne’s assertion (2004 in Chu and Tsui, 2008: 1) that social work is a judgement-based practice rather than a technical practice. The writer’s assumption was that social pedagogy skills involve informed judgement and prudent acumen, as well as ingenuity in creating tactful responses and deftness of technique in
applying agency, so this study was approached with the notion of investigating *tactful ingenuity*. This conceptualisation of skill(fulness) and skills was more complex than the analysis reported in Chapter 5. Other complex questions for further analysis and research are discussed in 7.2.

The naturalistic paradigm asserts that research is bounded by the researcher’s values (Gray, 2009: 25), which may be discernible in the thinking represented in this section. More context within the reflexive horizons of the insider researcher and writer is introduced in the next section.

### 2.06: Contextualising the Researcher

The naturalistic paradigm axiomatically states that that inquiry is situated and conducted within the orbit of the researcher’s values and conceptualisations (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 38). I, hitherto researcher and writer, recognise that the researcher is not neutral and value reflexivity for the learning it affords to an apprentice researcher as well as its contribution towards contextualising the outcomes of this inquiry. I corroborate Bauman’s view (Thomson and Gunter, 2011: 27) of fluidity between plural identities, and notions of dialogical self (Wiley, 2006) as I turn back and forth between inquirer, writer and critical thinker.

My approach is inclusive of plurality and complexity. I accept reality as dialogically mediated and transformed by critical reflection on experience. This dialogical perspective has informed the definition of skills above. Critical study of Steiner’s (1995) epistemology has persuaded me to orientate my position towards his ethical individuality.

I question the value of ideologies and wonder to what extent they differ from paradigms. Steiner’s anthroposophy is based on a theory of knowledge (Steiner, 2007) and epistemic capacities that can be developed by reflexively thinking about one’s own thinking (Steiner, 1995). This method guards against the oppressive encapsulation of ideology. He wrote: “*We must be able to confront an idea while experiencing it; otherwise we fall into its bondage.*” (*ibid.*: 257) This places an ethical responsibility of discernment and authentic insight upon the individual intervening in the lives of others and the social construction of culture.

I am interested in what Camphill practitioners are doing and why. Do they share my respect for Steiner’s insights into the wellbeing of society depending on the respectful inclusion of all its individuals? Steiner’s maxim for social health proposes that:
The healthy social life is found
when in the mirror of each human being
the whole community finds its reflection,
and when in the community
the virtue of each one is living. (Selg, 2011: 95)

I frame my position as a psychological bricolage, after Kopelman (2014: Location 769) as pragmatically presencing the integral self that negotiates towards positive relationships and outcomes. I view knowledge as an authentic relationship to ourselves and the inhabitants of our awareness.

While adopting the assumptions of social construction in the naturalistic paradigm, I recognised that participants might hold other, possibly tacit, epistemic assumptions. A question emerged within this inquiry on two fronts (Chapter 6): how much can a person inhabit or know the experiences of another person while negotiating the social pedagogy relationship or the insider researcher position? This question penetrates into the ethical basis of our capacities to advocate for the wellbeing of other people and for our interventions in their lives.

From a perspective of embodied knowledge, Johnson (1989: 363) considers Dewey’s argument that knowledge can be both personal and practical without ceasing to be public and criticisable, which offers some justification for the pragmatic actions and decisions of researchers and SP practitioners who act to best of their knowledge. I have endeavoured to portray my findings with integrity and authenticity that I hope will be recognisable by readers within and outwith Camphill. I am responsible for any errors and omissions and hope for insightful feedback that will inform further studies.
Chapter 3: Research Question

The research was conducted in Camphill School Aberdeen among experienced social pedagogy (SP) practitioners by an insider with 25 years’ experience of the culture. The community of practice has developed through anthroposophical understandings of curative education and has recently integrated SP understandings. There is evidence that the quality of practice is valued and effectively contributes towards the development of individual resilience and social competence in vulnerable young people, many of whom have learning disabilities.

Hatton (2013: 29) asserts that understanding without action to change their circumstances renders a person incomplete. Storø (2013: 1) observes that SP practitioners’ identities are shaped by the ways that they connect theory and practice, which suggested talking to practitioners, rather than observing their practice. Enumerating skills would not capture the skilfulness. Hämäläinen (2003: 77) claims that, “An action is not social pedagogical because certain methods are used therein, but because some methods are chosen and used as a consequence of social pedagogical thought.” If the thoughts that inform actions are the significant agency then practitioners could be asked to explain their actions. With this realisation the study became an ethnomethodological inquiry.

The processes of conation cannot be assumed to be fully articulated and are likely to be partly tacit. So the challenge was to investigate tacit and consciously intentioned actions. The focus of the research therefore turned specifically to skills that are combined with other actions directed towards common third activities (see Appendix G). What skills are involved and how are these skills understood by practitioners? The research question became:

**What skills are used by Camphill social pedagogy practitioners, and what are their perceptions of those skills?**

How this could be achieved is the theme of the next chapter.
Chapter 4: Research Approach and Methods

The aim of this study was to learn about skilful practitioner perceptions, or ingenuity, by focussing their attention on skills in the context of their practice experiences.

What skills are used by Camphill social pedagogy practitioners, and what are their perceptions of those skills?

In this chapter the research design is summarised, methodological questions are discussed and the research instrument mobilised in semi-structured interviews is described. The research location and the participants are introduced, and ethical sensitivities then discussed. Details of the research undertaken are followed by reflections on the process. Finally the analytical methods are described.

4.01 Research Design

An ethnomethodological study was conducted in a mature community of practice that could mobilize the researcher’s insider knowledge to articulate examples of Camphill social pedagogy (SP) practice for the benefit of insider and outsider practitioners, educators and the beneficiaries of subsequent SP practice. This study was envisaged as the first phase of a longer investigation of articulated and tacit skills, as represented by social pedagogy (SP) practitioners working in Camphill School Aberdeen (CSA). Five participants from CSA agreed to provide interview accounts of their SP practice. The individual interviews of about 55 minutes were conducted in CSA in a neutral meeting room. The researcher has drawn on his insider knowledge to inform analysis. Three participants agreed to review provisional findings and data from these 50 minute reviews were analysed with reference to the original interview transcripts.

4.02 Methodological Considerations

Research methods were required that could elicit practitioner perspectives of their own SP practice experience in the everyday contexts of life in Camphill. The intention was not to enumerate or encode skills but to identify what attributes made them SP skills, so there was no question of a quantitative approach. The starting point was open-minded interest, without predictive hypothesis or theory, so inductive methodology was required to discover indications
and patterns in the data that may contribute to fresh theory (Gray, 2009: 15). The study aimed to gain insight into practitioners’ own perspectives of skilfulness, which placed the inquiry in the field of ethnomethodology, seeking to understand how social realities are accomplished through practitioners’ interpretations of their relational experiences (ibid.: 170).

An interpretivist qualitative methodology was selected that values ideographic knowledge gained from interaction with participants in situated contexts and recognises the encapsulating value-bounded perspective of the researcher (Gray, 2009: 25). The stance of social construction that is implicit in Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) work accepts the expression of multiple realities. Individual reflective practice generates individualised personal knowledge and skill (Polanyi, 2005), and this study aimed to elicit some of the diversity represented by experienced practitioners from the community of practice. Insider experience showed that work with people deemed to need support to overcome learning disabilities involves negotiating relationships with often radically different epistemological perspectives. The CSA community of SP practitioners and beneficiaries is perceived as a heterogenous epistemic community (after Håkanson, 2010). The naturalistic paradigm asserts that inquiry is holistic and that findings are ideographic and non-generalisable (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 37). These axiomatic constraints are fit for purpose as this study investigates situated skills informed by personal knowledge within a culture of practice localised within a specific organisation.

The feasibility of practitioner observation was considered. Phenomenological observation can capture the stream of behaviour, but cannot elicit the emic mind stream, practitioners’ contextual awareness, intention and meaningfulness of complex behaviours (Harris, 1976).

The significance of researcher values in the naturalistic paradigm demanded additional rigour towards long-standing reflective practice in order to sharpen reflexivity. Rigorous reflexive alertness was also demanded by the position of theoretically sensitised insider researcher (Floyd and Edward, 2012).

4.03 Interview Method

Narrative interview methods were considered as rich data can be obtained from participants’ accounts of their experiences, and interviewers can learn aspects beyond the horizon of the text (Edwards and Holland, 2013: Location 131). Narrative interviews were deemed likely to generate discursive data, although a narrative question was included to encourage participants to relax while speaking freely. The semi-structured interview is commonly used in social research, and the research paradigm gives a framework that will determine what kind of
knowledge can be produced, which is concomitant with the philosophical assumptions that inform the analytical approach \(\text{ibid.: Location 557}\). The aim was to give participants scope to represent specific perspectives, and then explore salient themes together.

### 4.04 The Research Instrument

Questions for the semi-structured interviews were piloted with the first two participants and then standardised (Appendix E). The aim was to gain insight into practitioner understandings and values of their skilfulness, and elicit skill attributes that could be further explored at the participant reviews, and in future studies. The intention was to ask questions that supported participants’ dignity and respected their experience. Direct questions about skills were not considered at this beginning stage of inquiry; situated accounts of specific skills were sought rather than abstract generalisations. Two exceptions were piloted in case this assumption was false. It was deemed important to ensure that no ambiguity emerged that might suggest that the practice was being evaluated or judged, as this would be unethical imposition of positional power in the context of the research framework.

Participants were first asked about their length of experience and to describe their work. The aim was to allow meaningful contributions to emerge through dialogue, which would empower the researcher to report substantive findings. During the piloting phase a participant paused for thought about their roles and responsibilities, so the question was repeated at the end of the interview in case further aspects had come to mind during the dialogue. A narrative question asked for a recent occasion when participants experienced a significant intervention with a young person or group. Responses were so extensive and rich that other questions were dropped during the piloting phase to keep within an hour.

Epistemic questions asked how participants knew that their contributions were effective, and how they arrive at an understanding of a young person. The pilots confirmed the assumption that questions about specific skills would prove difficult to answer, but the responses were indirectly illuminating.

The following questions inquired about the challenges of motivation and specific learning, which offered a different approach towards practice examples and reflexive understanding, a competence emphasised in SP literature. This was followed by questions about the essential skills needed by new co-workers. It was anticipated that these questions might elicit tacit
dimensions that by participants took for granted within their own practice (Hellawell, 2006), and might identify further perspectives on essential skills.

The final batch of questions began by asking about the changes in practice during participants’ Camphill experience. The aim was to approach the present with hindsight. Continuing the biographical theme, participants were asked about a seminal experience in their own development, which might point to perspectives on their skillset. The interview was wound down by giving participants an opportunity to include significant omissions, and a second opportunity to summarise what their work.

Two reserve questions were prepared, but not used, inquiring how participants dealt with critical and unexpected situations.

4.05 Research Location

The study was undertaken in the researcher’s home and place of work, Camphill School Aberdeen (CSA), 6 miles west of Aberdeen City. Permission to name CSA in this study was explicitly granted by the CSA Research Ethics Group. Interviews were held in a neutral meeting room.

The principle settings in which social pedagogy practitioners work are houses for residential, respite and day placements, school houses, craft workshops and artistic therapies.

Currently CSA constitutes 250 contributing co-workers, of whom 160 are residential career volunteers and 90 are employed, self-employed or day volunteers. Career volunteers, such as the researcher, are long-term unwaged community members. At the time of this study 76 young people with social vulnerabilities or learning difficulties had placements in CSA, of whom 30 were residential (CSA, unpublished).

4.06 Research Participants

An opportunist sample of 5 experienced practitioners was selected, who were invited to participate in interviews and a reference focus group to review provisional findings. For an initial small scale study it was pragmatically more expedient to focus on a sample of participants with mature perspectives and a wide range of experience before reaching out to other practitioners and stakeholders at a later stage.
Three female and two male experienced co-workers were initially invited to participate, representing school, house communities and craft workshops. Although names have been changed to preserve confidentiality, the five practitioners who agreed to give interviews may be recognisable to other CSA co-workers, so minimal details are listed in Table 4.06.1. All participants work directly with young people and support the training of inexperienced co-workers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years of experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alison</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blythe</td>
<td>House Coordinator</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare</td>
<td>House Coordinator</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana</td>
<td>House Coordinator</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.06.1 Research Participants

4.07 Ethical Sensitivities

This study is a partial contribution to the award of MRes (Social and Educational Research) which has been funded by CSA. The researcher has been given time to independently design and conduct the research, and the outcomes are the sole responsibility of the researcher with reference to the perspectives of participants. Ethical approval for involving vulnerable young people in the study was not deemed by the researcher to be inappropriate as practice observation would not produce the data required to answer the research question.

The study design was approved by the researcher’s supervisor from the University of Aberdeen School of Education (Appendix A), adhering to the College of Arts and Social Sciences Research Governance Policy and Procedures for Ethical Review (CASS, 2011). The underlying principles of University of Aberdeen policy are: excellence, honesty, rigour, openness and accountability, care and respect (University of Aberdeen, 2014: 6-7). In addition, ethical approval was granted by Camphil School Aberdeen Research Ethics group (Appendix B), who approved the disclosure of the organisation’s name.
4.07.1: Confidentiality

Participants were given a summary of the aims of the study (Appendix C) and the consent form (Appendix D) with a week to consider their decision. Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any stage without giving a reason. Names of participants have been changed and all references to other individuals, have been anonymised in the transcripts. Participants were made aware, prior to interview, that other CSA co-workers may be able to deduce their identities from this dissertation. For this reason the outcomes of the research will be transposed into an executive summary with less detail for Camphill distribution. In adherence with CSA policy, participants consented that in the event of unacceptable practice being disclosed the Child Protection Officer would be informed as an exception to the assurance of complete confidentiality. No unacceptable practice was disclosed.

Digital recordings of interviews and the focus group were password protected and deleted at the conclusion of the study. Transcripts are held securely in digital format and all participants consented to transcripts being used in further research.

4.07.2 The Insider Perspective

The position of an insider research is not neutral, although the study aimed to produce descriptive outcomes without evaluating practice. A primary issue to be navigated transparently was the researcher’s position as an insider with extensive prior knowledge. This issue involved rigorous reflexivity to sensitise the researcher to inequalities of power, privilege and prejudice which have been arduous to unravel. Drake (2010) calls for reflexive criticality in insider research, which asks the researcher to step outside self and looking inwards, which implies a dialogical view of self (Etherington, 2004) or plural selves. During critical reflection, ‘present self’ questions ‘past self’ from the vantage point of hindsight. The researcher’s perspective follows Isaacs (1999: 19) who defines dialogue as a “centre with no sides”, which leads to the notion that reflective critical rigour establishes a social centre attracting as many insider perspectives as possible. Some of the researcher’s intrapersonal dialogue was shared with participants during the reviews.

Reflective journaling continued from the design phase throughout the study, aiming to clarify the researcher’s perspectives and surface assumptions. Journals were reviewed during data
analysis and further reflective memos were written as researcher perspectives changed, which offer an audit trail for future review of the study.

The emic perspective was sought in this study, which belongs to the participants in the field of inquiry (Harris, 1976). A significant element of SP practice is planning and evaluation (Storø, 2013: 107) as the content of what is practised determines what it is (ibid.: 3). The content of the mind-stream is not visible to phenomenological observation, which would not be able to capture the all-important internal emic experience and pedagogical thinking of practitioners. Although the instruments used were not neutral this study had no overt intention to evaluate, adapt or develop the practice of others. Nevertheless the dissemination of this inquiry may do so. The intention is that dissemination of any findings may be beneficial to practitioners and indirectly to beneficiaries of future SP practice.

4.07.3: Power Inequalities

The aim was cause as little disruption in CSA as possible. Nevertheless the intervention of a research study into a community of practice may have unpredictable consequences beyond the current horizon of the researcher. This is an example of the power of research to facilitate change, although the researcher is powerless to determine what changes may result.

The researcher does not hold an organisational position of authority, although some participants do. No problematic issues of power or authority were encountered when negotiating arrangements. Reflexivity during interviews was crucial to recognise and negotiate power dynamics and the researcher’s role in the research process of knowledge construction (Edwards and Holland, 2013: Location 150, 317). It was however not possible to offer participants, who are living the research theme, complete control of the research process (ibid.: Location 383) due to the double requirement for approval of the research design before participants could be approached.

Although the researcher is an insider to the organisation, he is an outside interpreter of participants’ experiences and their understandings of those experiences. Lincoln and Guba (1986) stress the value of authentication so provisional findings were discussed with participants before dissemination. Time constraints and the summer recess offered insufficient opportunity for participants to check transcripts before analysis. Trustworthiness is a question of acceptability, and highly dependent on reflexivity (Thomson and Gunter 2011). The
researcher declared his ignorance and vulnerability in the request to be informed and in presenting the results of analysis. Vulnerability was reversed in the choice of interview questions and particularly in the role of reporting the study. The capacity of published research to unintentionally misrepresent participants without their careful review and feedback was emphasised. As researcher and participants will continue to work together after the research is disseminated, trust, safeguarding and respect remain important.

4.08: Undertaking the Study

Once ethical approval had been obtained from the School of Education and Camphill School Aberdeen in the middle of May, participants were approached by email and, if interested in participating, were given a summary of the aims of the study (Appendix C), and a copy of the consent form (Appendix D). The interviews took place in a neutral meeting room over a period of 5 weeks up to the beginning of July, which was a hectic time for participants at the end of the summer term. Appointments of an hour were made, and the first 5-10 minutes were taken up with a discussion of the consent form, which was then signed.

During summer recess, the interviews were fully transcribed in reverse order, to identify any bias from earlier interviews in later interviews. A couple of times language had been borrowed from earlier participants when clarifying contributions during later interviews. There was one instance of inadvertently leading the participant’s response when she seemed disoriented by the question.

The transcripts were examined, adding codes and memos, adopting the suggestions of Lincoln and Guba (1985: 339) derived from early grounded theory methodology. It became clear that the rich complexity of the data could not be fully processed before the submission deadline. Two themes emerged quite quickly and these were presented to participants in a report (Appendix F) inviting them all to respond. These themes defined the findings presented in this dissertation, leaving other themes for future inquiry in follow-up phases of this study.

Plans for a review focus group with all participants unravelled when only 2 participants could meet at the same time of the three who agreed to participate. An individual interview and a review with two participants took place at the beginning of September, in the same room as the initial interviews. There was insufficient time to fully transcribe the reviews so the audio recordings were partly transcribed, coded and reviewed with the earlier coded interview
transcripts. The coded transcripts were revisited during the report writing, and fresh nuances and resonances were noted.

4.09: Reflections

Naturalistic inquiry was welcomed as a research paradigm as it valued emergent processes of learning and inquiry, which have characterised the researcher’s reflective practice for 40 years. This mode of inquiry did not easily adapt the tight timeframe for this study, which limited how much analysis could be done on the data. The participant review had to be undertaken at the beginning of a new school year, which restricted participants’ availability and the time remaining for further analysis and writing up the findings. Gray (2009) warns against jumping to hasty inferences from small data samples. The resulting findings can only be tentative and exploratory.

4.10: Analysis

Lincoln and Guba (1985: 41, 339ff) embraced the notion of grounded theory as characteristic of the inductive naturalistic inquiry paradigm as an emerging, cascading, unfolding process (Lincoln in Gray, 2009: 25). Glaserian grounded theory methods, which strongly emphasise the primacy of the data (Birks and Mills, 2012), were used to analyse the interview transcripts by coding skills and writing reflective memos alongside the texts with a word processor. This enabled the use of software searches to find linked codes that were aggregated into related categories. Interview transcripts were coded with inductive memos and indications of skills were provisionally categorised to elicit themes for participant feedback, following grounded theory methods.

The patterns of skill categories were not immediately apparent, and the data raised questions about how relational skills related to organisational and structural skills in practice. At the time of preparing a report for participants, a radical shift in the organisation of skill categories was made when it was realised that participants were using everyday words to describe advanced communication techniques. Reflections and perspectives on provisional findings were obtained with three participants. The audio recordings were partly transcribed and coded with inductive memos. Reflective journal entries were reviewed with reference to the data review.
and themes were selected for reporting on the basis of participants accounts that introduced themes not previously considered by the researcher.

4.10.1: Authenticity

Lincoln and Guba (1986) proposed strategies for establishing the authenticity of naturalistic inquiry, which included member checking and fairness. Only findings are reported that have been through iterative cycles of review by means of data checking and reflection on the researcher’s own theoretical sensitivity (Glaser, 1978). Participants’ views on the report of provisional findings (Appendix F) and the researcher’s account of his thinking were taken into account. There were no unresolved issues, but a number of unanswered questions suggest that purposive theoretical sampling (Birks and Mills, 2012: 69) for more data is required before the skills can be mapped.

The main criterion that Lincoln and Guba (1986) suggest for authenticity is fairness, which involves open and balanced negotiation of evaluation and member checking, effectively sharing power with participants. A focus group was planned as a means to achieve dialogical authenticity, giving participants the opportunity to read and consider provisional findings before talking together. Although divergent questions are expected in naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), it was hoped that participants would co-produce understandings in a dynamic where the researcher could withdraw to the margins. The collapse of this plan weakens the study’s claim to authenticity. Further data collection and authentication will strengthen the integrity of continuing inquiry. There is no expectation of convergence on the mapping of skills; a further process of non-reductive relational analysis will be explored to negotiate the complexity of interacting social processes.
Chapter 5: Findings

This naturalistic inquiry study investigated the culture of practice in a Camphill community working with vulnerable young people. The aim was to identify the skills in use, and practitioner’s understandings of those skills that constitute the ‘tools of their trade’. The research focussed on the question:

**What skills are used by Camphill social pedagogy practitioners’, and what are their perceptions of those skills?**

An overview of skills identified in the data is reported in this chapter. The themes that emerged from initial data analysis, and were reviewed by participants, are reported and discussed. Other nascent themes have not been authenticated by participants.

Data analysis suggested that participants may tacitly distinguish between relational skills used with a young person present and skills used for the benefit of a person not present at the time. The themes that developed from this question led to a deeper understanding of the subtlety of practitioners’ relational skills and difficulties in communicating them. This contrasted with a range of subtle non-verbal communication skills that enable practitioners to gain a profound collaborative understanding of young people.

5:01: What skills are used by participants?

The descriptions of participants’ working tasks contextualised their understandings of different skills. Participants described their practice roles as:

“I'm a teacher... and what I teach, on the one hand, it's things they need to know, but they need to know them to help them to understand the world and understand themselves.” (Edward)

“I am responsible for a house of 6 pupils with special needs, and 9 co-workers... I participate in the daily life and I'm part of the daily life. I work directly with the pupils, sometimes I supervise co-workers. I support them in creating the right activities for the pupils, and work together with parents and authorities to create the right care for those children; and I clean, and I do laundry and I cook.” “I am able to carry on... I'm able to find the trust that it's going to be okay, and carry on and keep putting in; and in the end, it always pays off.” (Blythe)
“...running the house, supporting all pupils in the way of everything: physically, emotionally, spiritually... you name it: co-workers, maintenance, household, menus... it's a never ending list.” “Give them the opportunity to develop the way they manage to develop, or not... This particular child comes to my house and then we do the best what we can, hopefully.” (Clare)

“...we try to help everyone... to learn new things that they hitherto weren't able to do, or didn't know they were able to do; and to learn to share, to take responsibility and develop an awareness of each other; and to feel that they have an important role to play in a social setting such as ours. And in the past one might have used the word 'family', and I think I can use the word 'family' in a sort of the widest sense in that it's a space where people can develop, can feel safe, and can help each other to discover things about themselves, and each other, and... to develop skills, to develop... an experience of who they really are and who the other person really is. And that comes... very often at the hand of a lot of practical things: just simply looking after the physical house together.” (Dana)

“I suppose the focus of my work is in the school, in the classroom, so I think of us as providing education...” “...it's, you know, trying to be able to support them to be the person that they are, that they can be, and to, yeah, to help to sort of, clear away these barriers that are stopping them being the best that they are... I think of children who have got a very negative image of themselves, and who seem to have been labelled as having all these difficulties, and to get beyond that.” (Alison)

Analysis of the interview transcripts identified a wide range of skills that appeared to be clusters composed of contributing skills. Participants described them holistically, but there were subtleties and depths that were not described, possibly because of the research environment’s potential to expose.

“If you let go of your own ego and do not respond with your ego, but respond with empathy and forgiveness, then you get a relationship which then transforms the way a pupil relates to you.” (Blythe)

[How do you get to know a young person?] “...just by spending time with them...” (Blythe) “I learn quite a lot about somebody when I see how they respond when they are in a situation which is different from the usual...” (Dana)

“...it’s just a nice quiet moment in the week for [a young man] and his co-worker.” (A)
In the reviews, the attempt was made to penetrate to the subtle skills.

“...It’s our ability to maintain our inner attitude actually that provides the structure that matters... The more you can do it, the less effort it takes. It becomes something that you know, and this is what you do...” (Edward)

“...it’s easier to demonstrate, but a lot of it is too subtle to actually demonstrate. We struggle a lot with that. ...giving a child the space ‘to be allowed to do’. Don’t help them too quickly. (laughs) [...] I suppose that’s to do with believing and trusting, and being confident that they can even when they are not sure that they can.” (Dana)

Edward’s phrase of maintaining our inner attitude is resonant of the German SP term, Haltung (see Appendix G), but it was not used by any participants. It became clear that many of the subtle skills involved intrapersonal skills, the disciplining or structuring of self while engaged in some kind of activity, or just being quietly with a young person. It was the inner attitude that shaped the outer activity. In the review participants were asked what was meant by giving a child space, and creating spaces for something to happen. The clear agreement was that the structuring of the inner space, intentionally maintaining an inner attitude (Haltung), is what makes everything else work.

Skill categories were divided into relational skills with young people present (You-I, I-You) and organisational skills advocating for and on behalf of young people (community-individual, individual-community).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structuring the pedagogical environment</th>
<th>Organisational management</th>
<th>Collaboration with families and other agencies</th>
<th>Collaboration and teamwork</th>
<th>Team development</th>
<th>Ethical practice</th>
<th>Assessment and planning</th>
<th>Decisive advocacy</th>
<th>Intrapersonal leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relational skills</td>
<td>Communication and advocacy</td>
<td>Communication support</td>
<td>Conveying reassurance</td>
<td>Understanding personal and contextual factors</td>
<td>Identifying and responding to needs</td>
<td>Facilitating learning opportunities</td>
<td>Facilitating formal learning</td>
<td>Facilitating practical learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Table 5.01.1 Two Groups of Skill Categories |
Collaboration, communication, and advocacy bridged both category groups, suggesting that there are other patterns not yet discerned. Advocacy was divided into two categories. The term ‘decisive advocacy’ was coined to describe collaborative evaluation and assessment that informed organisational management and strategic planning where practitioners advocated on behalf of a young person’s learning, safety and wellbeing.

Clare described such a task: “We went through a process of making a decision to see how we support, as Camphill, [a young man's] 52 weeks' placement.” This category also included inter-agency reviews and family support with the young person being indirectly involved in different ways. Alison described an example of direct advocacy to a young person, on behalf of their own or others’ learning, safety and wellbeing: “…he'll have some ideas of particular things he really wants to do... so there is the thing of agreeing together what we're going to aim for this week, and I think that's really important”.

Young people and learner practitioners learned from practical activities. Dana described introducing co-workers (practitioners) to camping:

“...it's often quite frail co-workers who are very frightened of going. They come back and say, 'Wow! I loved it', and that's always what I'm looking forward to hear, because then... something has changed in someone. So there is there is partly all this what I talk about, the social possibilities, but there's also that, 'Gosh, I got to know myself, in a way that I didn't know'... So it's resilience they're developing, I hope, at least.”

There was an example of collaborative learning, where young peoples’ learning was supported co-workers’ learning. Alison described the annual influx of new co-workers:

“...there's also the whole social element of all the Foundation Year people who arrive from (laughs) from all over the world with different gifts, and the way that they contribute socially around the children, I think, is really very very important. Especially when you have children who have themselves been excluded, that suddenly there’s a group of people who are also getting to know each other each year, and also the children can be included in all that sort of relationship forming... I think they learn a lot from the fact that everybody is representing so many different nationalities and different cultures.”
5.02: Understanding young people

In order to support and respond to the needs of young people, SP practitioners work towards a wide understanding of the contexts of their backgrounds and lived experiences, as well as a deep appreciation of their personalities, capacities and constitutional propensities. To what does a practitioner respond, and how do they know it? All participants were confident that they were able to identify at least some of a young person’s talents or obstacles to learning, an understanding usually achieved in collaboration with other practitioners. They were asked how they achieved this understanding.

“I try and listen and ask questions, partly to show that I am indeed listening to him.” “...also the way he talks. He can talk very intensely, and if he's ill, or if he's not feeling well or if something has gone wrong, then I can experience this anxiety...” (Edward)

“I guess just by spending time with them, I mean you know, I spend a lot of time with the pupils... when you meet them initially, and you read the file, you have a certain image of who that person is and, based on your past experience, you can imagine what kind of approach they would possibly need, and what kind of activities they would need. And then, you know, depending on their response, and how they connect to you, you have to adapt it... it's not always right, but often it is, and I build up a relationship with them, you know, and I'm always available (laughs)... you create a, you know, mutual empathy towards each other and I think that really helps.” (Blythe)

“Time spent? ...I think to get a new person into the house, its always something, a kind of intense experience, because then we do it together with the co-worker, but somewhere, somehow, some experience tells me to be intuitive, to set up something which would start working. Yes, and of course, well, depending on the co-worker, that comes together, and their observations, their experience, and that plays a huge part as well.” (Clare)

“...just by spending time with them and observing how they relate to the world around them, to themselves, to me, to the task at hand. The way somebody speaks, or when somebody speaks, or how somebody speaks: it can be very telling.” (Dana)

“...when somebody first arrives we have usually gone for a walk around the estate (laughing) and really just looked at what's happening on the on the estate, and visited houses just to find out what's happening and what people are doing... for the sort of children who are worried about what's going on, where everybody is, what's everybody doing: 'What's their connection
to me as the new pupil?’ I think it was really helpful to go round and see what some of the other children are doing and see what the adults are doing, and seeing what the sheepdog’s doing (laughs) and the horses and, yeah, just seeing what’s happening on the estate…” (Alison)

Dana spoke about empathy: “…if you let go of your own ego and do not respond with your ego, but respond with empathy and forgiveness, then you get a relationship which then transforms the way a pupil relates to you.”

In the interviews and reviews participants were asked how they approached, developed and achieved this understanding. There were long pauses after this question. Participants spoke of spending time with young people and doing practical activities with them, although the Danish SP term, common third (Appendix G), was not mentioned. Edward spoke about young co-workers coming to the community needing to be “listened to, and responded to, in an adequate way”. He agreed that this is also a need for young people, and emphasised that it is important to be able to “to notice that a person wants something but is unable to ask for it in the way that you expect them to ask…” The ability to listen and hear what a young person is not saying is clearly significant, not only in SP. Insight into how this is achieved – what skills are being used – came from Dana. She spoke of the effort involved in creating an inner space for several young people, one after the other. The impression was of an effort to reconfigure self, one’s inner receptivity as a subtly different attitude and sensitivity, even presence, was required for each person.

Participants declared a deep admiration for the achievements of individual young people. Alison said, “I was really impressed to see how well he coped with waiting for his part [in the play], and then doing it perfectly (laughs).” Subtle relational and communication skills were described. Communication might be a subtle as silent rapport:

“…he was very severely autistic, you know, who doesn't ever look you in the eye... and the night attendant phoned me because he was up the whole night, dashing about and banging the walls and moving his bed here there and everywhere… I just sat on his bed, and he took my hand and he looked into my eyes for ever, and he never looked at me before you know – he was squinting away – and we sat there. I sat there with him, holding his hand, with this severely autistic boy for 20 minutes until he closed his eyes and fell asleep.” (Blythe)

Alison described supporting a young man. “...you need to be outwardly very calm and inwardly very awake. (laughs) ...I think to have those skills is quite a challenge if you're newly
arrived.” In the review she said that this outer calm with inner alertness would not be noticed by someone entering the room, who might assume that the practitioner was doing nothing.

Subtle communication skills were also used in collaborative work. Dana described a conversation with a colleague: “I am able to translate what she says… actually I had to hear her need in it.” She also spoke of new co-workers relating to young people: “most of them are amazingly good at seeing somebody's challenging behaviour as their need, rather than a personal attack…”

A review of the relational skills in the data revealed far more sophisticated interpersonal skills than spoken language and communication-support strategies. Dana said: “sometimes youngsters say things but they mean something else…”, and spoke of understanding “what's really going on inside them”. Blythe spoke about responding “with empathy and forgiveness, then you get a relationship which then transforms the way a pupil relates to you.” This suggests that practitioners are using intrapersonal skills to adapt the self for the sake of another person. The ‘use of self’ is a significant theme in SP education, but did Blythe’s use of the word, empathy, suggest more than the capacity to feel, imagine, understand or share the feelings of another person?

Empathy was discussed in the reviews. Edward said: “I think empathy is an activity.” He spoke about feelings not requiring effort, whereas empathy does. Intrapersonal skills played into the capacity to understand a young person, and to tune into them psychologically. Openness and flexibility were suggested by participants as being essential for SP practice; as well as being here and coping, as Clare put it with a smile.

5.03: Making space for individuals

All participants valued the resourceful and flexible support available within the organisation.

“I feel welcomed into the house community. I'm part of the social network in the house, which is... a great help to me but, partly it enables social opportunities to arise for the child I'm working with, because people can pass by and have a few words...” (Edward)

“...we have a lot of freedom in the way we use resources as well, a huge amount of freedom that we can share our lives and our resources the way that we do...” “I do the things I do because I have masses of support...” (Blythe)
“...in Camphill, that's what's so important. I think that comes back to the flexibility of the curriculum, that you can do these things.” (Alison)

Flexible structuring of resources to create the SP environment, termed ‘the community’ by participants, was a clue to understanding practitioners’ perspectives of the collective effectiveness of CSA as a service provider. One house coordinator spoke about how supportive it would be for her work to strengthen the understanding and interaction between houses. Another house coordinator described the useful learning she gained from an event where several houses participated.

This drew attention to a complex interaction between organisational management skills and common third (Appendix G) activity skills. The key words were ‘space’ and ‘freedom’.

Dana spoke about working with a young man. “...particularly on a cycle ride if you go far and cycle in front of him. After about 4 miles he begins to talk and sing and talk and then he’s sharing what’s going on in himself. But it takes really 4 miles of movement before he is ready to do that. So that’s a different kind of space that needs to be created for him. Each one needs something...”

Clare spoke about welcoming a young person into the house. “I think there is a freedom, and you kind of receive a new challenge. It's okay, you get some reports from the past but you start anyway with an empty page. (laughs) And that's quite exciting.” She also spoke about developing practitioner skills. “I think it grows with their time spent in Camphill, their experience and so on, not from day one when they come and know nothing... Yeah, I think that idea that we nurture this initiative and growing freedom.”

All participants agreed that working with young people and with other practitioners depended on the individual involved. Three participants spoke of space for the individual: a young man’s “private work space that he can retreat into when he becomes upset” (Edward), “[it] has to do with the personality of the person running it, and also to do with the whole setup, that it’s a creative space but there's a lot of flexibility.” (Alison) and “space where people can develop, can feel safe, and can help each other to discover things about themselves, and each other, and to develop”; “a big part of my life is just that: just creating a space where people can do things. So it's in one way quite an invisible job – in one way – and it would only be noticed when I don't do it.” (Dana).
Three participants spoke about freedom. Clare said that “we nurture this initiative and growing freedom” in co-workers, and that “It would be very difficult for me to work in another place and not have this freedom.” Dana spoke about new co-workers who “want as much freedom as possible”. Edward described his teaching work: “We can do all we can to make it possible, but what we do to make it possible is, in a way, our gift to them; and they take that gift and they do with it what they do with it. And what they do with it is actually not in our control... I try to offer it in freedom, without dictating how it will be used.”

Skills mentioned in the data that structured the social pedagogical space included planning and staffing placements, passing on information, assessment of progress, reading reports. There were also skills that brought structure to relational practice, such as creating a space for activities, and providing specific activities in which practitioners and young people participated, which practitioners call common third activities (Appendix G). Examples in the data were camping, games, celebrations, curriculum content and enacting stories, as well as household tasks and cooking. An additional dimension was creating an inner space for another person, which I understood as a psychological adaptation and therefore an intrapersonal skill. This was confirmed by Edward and Dana who noted that creating a space for a succession of people (including other practitioners) was an effort. Edward referred to this skill as “listening to the needs of young people that might be expressed in unanticipated ways, such as behaviour”.

Regarding the skill of opening an inner space that contributes to interpersonal skill, Edward described this as learning to maintain certain attitudes. Dana contributed some telling perspectives: “if it's difficult for them to not see themselves first, it can also be difficult for them to appreciate the other.” In the review she said: “I think I am probably always trying to create a balance of some sort, so if somebody is really ‘out there’ I become very quiet, or the opposite sometimes. I think it’s just about trying to create that balance.” Dana suggested that the ability to generate questions from an interest in young people was very energising for other practitioners.

After reviewing the provisional findings with participants, four themes emerged, which will be discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter 6: Discussion of Findings

This chapter will expand on the themes that have emerged so far from data analysis. As this study has insufficient scope to approach anything more than tentative propositions, this chapter opens up questions that require further studies. The themes are:

- perspectives on the social pedagogy relationship,
- the relationship between giving space and the experience of freedom,
- how much one person can know of another,
- the receptivity of practitioners and structural articulation of the environment.

6.01: The Social Pedagogy Relationship

Participants gave young people appreciation and credit for their successful efforts, suggesting that Edward’s perception may be shared: that it is how the support is received and mobilised by young people that ultimately determines the effectiveness of that support. No matter how hard a group of well-intentioned people work to involve and include a young person, it is the young person’s own experience that determines whether they feel they belong in that group and how much they want to participate in group activities. This suggests that however much the supportive contributions of practitioners become integrated into the life of a young person, it is through self-determined effort that the young person integrates themselves into social activity, either purposefully, disruptively, for fun or as a challenge. Does this indicate that the ethical value of self-determination, demanded of practitioners (AIEJI, 2010), is regarded as the key to the learning process where the practitioner takes the role of advocate for learning, and even the key to socialisation?

One way in which learning was advocated was the facilitation of structured environments, which involved not only conducive learning environments but also anxiety-alleviating trust of young people in the reliable consistency of practitioners. Between practitioner and young person live questions, and when these questions are mutually understood, then development emerges. Dana spoke of the energising effect of working with new practitioners who asked questions, and perhaps it is these questions that open up spaces that invite young people to learn and develop their own questions. Is this encouraging openness perceived as an essential element in the mutuality that Jackson (2006: 65) asserts is a concept characteristic of curative education?
6.02: Space and Freedom

Do practitioners experience that they receive flexible opportunity from the organisation, something that they able to pass on to others? Some participants spoke of freedom for flexible initiative and some spoke of space to learn and develop. Practitioners demonstrated trust in the resourcefulness of the organisation and the cooperation of other practitioners in contributing perspectives of understanding and resourcefulness to the learning environments that were being created, such as a flexible curriculum, which offers the opportunity to create common third activities (see Appendix G). Do practitioners perceive the curriculum as a common third?

Learning environments were being created in environments beyond the Camphill estates, as the familiar orderly culture was transferable, even being created for others by a young person in one case. This demonstrates trust in the potential of young people to learn to structure social environments in a manner that facilitates social participation. Do practitioners see the delegation of responsibility as a common third opportunity shared between them and the organisation within which they can create the supportive environments for one another as well as young people?

This being the case, practitioners may experience that they are supporting the ability for young people to become agents of change in society, either alone or with facilitated support, as much as they are supported by the community. This would offer good reason for practitioners to value the informed collaboration that involves house teams and school or other activity teams. Flexible collaboration that offers scope for practitioners’ initiative was mirrored in how practitioners were making space for others to learn and develop. The overall gesture is one of offering space and trust in young people’s innate capacity to learn.

An important question was to understand what is meant when practitioners speak of an inner space. The capacity to offer structural support seemed to depend on two key elements. One of these is the capacity to profoundly understand young people. If this understanding is perceived as a relational space, then collaborative understanding opens a structured space in which a young person may experience that they are being met and appreciated in a consistent manner, which would tend to allow trust to develop. Dana spoke of “...giving a child the space ‘to be allowed to do’. Don’t help them too quickly (laughs). [...] I suppose that’s to do with believing and trusting, and being confident that they can even when they are not sure that they can... One skill is to allow...” Does this trust characterise the attitude towards new
practitioners, to find their way with sufficient support and enable them to take initiatives? This would be so if the space given by the organisation is the freedom to do one’s creative best within the structures of social care practice.

This notion opens up the prospect of a resonance between organisational structuring and practitioner work, where the organisation qualitatively reflects the practitioner’s skilful opening of developmental spaces in the individual. The data sample is too small to indicate anything about CSA as a whole, although, if the perspective of the whole being held within the part (Bortoft in Scharmer, 2007: 159) is instrumentalised, the organisation is represented in the individual as Steiner proposed is necessary for social wellbeing (Selg, 2011: 95) and CSA is idiographically represented to some degree in the sample.

On this tentative basis, an initial proposition towards a representation of Camphill SP practice development was suggested to participants in review. The development of a SP practitioner begins with an intention to make a difference in the life of another person, which opens an inner space in that person who decides to spend time volunteering or employed in Camphill. Training involves preparing oneself for that person to come, letting go of preconceptions and adapting to the person who arrives. They agreed that practice begins with the young person.

6.03: Getting to Know You

One of the sensitivities that had been problematized before gathering data was the question of plural epistemic assumptions among participants and researcher, primarily the articulation of skills involved in understanding other people and their experiences of their often complex situations. Practitioners need to inform themselves thoroughly in order to tactfully guide practice activities and advocate decisions that promote the learning and wellbeing of others.

Participants described young people’s situations and the child’s own experience of their situation. Alison described that order to really be with a young person in an active way, even if working independently, an alert empathic rapport is required that may not be noticed by someone who walks in the room. Blythe spoke of empathic responses. Dana spoke of creating inner space. Edward spoke about holding an attitude and listening.
These skills began with an inner attitude, an effort of opening an inner space towards the young person. Was this a description of how to achieve empathy? There was cautious agreement in the reviews for the suggestion that all the skills involved in understanding others on all possible levels, and in all possible ways, could be categorised as communication skills. Dana commented that such skills were so difficult to speak about that they could only be demonstrated, and that some were so subtle that they could not be observed by inexperienced practitioners.

The subtle achievement of a rapport can be related to Goethean principles of phenomenology, mentioned in Section 2.02, as a forerunner of anthroposophical methodology. Goethe suggested that objects observed properly created their own organ of perception in the observer, which the researcher relates to perceptual closure as a psychological imprint. Goethe wrote: “How could we see the light if the eye was not sun-like?” (Moore and Simpson, 2007: 294) and that “The eye was made by the light and for the light so that the inner light may emerge to meet the outer light.” (Mellett, 2000) Following and extending Mellett’s account, the psychological openness or inner space that a practitioner creates in order to listen intensely to another individual develops reciprocally and is ‘shaped’ by that individual in the practitioner’s experience of that person, which allows the practitioner to ‘hear’ what the other person needs but cannot say, possibly to sense the potential of that individual that has not yet been expressed.

This inner skill is about removing the obstacles in oneself to the expression of another person, and offering them that open space. The gesture is one of inclusion. If a practitioner is open and flexible enough to allow the young person to enter and shape the self, then this reflects the respectful encounter, proposed by König, of meeting ego to ego, eye to eye (in Jackson, 2006: 22 and quoted in 2.05). Dana described the effort to keep the sensitive inner space flexible. Blythe described experiencing the wholeness of a child in silent rapport. Heidegger wrote that “a boundary is not that at which something stops but... that from which something begins its presencing.” (Bhabha, 1994: 1). The activity of presencing the other in self lives at the heart of Sharmer’s ‘social technology’ of presencing captured in the injunction to “let go and let come” (Scharmer, 2007: 199). Bortoft suggests that this process is difficult because it involves an epistemological reversal (Scharmer, 2007: 159). Perhaps practitioners conceptualise the capacity to receive the wholeness of a young person as developing an open questioning space within self, which the young person shapes to fit themselves. They form an organ of perception that is formed by the young person that is fit for purpose. There are undoubtedly other ways of understanding the process of developing empathic rapport.
The above is proposed as one possible account of the tacit understanding among participants that draws on the Goethean roots of Steiner’s work that has informed CSA culture for many years, as comprehended by an insider. The understanding that emerged from the data prompted the realisation that the capacity to sensitively structure a welcoming attitude in an inner space could be perceived as the key to developing the skills of holistic communication. This key could be called an attitude of inclusive hospitality. More investigation is needed to authenticate this tentative suggestion.

6.04: Non-Verbal Communication?

The notion of skills that gave structure and opportunity for learning or development suggested the organisation of the categories into organisational and psychological structural skills as distinct from relational processing or communication skills. However, considering Blythe’s report, mentioned above, of a significant silent encounter with a severely autistic boy, can intrapersonal effort of opening inner space of inclusive hospitality structure an organ of perception as proposed by Goethe? Bogdashina (2010: 133) suggests that inner rapport can be conceptualised as a form of non-verbal communication. Three participants cautiously went along with the researcher’s suggestion that, however it was conceived, their understanding of young people constituted a form of non-verbal communication, receiving communication. Further inquiry may find what practitioners really think about this idea. If all action is taken as non-verbal communication, then all structuring of the self or of the environment may also be considered as articulating a message that may be subtly perceived by one another and by some young people. Communication is a structuring of a medium, such as voice, or movement, or behaviour, or a kitchen is a sign that means something to another person who notices it. The knack is in the noticing, and a knack can possibly be trained, or learned, if it is possible to tell a learner what to notice.

If the development of receptivity to subtlety makes a difference between being able to notice subtle skills so that they can be effectively demonstrated, and not noticing, then the practice of SP is being frustrated by the lack of language to draw one another’s attention to these subtleties. If practitioners understand this differently to the tentative suggestions here, then the lack of language still stands as a learning difficulty to learning. The knack remains tacit.
It is possible that some participants tacitly declined to share some aspects of their work within self in the research environment, however the lack of language was stated explicitly. A significant question for SP practice is to find clear terms so that subtle skills can be taught. Practitioner understanding would seem to be a promising field of inquiry, which may elicit the terms that can afford explanations of those subtle skilful nuances that turn everyday actions into developmental learning opportunities.
Chapter 7: Implications and Concluding Reflections

This study mobilised a naturalistic paradigm to investigate experienced practitioners’ understandings of social pedagogy skills used in a Camphill service provision for young people with learning disabilities. Data was obtained from interviews, analysed using inferential methods, and a selection of findings reviewed by some participants. In this chapter the findings are summarised and implications for the future are outlined. Limitations of the study are indicated and the chapter ends with some concluding reflections.

7.01: Summary of Findings

Camphill creates a welcoming space for vulnerable young people to resiliently develop their potential and integrate into their local culture. Participants described skills holistically, although many skills appeared to be combined with significant tacit skills. Seventeen clusters of skills were identified that divided between relational skills and structural skills that ranged from organisation level to practitioner self-management.

Participants gained considerable understanding of young people through collaborative attention and a wide range of communication skills that could be simply described as listening. Such listening was connected with ‘creating an inner space’ in order to meet and be with young people.

Structural reconfiguration of self and relational skills were possibly interlinked as subtle elements that contributed to practitioner’s receptivity towards non-verbal communication. Participants described them separately, depending on their role in the practice situation such as decision making, team development or organising activities with a young person. Such subtle communication skills were characterised as difficult to teach, even difficult to observe, and the lack of language to talk about these skills relegated them into the tacit dimension of practitioner wisdom.

7.02: Implications for the future

Questions were asked from the researcher’s insider sensitivity, which can be further investigated in the data, and then pursued through further theoretical sampling, before grounded propositions about practitioner’s perspectives can be put forward.
One of the most emancipative cultural legacies is language, and this study suggests that new language and concepts are needed to value and pass on the subtle and tacit skills that live in the Camphill School community of practice, and to disseminate local expertise into the wider culture of social practice. Camphill has developed a cultural language of practice (Section 2.03), which appears to lack the capacity for leading new practitioners into some of the subtle skills. There are a range of skills that are difficult to talk about, and they will remain tacit, even occult, as long as they elude language. Polanyi (1983 in Moustakis, 1990: 20) observed that, “We know more than we can tell”, claiming that, “all knowledge is either tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge” (ibid.: 21). The inability to articulate significant elements of practice that are too subtle to demonstrate make it difficult for practitioners and others to learn or to evaluate them. This observation requires further study to determine whether this is experienced by other Camphill practitioners.

Other questions that have emerged, calling for further investigation are the conceptualisation of empathy and what was termed ‘inner space’. It is possible that these skills have been articulated elsewhere, and a study of theoretical sources may identify compatible expressions of these concepts. Other concepts of practice, such as Bourdieu’s habitus and field (Maton in Grenfell, 2012: 50), can be related to familiar concepts of community and lifespace. There are possible benefits for SP practice of discourse between anthroposophical understandings and current education and social theories. This is a task for SP educators and trainers. These theoretical frameworks may enable the language of everyday practice to penetrate tacit expertise. If SP is to be valued and taken up more widely in Scotland, the skills of SP need to be articulated clearly and understood.

There is a potential role for researchers to support practitioners to develop the subtleties of practice and the effective articulation of practice skills. Other researchers, insiders or outsiders, are likely to encounter different understandings, and the same understandings differently, which would contribute richness and depth to knowledge of SP practice. This small scale study has begun to identify essential skills that SP practitioners are using, including intrapersonal and non-verbal communication skills. Practitioners speak about these skills holistically. There is insufficient data to tell whether these skills are conceptualised similarly by other practitioners. The development of SP practice in Camphill and in Scotland would benefit from practitioner discourse about empathy, non-verbal communication skills and the creation of ‘inner spaces’ that support the development of young people with learning disabilities and extend their participation in the life of society.
7.03: Limitations

The scope of this study was limited by a restricted time frame, so the sample of practitioners was small. The field of practice only included SP practitioners working with young people. There is insufficient space in this report to include more of the themes that emerged from data analysis. These themes can be investigated further with practitioners. Insufficient data was gathered to attempt to generate grounded theory, so the study can be regarded as unfinished. The tentative findings are to be viewed cautiously because of the holistic tendency to perceive closure within a limited amount of data.

The findings are ideographic, thus situated locally and no claims of knowledge are made that represent the understandings and skills of other SP practitioners in Camphill or elsewhere. However the understandings and skills that have been reported may inform and stimulate practitioners in other settings. Any propositions concerning practitioner’s emic perspective are tentative and subject to further authentication and revision. This study was envisaged as the initial phase of a longer inquiry into Camphill practitioner wisdom, which it is hoped will be eventually able to identify grounded theory that is robustly authenticated by practitioners.

At this point further work is needed to strengthen a claim to authenticity. An executive summary of findings will be disseminated in the research community, which it is hoped will generate interest to continue the research.

7.04: Concluding Reflections

The experience of interviewing experienced practitioners to find out about these skills opened new vistas and personal perceptions to the insider researcher that have not previously surfaced in his 25 years within the community. The insider perspective that has informed theoretical sensitivity while investigating the data has revealed a perspective with history. The researcher is wary of this perspective, as the haste with which the analysis was conducted has not yet produced alternative perspectives.

The task of social pedagogy is to create social environments where individual potential can be expressed and thrive, and to co-create educational pathways with vulnerable people towards participation in society as far as their and our willingness and ability allows. This practice
creates and depends on a resourceful environment where trust is nurtured, and where risk is negotiated for the benefit of learning and becoming. In collaborative Haltung (see Appendix G), maintaining an inner attitude resiliently, lives a commitment to altruistic social responsibility that nurtures individuality, cultural diversity and inclusion within the bounds of resources and creative ingenuity. In this the researcher finds his own values embedded in skilful SP practice of holistic communication and collaborative adaptation of self to admit the otherness of others.

The initial perspective represented here may be considered a first glimpse and, before proceeding any further, second looks are required. Can participants be expected to respond unequivocally to questions about their tacit assumptions and sensitivities? This study is done but further questions are opening up, which will require further analysis to inform the theoretical sampling that is needed to understand and represent the skilful practice that lives in Camphill.

This study has shown that subtle specialist skills that support the development of young people, lack adequate expression to become more widely known. There is tacit expertise living in Camphill, and while that skilfulness and those skills remain tacit, professionals and policy makers cannot recognise their potential to help socially vulnerable people find their way to resilient social participation. Such subtle skills are unlikely to be unique to Camphill, and it may be that SP practitioners elsewhere also struggle to articulate the subtlety of their skills. Until the language is developed is likely that Camphill skills will not be valued sufficiently to penetrate into other communities of practice or into mainstream provision, which is the preferred route of response to the needs of young people with learning vulnerability. Until practitioners develop language skills to match their non-verbal communication skills, Camphill could contract into vulnerable isolation, unable to venture forth into wider participation in mainstream provision. It would be ironic if an organisation that has helped so many young people on their way into a fulfilling life were unable to contribute its full potential further afield.
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Appendix A: School of Education Ethics Approval
Appendix B: CSA Ethics Approval

Camphill School Ethics form

Name: John Ralph

Purpose of research:

Investigating the skills used in Camphill social pedagogy practice

This study will contribute towards the award of MRes (Social and Educational Research) from the School of Education, University of Aberdeen. My research will explore explicit and tacit dimensions of Social Pedagogy (SP) skills in Camphill School Aberdeen from an insider perspective. CSA has integrated a range of theories and approaches from Europe and the UK into the BASP and current practice. SP practitioners are “...expert in the social potential of the young people” (in Hatton, 2013: 95). The skilled practice in CSA has been highly valued by agencies and parents, so I have no doubt that there are skilful practitioners in CSA, but what skills are actually being used?

This study is envisaged as the first of a number of studies into what we can do and how we do it. The research, for which I am seeking approval, will be conducted during May-September 2014, and the resulting dissertation will be submitted at the end of September.

Participants:

A convenience sample of 5 experienced co-workers from Camphill and Murtle estates, currently working with children and young adults, will be invited to participate.
What consents will be sought and how?:

This research has been approved by the School of Education, University of Aberdeen, and will adhere to their policies on research ethics. (copy enclosed)

An information sheet about the research, and a consent form, will be provided with the invitation to participate. Participants will be asked to sign a form consenting to an interview, and to participate in a ‘reference’ focus group. Participation in the focus group, after completing an interview, is entirely discretionary. Participants will be asked to consent to audio recordings and researcher notes being taken during the interviews and the focus group. They will be asked to consent to anonymised data being used by me in this and subsequent research. Participants will be able to withdraw at any time without giving reasons, and may withhold consent for data to be used in further research.

Which research methods will be used?

Individual semi-structured interviews (about an hour) will provide the first wave of data. When preliminary findings are available at the end of August, participants will be invited to a semi-structured focus group (about an hour and a half) to review, discuss and question the provisional outcomes. Both data gathering events will be digitally audio-recorded, supplemented by digital researcher notes.

Data will be investigated inferentially through thematic analysis of skill clusters identified by means of Grounded Theory methods. To sharpen reflexive sensitivity towards insider partiality of the researcher, the whole research process will include dialogical self-inquiry using Heuristic Inquiry methods, which will also be documented in the dissertation. Researcher reflexivity will be supplemented by participants’ reflections on provisional outcomes. Data
from the focus group will be incorporated into the analysis and contribute to the findings.

Who will have access to the research findings?

This research will be submitted to the University of Aberdeen, School of Education, as a partial contribution towards the award of MRes (Social and Educational Research). The dissertation will then be lodged in the University of Aberdeen library, and may also be disseminated through Camphill Scotland’s website.

I propose to offer a summary of the findings to interested CSA co-workers, which may be of interest for the future development of CSA education and training.

All digital audio data will be secured with password protection, and deleted at the conclusion of this research. Anonymised transcripts will be kept securely in digital format and hard copies, and will not be shared with anyone. This data may be used in further phases of my research related to this initial study. I will seek separate approval from CSA Ethics Group for any further research and publication.

Ethical issues:

I would like to name Camphill School Aberdeen (CSA) explicitly in the dissertation as the location of the study. CSA is likely to be recognisable to many readers, and anonymisation would prohibit the inclusion of any community history. If this proposal is not approved, I would anonymise the community as a well-established Scottish organisation with many years’ experience working with children and young adults having learning difficulties. However, I believe that the focus on social pedagogy, and the identity of the
insider researcher, will give CSA away to informed readers. As I intend to report what skills I find, and their composition, not to evaluate competence or suggest modifications to practice, I suggest that this disclosure poses negligible foreseeable risk to CSA.

All names will be anonymised, and data transcripts will not be shared with other researchers. No identifying references to participants or any other individual, including children and adults placed in CSA, will appear in any disseminated materials resulting from this research.

Participants will be informed clearly on the consent form that CSA policy on disclosure of malpractice to a Child Protection Officer will be adhered to. This exception to confidentiality will be discussed with each prospective participant as a condition of participation.

Partiality of the insider researcher will be managed, and explicitly disclosed, through critical reflexivity, Heuristic Inquiry, and participant reflections on provisional findings.

I welcome questions of clarification, and discussion about concerns, especially any that I have not covered here. Thank you for the group’s consideration of this request.

John Ralph, 15 May 2014
Appendix C: Information for Participants

Investigating the skills used in CSA social pedagogy practice

Information for Participants

May 2014

Researcher: John Ralph (j.ralph@crss.org.uk)
Supervisor: Gabrielle Ivinson (gabrielle.ivinson@abdn.ac.uk)

What is happening?

You are being invited to participate in a research study that I will conduct in Camphill School Aberdeen (CSA) between May and September 2014. Before you decide whether or not to take part, please read the following information carefully. It is important to me that, if you agree to participate, you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

What are you being asked to do?

Initially I would like interview you for about an hour, to talk about your experiences of practice, and the skills you are using. At the end of August you will be invited to join a reference group, with 4 other CSA co-workers that I have interviewed, to review and discuss the provisional findings of this research. This will give you the opportunity to reflect on, question and clarify anything that has been misunderstood or misrepresented. You can decide whether you will participate just in an interview, or in an interview and the reference group. If you agree to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form (enclosed) that describes what you are agreeing to, and that I will ensure your confidentiality.

You will be entirely free to withdraw from this research at any time without giving a reason. Whatever you contribute will be highly appreciated, and treated with the utmost respect.

What is the purpose of the research?

This research will explore the skills that are used in CSA. I am particularly interested in the subtle elements and hidden dimensions of skilful practice: what we are doing, and what enables us to do it. My interest arises as a response to a perceived need to understand more clearly the strengths and
skills that are currently used in social pedagogy practice in CSA. I do not intend to suggest any changes; I just want to know what we are doing, and what enables us to become good at it. Further research, building on and deepening this study, is envisaged in CSA and other Camphill Scotland communities in the future.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The data gathered during this research will be used in my dissertation, which will be submitted to the University of Aberdeen towards the award of MRes (Social and Educational Research). Papers based on this research, naming Camphill School Aberdeen, will be available through the University of Aberdeen Library, from Camphill Scotland and directly from me. I intend to write a summary of the findings, and all participants will receive a copy.

The information you provide, your identity and that of anyone who is referred to by participants, will be anonymised in the collection, digital storage and publication of research materials. However, as a requirement of CSA approval, CSA policy on disclosure to a CSA Child Protection Officer will be adhered to.

Digital audio recordings of your contributions will be kept securely, and deleted at the conclusion of my course of study. Transcripts of the audio recordings will be retained anonymously and may be used in my further research. No data will be shared with other researchers.

Who is organising the research?

The research will be carried out and written up by me, John Ralph, living in CSA. I am conducting the research as a post-graduate student of the School of Education, University of Aberdeen, supervised by Professor Gabrielle Ivinson for the School of Education. This research has been reviewed and approved through the procedures laid down by the School of Education, and has also been approved by the CSA Research Ethics Group.

I am inviting you to participate as co-researcher, to share your experiences and knowledge, and to bring critical reflection to my insider perspective through feedback, questions and clarification to the provisional findings before I write them up. As an ‘insider’ researcher, I am also conducting a reflexive self-inquiry into my own experiences and understanding of social pedagogy practice during this research.

If I say “yes”, what happens next?

If you agree to participate, we will arrange a date and time for an interview of about an hour. You can choose whether you would like to come to one of the rooms in Murtle Office, or you can suggest another suitable venue where we will not be interrupted. When we meet, I would like to clarify any
uncertainties you may have about your participation. I will bring two copies of the consent form, which I will ask you to sign, one copy for each of us to keep. Then I will invite you to talk about recent experiences when you felt able to contribute towards a positive difference in a young person’s life. We will go on from there.

**Contact Details**

If you have any questions, require further information about the research or decide to withdraw later, please contact me, as principal researcher:

John Ralph

If you have any concerns about the way in which the study is being conducted, you can contact the research supervisor, Gabrielle Ivinson, via email:

*Thank you very much for your time.*
Appendix D: Participant Consent Form

Research Title: Investigating the skills used in CSA social pedagogy practice
Principal Researcher: John Ralph

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study, and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

Please initial box

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

I agree to take part in the above study.

I understand that my contributions will be anonymised, with the possible exception of any disclosure that is reportable to a Child Protection Officer according to CSA policy.
Digital audio recordings will be kept securely and will be deleted at the end of November 2014. No audio data will be shared with anyone else.

Please tick box

I agree to participate in an interview.
I agree that it will be audio recorded and researcher notes will be taken.

I agree to participate in a focus group.
I agree that it will be audio recorded and researcher notes will be taken.

I agree that the transcript of my contribution to this study will be stored anonymously and may be used for future research.

I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.

____________________________________________________________________________
Name of Participant                                           Date                                           Signature

JOHN RALPH

____________________________________________________________________________
Name of Researcher                                           Date                                           Signature

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Appendix E: Interview Questions

These are the standardised questions used in the semi-structured interviews.

- How long have you been working with young people in Camphill?
- Are you currently working directly with young people at the moment?
- Are you currently supporting other co-workers who are working with young people?
- How would you describe the work you do with young people to someone who had never heard of Camphill?
- Tell me about a recent experience when you felt you were able to contribute to the learning and development of young people.
- What do you notice that tells you that the work you do with young people is effectively supporting their wellbeing and development?
- What do we do in CSA that supports your work with young people?
- How do you get to know and understand a young person?
- What are the challenges to your work with young people?
- How do you work on these challenges?
- What inspires your work with young people?
- What have you learned that supports your work with individual young people?
- What do you look for in new co-workers?
- What are the essentials that new co-workers need to be able to do for 'good enough' practice?
- What do you find that new co-workers struggle to learn?
- What do new co-workers pick up easily?
- What kind of support do you find that new co-workers need?
- In what ways have the skills in CSA changed while you have been here? Could you tell me about some different skills that have been developed?
- Have there been moments when your own development took a leap forward?
- Is there anything that you would like to add, that could be important?
- Do you feel you have fully represented what you are doing?
- How would you sum up what you are able to do for the benefit of young people?
Appendix F: Provisional Report for All Research Participants

In this research project I am asking participants what they are doing, and what they are aware of doing. I am also looking at myself, as an insider, and asking whether I have understood what has been reported by participants. The data collected in the 5 interviews were varied and rich in expression and implication. I will need much more time to unearth all the treasures. A wide range of complex skills were evident, and there were interesting hints of skills that were not named, yet seemed to me to be necessary to achieve benefit for young people. I would like to hear your views. Does what I write here reflect your perspective of what you are doing and the skills that you use?

I am borrowing a definition of a skill as an activity that can be learned and developed. I see skills as 3-fold and dialogical (feeding forward and feeding back), involving embodied agency (intention and ingenuity), responsive sensitivity (dexterity and effectiveness) and consequential outcomes (something or somebody changes). This concept is likely to evolve, and I can explain more about what I am thinking when we meet.

I have provisionally divided the skills from the data into structural skills for and on behalf of people (community-individual and individual-community) and relational skills with people (YOU-I and I-YOU). Collaboration and teamwork bridge both areas and it is not yet clear how the dynamic is being worked out. Your perspective may be different, so please take a look at the list below and see whether the skillets fit your view of your practice. What is not quite like that? What is missing?

- Structuring the environment
  - Organisational management
  - Collaboration with families and other agencies
  - Collaboration and teamwork
  - Intrapersonal leadership
  - Ethical practice
  - Team development
  - Ethical practice
  - Decisive advocacy
  - Assessment and planning

- Relational skills
  - Communication and advocacy
  - Communication support
  - Understanding personal and contextual factors
  - Facilitating learning opportunities
  - Facilitating formal learning
  - Facilitating practical learning
  - Empathic sensitivity and tact
  - Conveying reassurance
  - Identifying and responding to needs
The arrangement above definitely does not yet map the field of skills clearly. There is much more work to be done and time to be spent.

I would like to discuss with you two themes from the interviews that I need to understand more clearly and to check for misunderstanding. These themes reflect the 2 areas of relationship and structure.

- Before I began this research I was aware that our individual and collaborative work with children depends on “knowing them inside out” (interview quote). Is our understanding of a person we are supporting based on communication? Direct communication is between us and the other person; indirect communication is from reading individual reports or possibly relevant research, prior learning and talking to others (not gossip but more respectful). If the understanding is not only communication, what skills are being used? If we are responding to needs, how much can we know about the needs another person might have? To what extent are we able to understand a person that we are supporting?

- The theme came from the interviews of “creating a frame” (interview quote) for beneficial activities to happen, and structuring the environment with consistent rhythms and routines. Does this relate to the ‘use of self’ which is mentioned in curative education and social therapy literature? The reduction in the number of experienced, knowledgeable co-workers was mentioned as a loss, and I wonder what is lost. Does it make a difference that an experienced social pedagogue accompanies a young person to the shop, or on a hill-walk, rather than someone without years of training? Does who-we-are and how-we-are structure or otherwise contribute to the learning environment, even when we may not be outwardly active? How can the environment of the social pedagogical relationship be described?

Many thanks for your participation.

John Ralph
Appendix G: Specific Social Pedagogy Concepts

Two specific social pedagogy (SP) concepts that emerged in the data are briefly introduced in this section.

Common third:
The common third is a concept from Denmark, deriving from the philosopher Kierkegaard (Lorenz, 2014), which refers to an activity that practitioner and young person do together with mutual interest. The shared focus of activity allows the pedagogical relationship of practitioner as one, a young person as another to develop around a third object of attention. Such activities, which may be everyday tasks or creative and artistic, become the medium of dialogue, the medium in which the relationship and trust between practitioner and young person, young person and practitioner develop (Petrie in Cameron and Moss, 2011: 79). This third element in the relationship can be conceived as a common space which each develops in their own way (Storø, 2013: 13).

Haltung:
The German word, Haltung, is translated as ethos, attitude or mindset by Eichsteller and Holtoff (in Cameron and Moss, 2011: 36), expressing “an emotional connectedness to other people and a profound respect for their human dignity” (ibid.: 54). This can involve attention, effort and commitment. As Smith and Smith (2008: 17) observe, for young people to meet us as helpers we have to be available. This availability entails a personal commitment to inclusion, to be there with, and be there for, young people. The notion of Haltung is echoed in Friere’s dialogic relationship, of walking alongside and holding the hand of a young person (Stephens, 2013: 19). Friere does not see this as a relationship of equals, sharply distinguishing the role of the learner from that of the critical teacher who explains to the young person the social structures that disadvantage them.

Can Haltung be holistic without an active commitment to societal change? Stephens points to a personal ethical orientation that some might consider to be a spiritual, and therefore contested, element in SP practice by quoting, “If in doubt, consult your conscience” (Bauman, 2009: 250 in Stephens, 2013: 63). Practitioners who have knowledge of anthroposophy might well relate this advice to Steiner’s philosophy of ethical individuality (Steiner, 1995), which promotes reflexive self-determination.