A Therapeutic Relationship?

An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis Exploring Aikido Practitioners' Perspectives on their Relationship with their Instructor

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Abstract

The Oriental martial arts have been described as systems of personal development that share commonalities with Eastern-inspired strands of psychotherapy. Within psychotherapy and beyond the therapeutic relationship is a major vehicle for psychological change; it is an important focus of psychological research and occupies a key role in counselling psychology. In contrast, the role and importance of the student-instructor relationship in martial arts for practitioners' personal development has not yet been investigated.

This study is a qualitative investigation of senior aikido practitioners' experiences of their relationship with their instructor. It sought to explore how practitioners perceive their relationship with the instructor, how they evaluate its significance with respect to everyday life and personal development, and what aspects of the relationship they perceive as facilitative or problematic for personal development. Semi-structured interviews with eight practitioners were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

Practitioners evaluated the relationship with their instructor as central to their practice and important for their personal development and daily life. They reported several facilitative instructor qualities and stances, conceptualised as credibility; empathy and attentiveness; facilitating self-governance; and maintaining boundaries. Practitioners experienced the instructor as providing guidance, role modelling, challenge and containment, and described a process of applying learning through internalising a mental representation of the instructor. Other facilitative aspects in their development were the cultural and social context of training and the embodied nature of learning.

The study discusses similarities and differences between the student-instructor relationship in martial arts and the client-therapist relationship in counselling psychology and psychotherapy. The present insights highlight the therapeutic utility of relationship arrangements outside the sphere of traditional psychotherapy. This is relevant to counselling psychologists in three ways: by providing a novel angle from which to explore our clinical practice; by challenging our conception of what constitutes a therapeutic relationship; and by identifying ways in which non-therapy developmentally facilitative arrangements could be used to enhance growth and wellbeing.

Key words: *Counselling psychology, therapeutic relationship, martial arts, personal development, psychotherapy;*

- Dedicated to my teacher, Parlour Saboumnim -

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Researcher's Account

Qualitative and phenomenological research such as IPA understands psychological knowledge as a co-construction between researcher and participants (Langdridge, 2007). This requires the researcher to be transparent about his or her identity, background, attitudes and motivations for engaging in the research (e.g., Finlay, 2006b, Madill, Jordan & Shirley, 2000). A researcher's reflexive disclosure of their position in relation to the investigative topic enables readers to evaluate how these factors may have impacted on the generation of knowledge. *Researcher reflexivity* (Berg & Smith, 1988; Steier, 1991) implies the principles of transparency and reflection; Researcher reflexivity also corresponds with the *reflective practitioner model* (Schön, 1987) to which counselling psychologists subscribe (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2003; 2010). In this section I attempt to map out my position in relation to the research topic, in line with the aforementioned criteria.

I completed my training in counselling psychology in 2008 and subsequently undertook further training in cognitive-behaviour therapy (CBT). I work within the National Health Service's Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) scheme in an inner London borough, using a predominantly cognitive-behavioural approach. I became interested in the crossover between martial arts and psychotherapy through my experiences of training as a counselling psychologist and practising an Oriental martial art. I started practicing hapkido, a Korean martial art in 2003, one year prior to commencing my training in counselling psychology. Over the years my martial practice emerged as a vital means of personal development, a form of self-therapy and an integral part of my personal philosophy. During my professional training I was exposed to *Third Wave* approaches in CBT, particularly acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), and began to incorporate mindfulness-inspired aspects into my clinical practice. This revealed some unexpected intellectual and experiential insights. I became aware of the philosophical correspondence between my martial practice and these Eastern-inspired approaches. Experientially, martial practice enabled me to explore and practice new behaviours and novel ways of being in a safe space. The task-oriented, experiential nature of training helped to acquire tangible experiences of overcoming obstacles and dealing with difficult emotions that were memorable and transferable to other life areas. I found that practice had a positive effect on my ability to regulate my emotions, and to become more flexible with respect to my attention and behaviour. I believe that these outcomes resulted from consistent exposure to challenges tailored to my individual needs and abilities, reinforced through the use of discipline,

metaphors, verbal instruction and role modelling. Another parallel was the cultivation of mindfulness through meditation during martial practice. As I acquired proficiency in applying ACT and mindfulness with my clients I also became more attuned to utilising aspects of my martial practice as a way of self-therapy. This personal engagement in turn facilitated a better understanding of ACT.

My personal fascination with these parallels eventually prompted my decision to conduct my Masters research, an IPA study exploring the psychological benefits of studying a martial art. I interviewed three fellow hapkido practitioners in the club I train in. As I immersed myself in the literature I discovered a substantial body of psychological research and literature on the psychological benefits of martial arts, confirming my interest in this topic. Delving deeper I became aware of the potential parallels between the roles of psychotherapist and martial arts instructor, and my interest in this particular area was reinforced by insights gained from my Masters research. These developments coincided with my experience of being a client in personal therapy and with a deepened commitment to my martial arts practice, where I increasingly came to regard my instructor as an important source of direction and support. For these reasons I chose to explore the student-instructor relationship in Oriental martial arts for my professional doctorate in counselling psychology.

Reflecting on my own preconceptions with regard to the current research I was aware of my expectation (and perhaps hope) that other martial arts practitioners experienced the relationship with their instructor as significant in some way. This was based on my personal training experience and preliminary insights from my Masters study. Most likely, it also reflected the emphasis on relationships that had permeated my clinical training. I was looking forward to exploring how other practitioners made sense of this unique relational experience. Once research got underway my perspective of martial arts training changed somewhat as I encountered other clubs, disciplines and instructors. My new awareness of the diversity of training approaches and teaching styles, and (subjectively experienced) differential interpersonal effectiveness of instructors initially gave rise to a sense of uncertainty but ultimately heightened my curiosity about what I would find.

Chapter I: Literature Review

This chapter will delineate the sphere of enquiry for the present research. It will review pertinent literature on personal development, Oriental martial arts and psychotherapy, with a particular focus on facilitative relationships in these domains.[1] By introducing the historical and philosophical cornerstones of key concepts and reviewing relevant literature in these areas, this chapter aims to chart the development of the research questions asked by the current study, and to elucidate how these relate to counselling psychology. Theoretical considerations will be discussed in chapter IV. As is customary in qualitative research, they will be explored in the context of current insights gained to provide a contextualised and meaningful account of key issues (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

1.1 Counselling Psychology and the Oriental Martial Arts: Personal Development at the Intersection of Eastern and Western Thought

Over the past decades, an ongoing dialogue has evolved between Eastern thought and Western psychology and psychotherapy, perhaps mirroring the sustained interest in Eastern systems of mind-body practices and personal development in our society at large. Products of this cross-fertilisation include Buddhist psychology (e.g., Claxton, 1986; Crook & Fontana, 1990; de Silva, 1984; 1990) and mindfulness- and compassion-based therapeutic approaches (Gilbert, 2000a; 2005b; 2009; Kabat-Zinn, 1994; 2005; Segal, Teasdale & Williams, 2002). The latter concur with the '*third wave of behavioural and cognitive therapies*' (Hayes, 2004), which include acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT; Hayes, Strosahl & Wilson, 1999), dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT; Linehan, 1993) and functional analytic psychotherapy (FAP; Kohlenberg & Tsai, 1991).

Another point of East-West cross-cultural convergence is the body of research exploring the psychology of Oriental martial arts. The martial arts evolved in accordance with, and were strongly informed by, traditional Eastern philosophical and religious systems like Zen Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism and Shinto. According to traditional conceptions personal development is an essential training goal of martial art, emerging more or less explicitly from its ethical and philosophical framework that propagates respect, discipline and cooperation (Fuller, 1988). Research into the psychological benefits of martial arts participation conducted over the past decades underlines its scope for promoting adaptive psychological and psychosocial changes, as will be discussed in section 1.4. Hence, the

[1] Please refer to appendix C for a description of the literature search.

martial arts have been described as a structured form of self-help or personal development (Fuller, 1988; Konzak & Boudreau, 1984; Thirer & Grabiner, 1980; Wingate, 1993).

It is interesting to consider the potential relevance of these developments for the theory and practice of counselling psychology. The humanistic basis upon which counselling psychology rests presumes an intrinsic interest in the process of personal development and the factors driving it. Counselling psychology takes a holistic perspective on individual change (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2003; 2010) and embraces the exploration of psychological growth processes, including those outside the domain of traditional psychotherapy. This is evidenced, for instance, by the popularisation of psychological body therapies within counselling psychology (Wahl, 2003). By assuming an open-minded perspective on individual change counselling psychology finds itself at the forefront of exploring little-researched and novel phenomena. It aims to create an understanding of mental health care that is empowering, preventative, accessible, and able to encompass an increasingly diverse society (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2003; 2010). One way of furthering this aim might be through a more integrative conception of psychological health promotion that transcends the sphere of traditional talking therapy and allows for the exploration of other systems conducive to psychological growth and wellbeing. The following section will outline the historic significance of personal development in mainstream culture and its relevance to psychology.

1.2 Personal Development - A Brief Overview

The concept of personal development is rooted in religious and philosophical traditions such as Judeo-Christian, Islamic and Indian religions, Confucianism and ancient Greek philosophy. The Greek philosopher Aristotle (384- 322BC) discussed in *Nicomachean Ethics* the pursuits of self-improvement and *'living well'* (Broadie & Rowe, 2002). Accordingly, multiple aspirations such as discovering the meaning of life, living the *'good life'*, or promoting health and aesthetic, moral or spiritual development may be regarded as aspects of personal development. Personal development has been pursued through various creative and movement-based practices. For instance, in the East, where the development of human potential has a long tradition in Buddhist and Taoist philosophical frameworks (Maslow, 1975; Schmidt, 1986); the disciplined cultivation of everyday activities was perceived as a conduit to character development (Hannon, 1999). Practices like meditation, martial training, tea ceremony and poetry developed into formalised art forms in the service of personal development (Musashi, 1645/ 1974).

The notion of personal development first gained importance within Western psychology through the works of Alfred Adler and Carl Gustav Jung, psychoanalytic contemporaries of Freud. Adler (1929/1969) emphasised human aspirations in his clinical work, and introduced the concept of *'lifestyle'*. Jung (1921/ 1971) coined the term *'individuation'*, which he saw as the human drive to achieve wholeness and balance. During the 1940s and 1950s these ideas were advanced by the American humanistic-individualistic psychology movement, notably through Maslow's (1943) work on self-actualisation. Self-actualisation was seen as the ultimate objective of an inherent human motivation towards personal growth. Ideas from humanistic psychology, fused with influences from the New Age movement of the 1970s, permeated mainstream culture and generated interest in the pursuit of personal development. Recent decades have seen a proliferation of self-help literature and the popularisation of spiritual and philosophical systems and mind-body systems, which include Eastern practices like yoga and martial arts. In the late 1990s the notion of personal development took a central position in American mainstream psychology with the election of Martin Seligman as president of the American Psychological Association (APA) and his introduction of positive psychology. Positive psychology proposed a focus on health over pathology within psychology and mental health (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, 1998; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

The following sections introduce the theoretical and philosophical cornerstones of traditional Oriental martial arts and provide an overview of their potential contribution to personal development and psychological wellbeing.

1.3 The Oriental Martial Arts - Practice and Philosophy

1.3.1 Origins and presentations

The Oriental martial arts are commonly described as forms of martial art originating from China, Japan and Korea[2]. Historically, they emerged as codified practices and traditions of combative training, frequently linked to spiritual-religious beliefs and philosophies like Hinduism, Zen Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism and Shinto. In Japan, martial arts were formalised in accordance with *bushido*, the samurai code of conduct developed between the ninth and 12th century by the Japanese warrior class. *Bushido* stipulated seven virtues for martial practice: rectitude, courage, benevolence, respect, honesty, honour and loyalty (Tsunetomo, 2002).

[2] For the sake of simplicity, the term 'martial art' will be used in this study to refer to Oriental martial arts.

Within contemporary Japanese martial arts, commonly used terms to distinguish between different objectives of combative practice are *bujutsu* ('warrior skills') and *budo* ('the warrior's way'). While bujutsu refers to "the various Japanese martial disciplines in their original function as arts of war", budo denotes "the process by which the study of bujutsu becomes a means to self-development and self-realization" (Friday, 2010, p369).[3] The conception of budo as an endeavour focused on personal development also emerges in alternative translations as "the way to stop weapons" or "conflict resolution" (Saotome; 1989, p191). Hence, at its essence modern budo is less about fighting an external enemy and more about overcoming internal conflict (Craig, 2002). The *-jutsu/–do* distinction is reflected in the names of various martial arts (e.g., *jujutsu* versus *judo*) and may signify their differential foci on technical application or skills acquisition in contrast to a holistic pursuit of psychological development within an overall way of life or spiritual path (Draeger, 1974; Reilly, 1985). While this bipartite classification system is prevalent within Oriental martial arts it is somewhat simplistic and should be regarded as a heuristic device (Donohue & Taylor, 1994).[4] The diversity of different arts and variations in teaching, even within the same style mean that "the generic name of an art is not a reliable guide to its characteristics" (Fuller, 1988; p326).[5] A variant of this system frequently used in martial arts research (Konzak & Boudreau, 1984; Nosanchuk, 1981; Nosanchuk & MacNeil, 1989; Trulson, 1986) distinguishes 'modern' (sportive-competitive) and 'traditional' (art-meditative) training. Traditional training is generally associated with an emphasis on self-control; conflict avoidance; respect for others; *kata* training; and philosophical study (Back & Kim, 1984; Donohue & Taylor, 1994).[6]

1.3.2 Martial arts in Western culture

The Oriental martial arts permeated Western culture during the 1950s and 1960s and were popularised over subsequent decades through the emergence of Asian and Hollywood martial arts movies. The popular media image of martial arts together with the cultural and language barriers between East and West spawned a trend towards secularisation of martial arts in the West (Back & Kim, 1984; Fuller, 1988). Fuller (1988, p.317) described how the

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[3] Within Japanese culture the suffix –do signifies an experiential form of knowledge or action that is prevalent in Japanese society, for instance in fine arts like *shodo* (calligraphy), *kado* (flower arranging) or *chado* (tea ceremony) (Ueshiba, 1992).

[4] Historically, the two terms bujutsu and budo showed considerable overlap in meaning and were not clearly differentiated (Friday, 2010). Donohue and Taylor (1994) pointed out that the above distinction reflected more closely our Western understanding of these terms than their traditional or contemporary usage in Japan.

[5] For example, both judo and taekwondo, despite their suffix –do, are Olympic disciplines with a strong focus on sportive-competitive elements.

[6] In this study the terms 'modern martial art' and traditional martial art' will be used to distinguish between the two concepts.

"sportification" of martial arts caused the loss or distortion of their philosophical and spiritual underpinnings, rendering them largely devoid of their original psychological, spiritual and moral elements. At the same time other theorists (e.g., Konzak & Boudreau, 1984; Konzak & Klavora, 1980) noted a significant counter-movement expressed by the increasing mainstream popularity of martial arts as a form of personal development, embedded within the wider interest in Eastern practices and philosophies described earlier. Perhaps partly as a continuation of this trend, recent decades have seen a steady proliferation of martial arts clubs and classes, for example by independent providers or youth and adult education facilities. A wide range of martial arts is being practised, with popular forms including Japanese judo, jujutsu, aikido and karate, Chinese kung fu and tai chi, and Korean taekwondo. Practitioners train for various reasons including fitness, recreation, self-defence, discipline and personal development (Columbus & Rice, 1998; Jones, Mackay & Peters, 2006; Kim 1991; Madden 1990; Stefanek, 2004; Twemlow Lerma & Twemlow, 1996; Wingate 1993; Zaggalidis, Martinidis & Zaggalidis, 2004). This suggests that the current profile of martial arts is mixed, spanning styles from the sportive to the contemplative end of the spectrum.

1.3.3 Aikido

Aikido is a relatively modern Japanese martial art founded in 1938 by Ueshiba Morihei (1883-1969). It is rooted in older martial arts, notably *daito ryu,* a traditional form of jujutsu (Goldsbury, 2010). Aikido can be translated as *'the way of harmonious spirit'* (Westbrook & Ratti, 2001) or *'the art of peace'* (Stevens, 1992a). It is a non-competitive, defensive art in accordance with Ueshiba's emphasis on peaceful conflict resolution and the development of *ki,* or cosmic energy (Ueshiba, 1984). Aikido's strong spiritual focus emerged from Ueshiba's personal philosophy, which was influenced by esoteric Shinto and Tantric Buddhism (Ueshiba, cited in Stevens, 1992b). Aikido is concerned with subduing an opponent without causing harm, often by applying the principle of circularity, which is technically realised by merging with, and redirecting an opponent's energy (Ueshiba, 1984). It has been suggested that distinguishing features of aikido are the explicit cultivation of compassion and respect for one's opponent (e.g., Chan, 2000; Westbrook & Ratti, 2001).

During the 1950s and 60s aikido was popularised internationally under the leadership of Ueshiba's son Ueshiba Kisshomaru (Ueshiba, 1984).[7] Aikido's relatively recent emergence and the enigmatic character and abundant teachings of its founder served to maintain a strong

[7] Today, many aikido schools are members of the Aikikai, the official juridical body established by the Ueshiba family and the International Aikido Federation, its international parent organisation (Ueshiba, 1984).

philosophical legacy signifying a reference point for virtually all modern interpretations. Nevertheless, there is considerable diversity with regard to its styles and emphases, along a continuum from the "strictly martial" to the "strictly spiritual" (Goldsbury, 2010; p.132).

1.4 Martial Arts Training and Psychological Change - A Summary of Existing Research

1.4.1 Psychological research into the martial arts - a brief overview

For over four decades the potential relevance of martial arts to the domains of Western psychology and psychotherapy has been explored within sub-sections of the psychological research community, particularly in Canada and the US. Until the early nineties much of the psychological research into martial arts stemmed from a sports psychology context and aimed at investigating potential effects of training on aspects of performance or personality development. Another research focus was the psychotherapeutic value of martial arts training in clinical populations, generally through outcome-focused quantitative studies. Outside the quantitative paradigm, a wealth of theoretical papers and essays exploring process-oriented aspects of martial arts participation emerged, but these rarely conformed to rigorous scientific methods. Fuller (1988) suggested that the paucity of high quality process-oriented research partially reflected a public misperception of martial arts as 'fighting sports' perpetuated through the media, and that this hampered the inclusion of martial arts in mainstream psychological research. More recently, however, numerous qualitative studies exploring martial artists' first hand experiences have begun to address psychological aspects of martial arts participation previously neglected by research. The following sections will provide an outline of psychological research into the martial arts to date.

1.4.2 The impact of martial arts training on personality, self-concept and affect regulation

An early focus of psychological research was the potential impact of martial arts training on dimensions of personality development, self-concept, and what might nowadays be referred to as affect regulation (Schore, 1994). Most studies reported a correlation between advanced proficiency of training with positive personality characteristics. Duthie, Hope and Barker (1978) found expert martial artists to be more assertive and confident than their average counterparts. While Kroll and Carlson (1967) failed to find any significant correlations between degree of proficiency and personality profile in karate practitioners, a replication employing more stringent proficiency criteria (Konzak & Boudreau, 1984; Konzak & Klavora, 1980) found that advanced practitioners of traditional karate were more intelligent,

emotionally stable, lively, venturesome, imaginative, forthright, self-assured and relaxed than novice and intermediate practitioners. The study employed the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF; Cattell, Eber & Tatsuoka, 1970), a well-established personality inventory for non-clinical populations. In supplementary qualitative interviews participants reported that training had a positive effect on their lives, aiding self-discipline, relaxation and concentration (Konzak & Klavora, 1980). Several other cross-sectional studies with adult and adolescent practitioners of various disciplines found correlations between advanced proficiency and decreased anger (Brown et al., 1995), aggressiveness (Daniels & Thornton, 1992; Lamarre & Nosanchuk, 1999; Nosanchuk, 1981; Skelton, Glynn & Berta, 1991) and anxiety (Rothpearl, 1979; 1980), and increased self-control (Brown et al., 1995), warmth (Pyecha, 1970), self-confidence (Spear, 1989) and self-esteem (Brown et al., 1995; Finkenberg, 1990; Richman & Rehberg, 1986). Some studies (Kurian, Verdi, Caterino & Kulhavy, 1994; Lakes & Hoyt, 2004; Twemlow et al., 2008) suggested a similarly positive impact of martial arts practice amongst children; however findings are altogether less clearly established (e.g., Nosanchuk & Lamarre, 2002; Reynes & Lorant, 2002a; 2002b; 2004).

While the bulk of these studies suggested a beneficial effect of extended training on the development of adaptive personality characteristics, a common criticism raised was the limited ability of cross-sectional designs to convincingly demonstrate causality (i.e., whether psychological development was due to training). Many studies failed to employ control groups or control for self-selection bias[8], which was regarded as a major confounding variable (Anyanjor 1981; Fuller, 1988; Knoblauch, 1985; Nosanchuk & MacNeil, 1989; Steyn & Roux, 2009). Theorists hypothesised that self-selection influenced prospective students' choices of particular martial arts styles in line with pre-existing personality factors, or accounted for the dropping out of existing students for reasons of personal incompatibility (either on their own accord or on the instructor's behest). This raised questions regarding the extent to which the adaptive characteristics observed were attributable to the effects of training as opposed to intrinsic personality factors. Nosanchuk and MacNeil (1989) tested the purported beneficial effects of traditional training (training hypothesis) versus the effects of self-selection (selection hypothesis) by comparing aggressiveness scores in practitioners of traditional and modern karate, taekwondo and jujitsu across three levels of proficiency, with the inclusion of former practitioners who had since quit training. The researchers defined

[8] Self-selection bias is a well-recognised phenomenon in social psychology (e.g. Niedenthal, Cantor & Kihlstrom, 1985) that appears to account for the fact that upon entry into a new social system individuals' social identities tend to be matched to that provided by the new group (Hogg, 1992).

'traditional' as opposed to 'modern' via four criteria: 1) the relative importance of *kata*[9] in training; 2) the degree to which full contact was sanctioned during sparring; 3) evidence of respect for the instructor, fellow students and the *dojo*[10]; and 4) the importance of meditation and philosophy in training; Within the traditional dojos they found an inverse relationship between seniority and aggressiveness that also featured in former students. Within the modern dojos aggressiveness increased with seniority. These findings a) lent support to the training hypothesis over the self-selection hypothesis and b) suggested that the style of martial art might play an important role in the direction of personality development, with traditional training encouraging adaptive changes and modern training excessive aggressiveness. Another study involving the first author (Lamarre & Nosanchuk, 1999) found a decline in aggressiveness over training duration in traditional judo practitioners. The authors argued that as judo is perceived as a 'soft' martial art it was unlikely to recruit practitioners with aggressive tendencies, and that the observed effects therefore reflected a socialisation process consistent with the training hypothesis. Other research comparing participation in martial arts and other activities substantiated both of Nosanchuk and MacNeil's conjectures: a UK study (Daniels & Thornton, 1992) compared the effects of karate, jujitsu, badminton and rugby on hostility levels in a student sample and found a correlation between training duration and reduced hostility exclusively in the martial arts groups. Spear (1989) found larger improvements in confidence and group morale through traditional hapkido training compared to other types of exercise. Similarly, Steyn and Roux (2009) found greater levels of personal growth and self-acceptance in adolescents practising taekwondo than those playing hockey or no sport . Other studies specifically highlighted the differential effects of traditional and modern martial arts training on attributes like aggression and humility. Trulson's (1986) longitudinal study compared the effects of six-month long traditional taekwondo training versus modern training and a control physical activity on the personalities of delinquent adolescents. Using the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI; Hathaway & McKinley, 1943), a clinical measure of psychopathology, he found a reduction in delinquent traits in the traditional martial arts group, an increase in the modern martial arts group, and no significant change in the control group. Adler (2003) found that a training emphasis on kata and respect predicted lower aggression levels among adolescents studying taekwondo or karate. In another study (Najafi, 2003) traditional karate practitioners placed stronger emphasis on the acquisition of humility as a training goal compared to their modern

[9] Please refer to the glossary in appendix B.
[10] Please refer to the glossary in appendix B.

counterparts. These findings correspond with findings from a recent survey of UK-based martial arts practitioners, which suggest that with ongoing immersion in a martial art philosophical components and a holistic appreciation for the art become more important to practitioners (Jones et al., 2006). In summary, this body of research suggests that regular martial arts participation can lead to positive changes in dimensions of personality, self-concept and affect regulation. These benefits appear to be limited to traditional as opposed to modern forms of training, while the latter may have the opposite effect.

1.4.3 Martial art as therapy

Another focus of psychological interest that partially emerged from this body of research and partially pre-dated it was the psychotherapeutic potential of martial arts training in clinical and educational settings. Numerous studies explored the targeted application of martial arts within therapeutic interventions for particular populations. Several of these successfully used traditional martial arts or adapted programmes as forms of behaviour modification in children and adolescents with emotional disturbances, physical or learning disabilities, and at risk of delinquency (Davis & Byrd, 1975; Gleser & Brown, 1986; Gleser & Lison, 1986; Madenlian, 1979; Mendenhall, 2006; Smith, Twemlow & Hoover, 1999; Trulson, 1986; Zivin et al., 2001), and as early intervention measures to aid academic performance and pro-social behaviour in mainstream education (Fleisher et al., 1995; Lakes & Hoyt, 2004; Twemlow et al., 2008). Madenlian (1979) found aikido training to be superior to psychotherapy and waiting list controls in improving self-esteem in teenage boys with behaviour problems. School-based participation in modified martial arts training proved effective in reducing aggressive behaviour in at-risk youths (Zivin et al., 2001) and in fostering empathy and pro-social conduct in elementary school boys (Twemlow et al., 2008). In a randomised study with pre- and primary school children (Lakes & Hoyt, 2004) taekwondo training compared to physical education improved cognitive and emotional regulation, pro-social behaviour and classroom conduct over a three-month period. These studies were typically evaluated through a combination of self-reports on standardised psychometric measures, and teacher or parent observer ratings. One possible factor enhancing the suitability of martial arts programmes for adolescents may be their potential to meet age-specific needs such as feelings of physical security, group membership, and a scope for aggressive play (Twemlow & Sacco, 1998). An Israeli study (Hasson-Ohayon, Kravetz, Roe, Rozencwaig & Weiser; 2006) found therapeutic benefits of martial arts participation in adults with severe mental illness. The authors reported greater cognitive and physical change and greater perceived control following weekly karate

training, compared to a verbally based psycho-educational recovery group. However, this study did not control for obvious discrepancies in reported physical fitness across conditions, instead reporting change in fitness as an outcome measure. This may have inflated the superiority of the martial arts condition.

Additionally to empirical research, a sizeable body of literature (typically by theorists with a background in psychology or psychotherapy and martial art) explored the application of martial arts principles within psychotherapy and personal development. The use of aikido principles, for instance, has been suggested for the promotion of self-awareness, interpersonal communication and conflict resolution (e.g., Dobson and Miller, 1978; Heckler, 1984; Martin, 2004; Saposnek, 1980; 1987). Other theorists investigated vocational similarities between the roles of martial arts instructor and psychotherapist (see section 1.5.3). Elsewhere in the literature martial arts training has been portrayed as a vehicle for personal development or mental health promotion (e.g., Fuller, 1988; Konzak & Boudreau, 1984; Seitz, Olson, Locke & Quam, 1990; Thirer & Grabiner, 1980). Fuller described martial arts training as "active agent of psychotherapeutic change" (p.317) and as "a formalized, refined system of human potential training" (p.318), while Konzak and Boudreau (1984) equated it with self-help. Others suggested its utility as an element of, or adjunct to psychotherapy (e.g., Lantz, 2002; Oulanova, 2009; Weiser, Kutz, Jacobson Kutz & Weiser, 1995).

1.4.4 Coping and personal development through the martial arts

More recent studies have explored the potential value of martial arts training in facilitating psychological wellbeing and personal growth within naturalistic settings and non-clinical populations. US-based psychologists Columbus and Rice (1998) investigated the meanings practitioners of karate, taekwondo and tai chi attached to their training through a phenomenological analysis of written narratives.[11] The researchers identified four contexts in which practitioners experienced training as useful: criminal victimisation (threats to safety and physical integrity); growth and discovery (striving for self-awareness and "psychological unfolding" (p.21)); life transition (managing life changes or a perceived lack of control or discipline); and task performance (everyday performance-oriented or competitive situations). The study concluded that in these contexts knowing a martial art enabled practitioners to overcome challenges, manage emotional reactions, and alter their experience of themselves and others. Wingate (1993) employed quantitative and qualitative methods to explore coping

[11] Phenomenological analysis is an umbrella term for a qualitative approach to data analysis based on philosophical phenomenology. It comprises several distinct methodologies (see section 2.1.2.1).

resources and psychological wellbeing in traditional karate practitioners. She used self-report questionnaires to identify practitioners who viewed themselves as coping well or poorly. A subsequent thematic analysis of qualitative interviews revealed that all practitioners, but particularly those with fewer perceived coping resources, found karate helpful for stress management, by releasing tension, providing distraction and enabling them to approach stressful situations calmly. Wingate related her findings to Lazarus' framework of stress and coping (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus & Cohen, 1977), which highlights the role of stress appraisal in the coping process. The framework describes the importance of primary appraisals of stress (one's judgement about the significance of a stressor) and secondary appraisals of stress (one's judgement about the controllability of a stressor given one's coping resources). Wingate concluded that practitioners perceived karate training both as a coping response and a coping resource, and that as a coping resource it affected both primary and secondary appraisals of stress. She concluded that karate training not only helped practitioners cope with current stressors but built resilience with regard to dealing with future stressors, and that the availability of this resource fostered psychological wellbeing. This idea corresponds with Fuller's (1988) proposal that aikido training promoted stress management and inoculation[12] by exposing practitioners to the experience of coping with problems, threat and adversity.

Hannon (1999) investigated the impact of aikido training on the process of self-actualisation. He found that senior practitioners reported greater identification with dimensions of self-actualisation on the Personal Orientation Dimensions (Shostrom, Knapp & Knapp, 1977), an established measure testing dimensions of self-actualisation, including increased abilities to be present in the moment; to express vulnerability and affection; better perceived control over thoughts, emotions and bodily sensations; and a greater sense of dedication. Supplementary structured interviews with five black belt practitioners elucidated these themes and corresponded with the questionnaire data. A further longitudinal analysis over a 6-month period yielded no significant results, which the author interpreted as signifying the slow and gradual process of change. The present author's previous research (Lutz, 2006) employed interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA; Smith, 1995; see section 2.1.2.2) to explore how hapkido practitioners perceived outcomes and processes of psychological change obtained through training. Hapkido was described as a structured means of achieving personal growth and acquiring adaptive coping skills, with regard to practitioners' self-concepts, ability to deal with challenges, and affect regulation. Practitioners

[12] Fuller anchored the notion of stress inoculation in Meichenbaum's (1985) integrated cognitive-behavioural clinical approach and suggested aikido training as a non-verbal alternative to this.

identified the formal structure and philosophy of training, the group environment, and their personal commitment as factors providing a sense of constancy, which they experienced as containing and facilitative of psychological growth.

These studies suggest that martial arts practitioners perceived training as a catalyst for psychological changes, which were transferable to other life areas. Having discussed the different psychological effects attributed to martial arts participation, the next section will explore potential factors accounting for those changes.

1.5 Potential Factors Accounting for Psychological Change within the Martial Arts

1.5.1 Physical exercise

The psychological benefits of martial arts training may partly be attributed to the effects of physical exercise, which is consistently associated with mental wellbeing in clinical and non-clinical populations (Biddle, Fox & Boutcher, 2000; Biddle & Mutrie, 2008). In non-clinical populations exercise participation is associated with global life satisfaction (Rejeski et al., 2001), reduced stress and anxiety (Taylor, 2000) and mood improvements (Biddle, 2000). Exercise also appears to enhance self-esteem by improving physical self-worth (Fox, 1997; 2000; Sonstroem, Harlow, Gemma & Osborne, 1991; Sonstroem, Harlow & Josephs, 1994). Physical self-worth is a global construct of salient aspects of the physical self, including body image, perceptions of physical competence and self-confidence (Thøgersen-Ntoumani, Fox & Ntoumanis, 2005). Some investigators (Fox, 1997; Thøgersen-Ntoumani et al., 2005) described the physical self as the interface between self and public, serving as the "display board for culturally valued characteristics" (Thøgersen-Ntoumani et al., 2005; p.611). Hence, in addition to biochemical and physiological factors (e.g., Biddle, 2000; Biddle, Fox, Boutcher & Faulkner, 2000), psychological moderators of enhanced wellbeing through exercise might include self–efficacy, confidence and improved body image.

Psychological benefits of exercise are heavily dependent on contextual and motivational features, with an important factor being goal orientation (Ames, 1992; Duda, 1993; Nicholls, 1989). Reviews (Ntoumanis & Biddle, 1999a; 1999b) found that task-goal oriented environments (emphasising self-improvement and task mastery) as opposed to ego-goal oriented environments (emphasising competition, social comparison, and normative evaluation) led to greater psychological benefits. Conversely, ego-goal oriented environments had the potential of increasing negative affect and worry. Goal orientation also plays an important role with regard to the purported 'character building' properties of exercise participation (Biddle & Gorely, 2005): overall, evidence for positive effects of physical

exercise on moral or pro-social personality development is equivocal at best (Biddle & Mutrie, 2008; Mutrie & Parfitt, 1998). On closer inspection, outcomes appear to be mediated by goal orientation, with task orientation being associated with greater sportspersonship, and ego orientation with increased aggressiveness and poor moral reasoning (Duda, Olson & Templin, 1991; Dunn & Dunn, 1999; Kavussano & Ntoumanis, 2003; Todd & Hodge, 2001). Similarly, Coalter (2005) suggested that an activity's particular characteristics and social context might be crucial, with activities addressing wider personal and social development being most effective for moral and pro-social personality development.

This literature evidences a host of psychological benefits attributed to physical exercise but also highlights potential limitations with regard to its scope for personal development. It has been suggested that martial arts training as a unique form of physical exercise may address dimensions of personal development beyond the scope of exercise. For example, Weiser and colleagues (1995) proposed that although physical exercise

> may be a central mechanism by which some of the beneficial psychological changes of martial arts occur, the confrontation with one's self and others that is inherent in the martial arts, has, according to the literature, an additional and enhancing effect. (p.119)

Traditional martial arts training differs from other forms of exercise through the role of philosophical and cultural factors, as manifested in aspects like the hierarchical structure and nature of social interactions; ritual; kata; meditation; and philosophical or ethical instruction (Back & Kim, 1984; Binder, 1999; Weiser et al., 1995). These elements may promote pro-social and moral development in practitioners and render martial arts training a potential source of spiritual or philosophical direction. A martial art can be a life-long system of learning: the mastery of a martial art is a long-term process and benefits are likely to manifest slowly and gradually (Weiser et al., 1995). The unique characteristics of martial arts engender a context facilitative of personal and social development compatible with Coalter's aforementioned considerations. The impact of philosophical and cultural factors in martial arts on personal development is also underlined by the body of research reporting differential psychosocial outcomes for martial arts with a modern or traditional focus, as outlined in section 1.4.2. The following sections will explore the potential impact of these factors in traditional martial arts.

1.5.2 Enculturation

The term enculturation is used here to refer to the way in which practitioners become socialised into a particular cultural, philosophical and social context. The process of

enculturation can be defined by factors such as a) the physically and psychologically challenging nature of training itself; b) formal and structural aspects of training (like discipline and etiquette); and c) the nature of group dynamics and social interactions within the dojo; These aspects have been discussed within the martial arts literature. Hyams (1982) described how being part of a distinct culture can lead to novel experiences and insights and how this capacity for change in the dojo is engendered by factors like the challenging, potentially dangerous nature of training and the requirement for discipline:

> A dojo is a miniature cosmos where we make contact with ourselves- our fears, anxieties, reactions, and habits. It is an arena of confined conflict where we confront an opponent who is not an opponent but rather a partner engaged in understanding ourselves more fully. It is a place where we can learn a great deal in a short time about who we are and how we react in the world. The conflicts that take place in the dojo help us handle conflicts that take place outside. The total concentration and discipline required to study martial arts carries over to daily life. The activity in the dojo calls on us to constantly attempt new things, so is also a source of learning- in Zen terminology, a source of self-enlightenment. (p.4)

Aspects of enculturation have also been addressed in psychological research on the martial arts. Konzak and Boudreau (1984; p.7) described how through "the ever-present etiquette of the martial arts, which emphasizes humility, respect, concentration, and relaxation" novice karate students underwent a "process of "socialization"" that was maintained through group reinforcement and cohesion. This process was understood as facilitating adaptive psychological change through the formation of new ways of being, for instance with respect to social and moral conduct (Konzak & Boudreau, 1984). In an earlier field study James and Jones (1982) explored the induction of novices into karate, and compared their socialisation process to social learning processes (Bandura, 1977). According to Bandura's learning theory observation, imitation, modelling and social reinforcement are key: individuals learn by observing each other's attitudes, behaviours and the consequences emerging from these.

The enculturation process is moderated by the person of the instructor, who shapes the training experience, not only by providing technical instruction but also by defining the ethical, philosophical and relational parameters of training (James & Jones, 1982; Konzak & Boudreau, 1984; Konzak & Klavora, 1980). In the martial arts literature the instructor's significance as a role model and guide is well established. The legendary 17th century Japanese swordsman and samurai warrior Miyamoto Musashi wrote in his treatise on military strategy, *A Book of Five Rings*: "the teacher is a needle, the disciple is as thread" (1645/ 1974; p.41). Within Japanese martial arts, the importance of the guiding function is implicit in the

term *sensei*, the traditional address for an instructor. This term, applied in Japan to teachers or masters of various disciplines, literally means "one who gives guidance along the way, one who goes before" (Saotome 1989; p.223).

From these different bodies of scholarship emerges the instructor's pivotal role in the students' enculturation process as a cultural representative, role model and guide. The instructor's influence transcends technical instruction, which, crucially, is embedded within the wider philosophical framework of the martial art. Possible implications of this will be discussed in subsequent sections.

1.5.3 The instructor's role in promoting personal development

A small amount of literature has explored the instructor's role in practitioners' learning process and personal development. A cross-cultural comparison of teaching styles and practitioners' perception of aikido in Japanese and US dojos (Dykhuizen, 2000) found that cultural differences in practitioners' perceptions of the art reflected the values emphasised by the respective teaching practitioners had received. Dykhuizen concluded that martial arts instructors act as mediators between discipline and students, and are instrumental for students' meaning-making and personal understanding of the art. In a questionnaire-based study (Jones et al., 2006) investigating the training motivations of members at various UK-based martial arts clubs practitioners rated the instructor's style with regard to interpersonal communication as well as conveying technical skills as the most important factor for their continued training. The authors highlighted the importance of the instructor's personal qualities and behaviours in this process and concluded that "the "instructorship" is perhaps more important than the art being practised: indeed the art is best defined by the nature of the instructor" (p.33). This position was re-iterated in a recent review of the benefits of martial arts participation amongst adolescents (Vertonghen & Theeboom, 2010).

Another contribution on this topic is a grounded theory study (see sections 2.1.1.2 & 2.1.2.3) with couples and families studying a martial art (Lantz, 2002). Lantz explored in what ways participants experienced martial arts participation as a positive family activity, with a view to evaluating its potential as an adjunct to family or couples therapy. Participants identified the importance of the instructor's character and integrity as an important factor in creating a positive training experience. The instructor's importance also emerged in the author's previous research (Lutz, 2006). Senior hapkido practitioners described experiencing instructor figures as central to their process of psychological growth, by virtue of facilitating

enculturation into a group philosophy, and safeguarding training boundaries with regard to formal structure, etiquette and discipline.

The instructor's centrality in the students' development is further highlighted by various theoretical papers, generally by psychotherapists with an interest in martial arts (e.g., Martin, 2004; Nardi, 1984; Parsons, 1984; Saposnek, 1987). This literature compared the roles of martial arts instructor and psychotherapist and suggested vocational similarities, commonly in the service of enhancing psychotherapeutic practice. Nardi (1984) proposed that therapists should look to the martial arts for direction on how to maximise and improve their personal development and clinical practice. Parsons (1984) highlighted similarities between the martial arts instructor's and psychotherapist's dedication to their practice, stating that both perceived their work as a vocation. He also noted the importance of being grounded in techniques and principles, and a stance of attentive non-attachment in both disciplines.

Two phenomenological studies by authors with a background in psychotherapy and aikido examined the crossover between skills acquired in aikido and psychotherapeutic practice. Epstein (1985) interviewed psychotherapists who were advanced aikido practitioners, in order to explore how their experience of being centred in therapy was informed by their understanding of centering in aikido[13]. Participants described the former as a psychophysical experience involving attentional shifts, an expansion of awareness and an improved sense of unity and balance, self-trust, intuition and present-moment focus. Epstein concluded that participants used elements of Eastern philosophy on which aikido is based as well as bodily memories from training to inform their clinical practice. Similarly, Faggianelli (1996) explored whether and how psychotherapists who were advanced aikido practitioners experienced their aikido practice as impacting on their clinical work. He found that participants applied technical, conceptual, philosophical and metaphorical ideas acquired from training to inform their understanding of the therapeutic process. For instance, participants related being centered in aikido to being present in therapy, and reported utilising aikido-specific strategies to inform their therapeutic procedures.

1.6 Facilitative Relationships in Martial Arts and Counselling Psychology

Within the context of these comparisons it is interesting to consider that psychotherapy and the martial arts are both systems that can enable structured personal development and psychological change. As discussed, martial arts students experience their instructor as taking a central position in their personal learning and development. This view of the instructor by

[13] Centering is a key principle in aikido philosophy and practice. For further reading see Ueshiba (2004).

implication places an emphasis on the students' experience of the instructor and his or her relationship with them. It further parallels the centrality of the client-therapist relationship in counselling psychology, where it is seen as key feature in the therapeutic endeavour. In order to better understand if and how the student-instructor relationship could be regarded as developmentally facilitative the following section will explore the importance of the therapeutic relationship in psychotherapy.

1.6.1 The therapeutic relationship in psychotherapy - a brief overview

The concept of the therapeutic relationship originated from early psychoanalysis. Freud (1912/ 1958a; 1912/ 1958b) identified three interpersonal phenomena in psychotherapy: transference (the client's unconscious identification of the therapist with significant figures from the past); counter-transference (the therapist's unconscious identification of the client with significant figures or unresolved conflicts from the past); and the client's "friendly and positive linking of the therapist with benevolent and kind personas from the past" (Bachelor & Horvath 2004, p.134). This last aspect, subsequently termed *'therapeutic alliance'*, received considerable attention in the psychodynamic literature (e.g., Greenson 1965; Zetzel 1956). Rogers' (1951, 1957) person-centred approach influenced the understanding of the therapeutic relationship by proposing that therapists needed to fulfil the core qualities of empathy, genuineness and unconditional positive regard in order to create the '*necessary and sufficient conditions*' (1957) for client change. Later conceptualisations also considered the client's contributions to the therapeutic relationship (e.g., Gurman, 1977; Heppner, Rosenberg & Hedgespeth, 1992; LaCrosse, 1980; Strong, 1968). This literature largely adopted a social influence perspective, emphasising the impact client attributions of the therapist as expert, trustworthy and attractive had on therapeutic outcome. With the emergence of outcome research in the 1970s the importance of common therapeutic factors, particularly client-therapist relationship factors, became firmly established as playing an essential role in client change across therapeutic approaches and modalities. Client-therapist relationship factors comprise therapist variables (like interpersonal style and personal attributes), facilitative conditions (like empathy, warmth and congruence) and the therapeutic alliance (Lambert & Barley, 2001). They can be seen as a construct synonymous with that of the therapeutic relationship. A review (Lambert & Barley, 2001) found that relationship factors accounted for 30 percent of the variance in therapeutic outcome. Their pivotal role in therapeutic change has been substantiated by more recent reviews (Cooper, 2008; Lambert & Ogles, 2004; Norcross & Wampold, 2011).

There is little consensus on a definition of the therapeutic relationship or its fundamental components (Bachelor & Horvath, 1999; Hill, 1994; Kolden, Howard & Maling, 1994; Norcross, 2010; Orlinsky & Howard, 1987). Gelso and Carter (1985; p.159) described it as "the feelings and attitudes that counselling participants have toward one another, and the manner in which these are expressed". Gelso and Carter (1985; 1994) further proposed that the therapeutic relationship consists of three components: the transference/ counter-transference relationship, the therapeutic or working alliance (the client-therapist collaboration in the therapy project) and the real relationship (the realistic, undistorted perceptions and reactions of both parties). The validity and relative importance of some of these constructs have been debated in the literature (e.g., Greenberg, 1994; Henry & Strupp, 1994; Hill, 1994; Kolden et al., 1994). The use of different aspects of the relationship may also vary depending on the therapist's theoretical perspective (Bachelor & Horvath, 1999; Cooper, 2008).

Despite these variations the working alliance as "the quality and strength of the collaborative relationship between client and therapist" (Horvath & Bedi, 2002; p.41) has emerged as a key pan-theoretical component of the therapeutic relationship (Cooper, 2008). A commonly accepted conceptualisation of the alliance (Bordin, 1979; 1994; Horvath & Greenberg, 1994) identified three core components: goals (mutually shared objectives of therapy), tasks (consensus on therapy tasks), and bond (the positive client-therapist attachment). The role of the alliance in client change across approaches is well documented in the literature (e.g., Horvath & Bedi, 2002; Horvath & Symonds, 1991). Reviews suggest that the alliance is moderately, but consistently related to therapy outcome (e.g., Beutler et al., 2004; Horvath & Bedi, 2002; Martin, Garske & Davis, 2000) and that measures of the alliance in early stages of therapy are strong predictors of positive outcome (e.g., Cooper, 2008; Horvath & Bedi, 2002; Batchelor & Horvath, 1999). Some reviews further suggest that the relationship between alliance and treatment outcome is causal, with the alliance being a cause for, rather than a result of positive outcome (e.g., Beutler et al., 2004; Norcross, 2010), whereas others (e.g., Cooper, 2008) are more conservative in their claims. The alliance is a vital factor in client change not only pan-theoretically but also across modalities, including couples and group therapy (Bourgeois, Sabourin & Wright, 1990; Friedlander, Escudero, Heatherington & Diamond, 2011; Pinsof, 1994) and therapeutic encounters using telephone or Internet contact (Horvath, Re, Flückinger & Symonds, 2011). It is considered ubiquitous in all successful helping endeavours (e.g., Bordin 1979, 1994; Luborsky, 1976) including those "not specifically structured as therapy" like pharmacotherapy (Bachelor & Horvath, 2004; p.138).

This has been supported by research (e.g., Carroll, Nich & Rounsaville, 1997; Elkin, 1994; Gaudiano & Miller, 2006; Krupnick et al., 1996; McGuire, McCabe & Priebe, 2001; Weiss, Gaston, Propst, Wisebord & Zicherman, 1997; Zuroff & Blatt, 2006). The alliance is also influential in general medicine (e.g., Hulka, Cassel, Kupper & Burdette, 1976; Scovern, 2002; Smith, Lyles, Mettler & Marshall, 1995; Stanton, 1987).

When evaluating the quality of the therapeutic relationship some considerations are important: firstly, research indicates that perceptions of the therapeutic process from the perspectives of therapists, clients and independent observers diverge considerably (Elliott et al., 1994; Hill & Lambert, 2004; Hilliard, Henry & Strupp, 2000; Levitt & Rennie, 2004; Orlinsky, Rønnestad & Willutzki, 2004). For instance, therapists and clients evaluate aspects of the therapeutic alliance differently (e.g.,Tryon, Collins & Felleman, 2006; cited in Norcross, 2010). Therapists and clients also tend to emphasise different components of the alliance as facilitative, with therapists focusing on clients' contribution in the therapy process, and clients on therapist characteristics like warmth and emotional involvement (e.g., Bachelor, 1991; 1995; Lambert & Bergin, 1983; Lazarus, 1971; Murphy, Cramer & Lillie. 1984). This also corresponds with the idea that clients select from therapy these elements needed for progress and that this shapes their perception of the therapeutic encounter (Bohart & Tallman, 2010). Indeed, clients appear to be better judges of the therapeutic relationship than therapists or observers (Bohart, Elliot, Greenberg & Watson, 2002; Bohart & Tallman, 2010). They also perceive aspects of the alliance more accurately than observers (Asay & Lambert, 2004; Orlinsky et al., 2004), probably because they have "privileged and experiential information about what happened in sessions" (Hill & Lambert, 2004; p.87). Crucially, clients' evaluations of the quality of the therapeutic relationship are more accurate predictors of treatment outcome than therapists' (Bedi, Davis & Williams, 2005; Busseri & Tyler, 2004; Horvath & Bedi, 2002). The key implication is that the client's perception of the therapeutic relationship is essential in establishing what factors lead to psychological change and should be prioritised (Bachelor & Horvath, 2004; Cooper, 2008; Norcross, 2010).

Like other relationships, the therapeutic relationship is subject to tensions and ruptures (e.g., Safran, Crocker, McMain & Murray, 1990), owing to client or therapist behaviours or attitudes, or misunderstandings. Client reports revealed that they at times experienced the therapeutic relationship as negative or unhelpful (Rhodes, Hill, Thompson & Elliot, 1994). Lambert and Ogles (2004; p.157-158) warned that in some instances therapy can have a negative effect on clients and that "psychotherapy can and does harm a portion of those it is intended to help". While client deterioration in therapy is not always due to relationship

factors, or even a result of therapy itself, therapist variables (alongside client variables or a mismatch between the client's presentation and the type of therapy) may contribute (Lambert & Ogles, 2004). Problematic therapist factors include a lack of empathy, underestimating the clients' problem severity, or disagreeing with the client about the therapy process (Mohr, 1995). In a review of five studies on therapist factors mental health professional attributed to unhelpful personal therapy they had received, Orlinsky and Norcross (2005) identified distant, rigid or emotionally seductive therapist behaviours. Given clients' common reluctance to communicate negative feelings or dissatisfaction about the therapeutic relationship (Hill et al., 1996) Bachelor and Horvath (2004) highlighted the need for therapists to be alert to clients' verbal and non-verbal cues to monitor levels of satisfaction, as well as to monitor their own feelings towards clients which can give clues to the quality of the relationship. Research indicates that therapists can repair ruptures by responding non-defensively, attending to the alliance and adjusting their behaviour (Safran, Muran, Samstag & Stevens, 2002), and that doing so is associated with positive treatment outcome (Kivlighan & Shaugnessy, 2000; Safran, Muran & Eubanks-Carter, 2011).

1.6.2 A therapeutic relationship in the martial arts?

In the current version of the *Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behavior Change* (Lambert, 2004) Orlinsky and colleagues (2004) reflected on the definition of psychotherapy adopted in previous volumes of the publication, as the interactions between a helper with one or more individuals "needing special assistance to improve their functioning as persons" (Orlinsky & Howard, 1978; p.284). They suggested that this conception of psychotherapy emphasised the notion of alleviating suffering and disability, typically within the context of institutionalised mental health care, and was not broad enough to adequately reflect the way psychotherapy was actually used in contemporary society. Instead, they endorsed a more inclusive definition (Orlinsky, 1989; cited in Orlinsky et al., 2004) encompassing moral and spiritual dimensions. Accordingly, psychotherapy is, or can be:

> (1) a form of remedial or higher education in the socio-emotional sphere of functioning (what in the nineteenth century might have been termed "moral education"), (2) a non-violent form of social control for deviant behaviour (a substitute or adjunct form of "correctional" influences for those who offend against others or themselves), and (3) a facilitator of meaningful personal orientation and philosophy of life (or "spiritual" development). (p.311)

Orlinsky and colleagues highlighted that nowadays many people seeking therapy did not have a diagnosable mental health problem but did so because they were "unhappy with

their lives, their relationships, and their selves" (2004; p.311). Particularly within the private sector of psychotherapy provision (but not necessarily limited to it) the psychotherapeutic remit of facilitating 'personal functioning' may include a focus on personal development, for instance by fostering self-awareness and personal resilience, or by exploring personal meaning.

As outlined earlier, the domain of personal development has historically encompassed a heterogeneous collection of practices. Developmentally facilitative relationships may therefore be found in practices outside the realm of traditional talking therapies that share a focus on personal growth. Research into the transformative value of relationships in these spheres is not yet well established. One interesting focus of exploration has been the student-teacher relationship in Zen Buddhism and mindfulness practice. Santorelli (1999) and McCoun and Reibel (2010) discussed relational factors in mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR; Kabat-Zinn, 1991; 1994), a system focused on improving physical and emotional wellbeing and fostering personal development. McCoun and Reibel (2010), for instance, highlighted the teacher's importance in MBSR, not only through the use of specific teaching skills but also crucially through his or her use of self. Young-Eisendrath (2003), a psychoanalyst and Zen student, compared the student-teacher relationship in Zen with the therapeutic relationship in psychoanalysis. She noted that both relationships act as vehicles for the client's or student's transformation by fostering insight and compassion, with the transformative value of this relationship being facilitated through the power of transference. Young-Eisendrath suggested that as well as providing great opportunities for development, the teacher-student relationship could also contain potentially unhelpful or destructive elements, for example due to a teacher's violation of social or ethical codes of conduct. This situation mirrors the potential difficulties in therapeutic relationships discussed earlier. Rush (2000) discussed the relevance of Zen concepts as applied in Zen meditation, the martial arts and traditional Japanese psychotherapies, to a Western understanding of the therapeutic relationship. Of particular interest for this study are his comparison of the student-instructor relationship in martial arts with the therapeutic relationship, and his proposal of various ways in which therapists can enhance their practice by incorporating Zen principles. These include guidelines for improving therapists' training, clinical work, and personal development, as explored further in chapter IV.

This section has attempted to locate the therapeutic relationship within a broader overall context of personal development spanning practices and traditions generally considered outside the remit of psychotherapy. The preceding sections have highlighted

functional similarities between the two types of relationship explored, which may warrant a thorough exploration of the nature of the student- instructor relationship in martial arts.[14] The research literature on relational processes in psychotherapy discussed in section 1.6.1 highlighted the value of prioritising the client's perspective when exploring the therapeutic relationship. Similarly, attempts to explore the developmental potential of student- instructor martial arts relationships for students may necessitate a focus on students' experiences of such relationships.

1.7 Aims of the Current Investigation

Currently, the student-instructor relationship in the martial arts is a little-explored area of investigation within psychological martial arts research. This seems surprising considering (i) the apparent scope of martial arts to promote personal development and adaptive psychosocial changes; (ii) the proposed parallels between psychotherapy and martial arts and between therapist and instructor roles; and (iii) the emphasis martial arts place on the importance of the instructor's role. The current study aims to address this gap in the literature by investigating how senior martial arts practitioners experience the relationship with their instructor, and how they perceive it in relation to their process of personal development.

The research questions for this study are formulated as follows:

(i) How do senior martial arts practitioners perceive their instructor and their relationship with the instructor?

(ii) How do practitioners evaluate the significance of this relationship with respect to their everyday lives, and their personal development?

(iii) What aspects of the student-instructor relationship, or what instructor characteristics are perceived as facilitative or problematic for personal development?

These questions aim to elucidate if and how martial arts practitioners use their relationship with the instructor as a vehicle for personal development, and which aspects of this relationship they deem most facilitative or problematic. The study's focus on the meaning of relationships mirrors the central position relationships hold within counselling psychology (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2003; 2010). It is hoped that the current investigation will contribute to the understanding of interpersonal processes in counselling psychology and martial arts alike, and provide pointers to how these could be enhanced in the interest of personal

[14] It is, of course, important to point out that there are also significant structural and functional differences in the relationships in both arrangements, some of which will be examined more fully in chapter IV.

development. Factors deemed facilitative of personal development in the current study might usefully be exploited in psychotherapeutic work or in the promotion of wellbeing and personal development more generally. Conversely, factors deemed problematic could be explored in the context of their potential relevance to counselling psychology relationships. Facilitative or problematic factors might include instructor or student qualities and contextual parameters. Secondly, exploring practitioners' experiences through a psychological lens might enable the elucidation of previously unarticulated and little-understood phenomena and processes. This could be of interest to practitioners, instructors, and others involved in the participation, facilitation or implementation of martial arts and related activities. Thirdly, a comparison of the therapeutic relationship and the student-instructor relationship in martial arts may offer a fresh perspective on our understanding of the therapeutic relationship in counselling psychology and identify novel ways in which our practice could be enriched. This could contribute to the cross-fertilisation between Western psychology and Eastern growth systems more generally. Counselling psychology draws on a diverse range of psychological and philosophical traditions; by professing to a humanistic value base and the promotion of wellbeing and potentiality-based ways of working, counselling psychology has played, and will continue to play, an important role in challenging the status quo of psychological practice (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010; Goldstein, 2010).

Chapter II: Methods and Procedures

This chapter will locate the current study within the wider epistemological and methodological context of psychological research and outline the research design adopted.

2.1 Research Design and Rationale

2.1.1 Qualitative research in psychology and counselling psychology - a brief overview

Qualitative research methods are popular forms of enquiry in counselling psychology, not least because the aims of qualitative research correspond closely with the value base of counselling psychology (e.g., McLeod, 2003). Lane & Corrie (2006) described the counselling psychology value set as one that "favours the personal and the subjective alongside scientific values" (p.14) and "privileges respect for the personal, subjective experience of the client" (p.17). As will be discussed, qualitative research is also interested in exploring rich and contextual phenomena, often with a focus on personal experience. The interest for qualitative methods in counselling psychology must be seen within the context of wider developments within social sciences and mainstream psychology (e.g., McLeod, 2003; Smith, 2008), which show the popularisation and increased acceptability of qualitative research. Smith (2008, p.1) described an "explosion of interest in qualitative psychology", evidenced by increases in qualitative PhD projects, academic training programmes on qualitative methodologies, and qualitative articles published in peer-reviewed journals. This signifies a shift away and broadening out from the established positivist paradigm prevalent in the natural sciences, which has dominated Western psychology. This paradigm rests on the assumption that reality is directly observable through quantification and experimental methods (Langdridge, 2007) and often favours quantitative methods and the analysis of numerical values.

Qualitative research, in contrast, remains firmly based within the realm of language (Smith & Osborn, 2004) and aims to describe or explain events rather than predict them (Willig, 2001). Therefore, qualitative research in psychology is generally inductive; it employs a 'bottom-up' approach to generating knowledge, moving from specific observations to broader theories, rather than testing pre-existing hypotheses.[15] Its primary concern with meaning renders qualitative research particularly suitable for the exploration of processes (Smith & Osborn, 2004; Willig, 2001). Hence, qualitative methods have proliferated in many

[15] It should be noted that broader interpretations of qualitative research include 'little q' research as well as the 'Big Q' research described above (Willig, 2001). 'Little q' research refers to qualitative methods being used within an overall hypothetico-deductive, 'top-down' research design (Kidder & Fine, 1987).

areas of psychology and psychotherapy, for instance within psychotherapy process research, and its utility in outcome research has been argued (McLeod, 2000). Qualitative research seeks to elucidate attitudes, perceptions and experiences through textual analysis characterised by the exploration of rich and *'thick'* (Geertz, 1973) accounts. Its emphasis on language and thought processes makes qualitative research an intrinsically psychological approach to scientific inquiry (Smith, 2008).

2.1.1.1 The researcher's role

While qualitative researchers may subscribe to different epistemological positions (i.e., viewpoints on what constitutes knowledge and how knowledge can be generated) they generally share the notion that research is influenced by the participants' and researchers' interpretations of phenomena (Willig, 2001). This has a bearing on how the researcher's role is conceptualised. Qualitative researchers recognise themselves as inseparable from the world that is being researched and therefore as impacting on the analytic process (Finlay, 2006a). They question claims to impartiality and objectivity that define positivist inquiry, and reject the conception of the researcher as outside observer or bystander.

2.1.1.2 Epistemological perspectives

The qualitative paradigm encompasses a range of epistemological stances and methodological approaches that correspond with these (Finlay, 2006a). Attempts to classify epistemologies must remain flexible, as distinctions are often fluid and difficult to map due to the diversity within and across approaches. Nonetheless, Madill, Jordan and Shirley (2000) provide a useful categorisation of qualitative methods along a continuum of epistemologies from naïve realism on one end to radical relativism on the other. Naïve realism perceives the world as consisting of knowable structures that can be uncovered and described through investigative methods. Case study designs and the realist version of grounded theory (GT) (Glaser, 1992) correspond with this perspective. More moderate views like critical realism and contextual constructionism acknowledge the multiplicity of different perspectives in the generation of knowledge. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA; Smith, 1996) and the social constructionist version of GT (Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Charmaz, 2006) are deemed *'critical realist'* (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) or *'contextual constructionist'*. At the other end of the continuum radical relativism understands knowledge as a social construction and rejects the notion of a fixed knowable reality. A method subscribing to this perspective is discursive psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992), a version of discourse analysis. Qualitative

methods across this continuum differ greatly in their evaluation of language-based communication. While researchers subscribing to a realist perspective believe language to be descriptive of an external reality, relativists view it as a social construct and not necessarily expressive of an external or even subjective reality.

Having introduced the main features of qualitative research in psychology the following section will provide an account of why and how a qualitative approach (IPA) was used in the present study.

2.1.2 A qualitative approach for exploring lived experience in martial arts

As discussed in chapter I, quantitative research on psychological aspects of martial arts has faced several methodological challenges. These pertain to the difficulty in controlling for self-selection bias in cross-sectional or short-run longitudinal studies, as well as cultural and contextual factors characterising martial arts practice in the West. Fuller (1988; p.326) cited the lack of a "coherent theoretical base" due to the technical and philosophical diversity within martial arts that disallowed a consistent way of classification. Other theorists (Becker; 1982; Columbus & Rice, 1991; Frager, 1969) also called into question the extent to which positivist research using quantitative methods can "capture the subtlety and complexity of the Oriental martial arts without simply violating their cultural and psychological complexity" (Fuller, 1988; p.327). Columbus and Rice (1991; p.128) suggested that attempts to "employ operational definitions, reflecting the third-person perspectives of the researchers may not necessarily remain faithful to the martial arts as they reveal themselves". They proposed that qualitative studies might yield more meaningful insights by preserving the cultural and philosophical aspects of martial arts.

Qualitative methods have been deemed particularly appropriate for the exploration of phenomena that are complex, subtle or difficult to explore through quantitative methods (Burman, 1994). The focus of qualitative research tends to be on the "quality and texture of experience" rather than "cause-effect relationships" (Willig, 2001; p.9) and enquiry typically involves the study of people in their natural environment. These features suit the objective of the current study, which seeks to investigate martial artists' accounts of their experiences of change, personal development and their relationship with their instructor. Phenomenology is a form of qualitative enquiry that appears particularly appropriate for this purpose.

2.1.2.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology originated from Husserl's philosophical phenomenology of the early twentieth century, and evolved in line with subsequent schools of thought, most notably those of Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty (Moran, 2000). Phenomenology is concerned with "the way things appear to us in experience" (Smith & Eatough, 2006; p.324), in contrast to attempting to produce objective statements of events, and therefore particularly suited to investigating personal experience (Langdridge, 2007). Columbus and Rice (1991; p.132) advocated the use of phenomenological methods for an exploration of martial arts that was "geared towards articulating the martial artist's point of view". They highlighted how, beyond its scope for exploring lived experience, phenomenology also shows considerable points of convergence with Oriental thinking: as a philosophical framework, phenomenology corresponds with Taoism and Zen, belief systems that have significantly influenced the Oriental martial arts (Columbus & Rice, 1991). Like phenomenology, Zen de-emphasises verbal understanding, gives primacy to immediate experience, and transcends dualistic notions of mind and body (Aanstoos, 1985; cited in Columbus & Rice, 1991). Phenomenology furthermore has a particular affinity with counselling psychology by virtue of their common roots in existential-phenomenological traditions (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2003; 2010). These considerations point to phenomenology as a promising framework for the present investigation. Established and emerging phenomenological approaches include descriptive phenomenology (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008), IPA (Smith, 1996; Smith & Osborn, 2004), hermeneutic phenomenology (Van Manen, 1990), template analysis (TA; King, 1998) and critical narrative analysis (Langdridge, 2007). Out of these, IPA has gained particular popularity within psychological research: it is currently the most prevalent approach to phenomenological psychology in the UK (Langdridge, 2007).

2.1.2.2 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

IPA proposes the notion of individuals as *'self-interpreting beings'* (Taylor, 1985), meaning that individuals "are actively engaged in interpreting the events, objects and people in their lives, and this interpretative activity is captured by the term "sense-making" (Smith & Eatough, 2006, p.324). IPA's central aim is to explore how individuals make sense of their experience. It is epistemologically grounded in phenomenology and hermeneutic inquiry, the latter relating to the process of sense-making and interpretation (Smith & Eatough, 2006). IPA research is conceptualised as a dynamic process where the researcher attempts to assume

an insider perspective (Conrad, 1987) on the participant's experience but also recognises that it is never completely possible to "stand in the shoes of the participant" (Smith & Eatough, 2006; p.324). Therefore, IPA makes no claims about having privileged access to participants' experiences. This situation spawns a *'double hermeneutic'* (Smith & Eatough, 2006) or dual interpretative process, with the researcher interpreting the participant's meaning-making process. Smith and Eatough (2006; p.324) state that "'reality' as it appears to and is made meaningful for the individual is what is of interest to the IPA researcher, and she or he recognizes her or his dynamic role in making sense of that reality."

As stated in section 2.1.1.2, the evaluation of verbal communication differs across epistemological positions. IPA is consistent with a critical realist perspective, which assumes that the respondents' utterances have some internal significance and that the communication is "part of their ongoing self-story and represents a manifestation of their psychological world" (Smith, 1995; p.10). However, IPA acknowledges that speech and language occur within a social context that is likely to impact on individuals' meaning-making process and communication. Therefore the relationship between a person's beliefs and psychological constructs on one side and their verbal communications on the other is not deemed transparent. Within the IPA researcher's scope for interpretation both empathic and critical positions can be incorporated (Ricoeur, 1970). This means that while IPA endeavours to understand an experience from the participant's perspective it can at times also take a more distanced stance and critically examine more opaque aspects of the participant's speech. The researcher might for instance, explore communications that appear to be governed by social conventions or strategies, omitted or hinted at content, or processes the participant may not be fully aware of (Smith & Eatough, 2006).

IPA is an idiographic approach that is concerned with the meaning-making process of individuals at case study level (Smith & Osborn, 2004). Participants are seen as experts of their experience, and by implication, of the topic under investigation (Smith & Osborn, 2008). The exploration of the participant's world is usually facilitated through the use of semi-structured interviews although other methods including focus groups, diaries, observational methods and electronically facilitated communication (like email, skype, or chat room conversations) are also possible (Smith, 1995; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). An IPA analysis aims to move from the particular and descriptive to the shared and interpretative by identifying emergent themes from the data and exploring commonalities and divergences in the participants' meaning-making of phenomena (Smith et al., 2009).

2.1.2.3 Using IPA for the current study

Several factors rendered IPA the most suitable methodology for the current study, compared to viable alternatives such as other phenomenological approaches or GT. Principally IPA was considered as most closely reflecting the author's critical-realist epistemological stance. Its grounding in phenomenology further makes IPA compatible with both the research topic and the philosophy of counselling psychology. Secondly, IPA bears intrinsic relevance to psychology at large and is deemed a "specifically psychological approach" (Willig, 2001; p.69). Smith & Osborn (2008) highlighted how the theoretical commitment of IPA to meaning-making implies a concern with cognitions and mental processes as a central feature of the analytic process, hence marking a point of convergence with cognitive psychology (Smith & Osborn, 2008). The established position of IPA in psychological research rendered it a more compatible option for the current study than alternative interpretative phenomenological approaches like hermeneutic phenomenology or critical narrative analysis. Thirdly, the idiographic and context-specific focus of IPA was regarded as a useful framework in which the current topic could meaningfully be explored.

According to Smith and Osborn (2004; p.211) the use of IPA is "particularly suitable where the topic under investigation is novel or under-researched, where the issues are complex or ambiguous and where one is concerned to understand something about process and change". This corresponds with the current research focus on a previously unexplored dimension of martial arts participation that taps into potentially complex and subtle relational and developmental processes. In contrast to IPA, descriptive phenomenology, TA and GT have a more limited idiographic scope (Langdridge, 2007; Smith et al., 2009). GT and descriptive phenomenology in particular focus more on conceptual, theoretical macro-level accounts whereas IPA is interested in micro-level exploration (Smith et al., 2009). TA tends to be less inductive than IPA through its use of pre-determined coding frameworks (Langdridge, 2007). As the current study is pioneering the exploration of a new topic area it was felt that the explicitly idiographic focus of IPA best addressed the objective of providing a detailed account of lived experience.

For the current study semi-structured interviews were used as data source. As mentioned, semi-structured interviewing is the most conventional form of data collection in IPA and most closely reflects the researcher-participant relationship (Smith et al., 2009). Semi-structured interviews provide considerable flexibility by allowing the researcher to be guided by the phenomena interesting to the participant, whilst still defining the area of

investigation at large (Smith, 1995; Smith & Osborn, 2004). Other potential data sources that were deemed less relevant were focus groups (which allow access to larger groups of individuals) and e-mail conversations or chat room interactions (which may facilitate access to geographically diffuse audiences or particular social sub-groups).

2.2 Sample Selection

Having explained the choice of methodology for this study, this section will describe the rationale for, and process of sample choice.

2.2.1 Club selection

Due to this study's focus on individual experiences of personal development it was important to select a club that followed and promoted a traditional, rather than a sportive-competitive training perspective. For the purpose of this research, a 'traditional' martial art is defined as one characterised by a holistic perspective and the propagation of *budo* as outlined in section 1.3.1. Due to the ambiguity and lack of accuracy of existing classification systems discussed earlier this distinction was not determined according to martial arts style but observational criteria, on a case-by-case basis. Exceptions were taekwondo and judo: as Olympic disciplines both were deemed more likely overall to present themselves as 'modern' martial arts or 'martial sports' and were therefore not considered for the research. Criteria for fidelity to traditional practice were adapted from Nosanchuk and MacNeil (1989).[16] They were a) the presence of contemplative elements and references to philosophy, b) evidence of traditional etiquette, discipline and teamwork and c) the absence or sanctioning of over-aggressive behaviour. Criteria focused on kata or sparring were omitted, as these elements may not necessarily be present in all martial arts. Suitability for inclusion in the study was determined through examination of club-specific promotional material (such as flyers and websites); informal discussions with instructors and students; and class observation or participation.

Criteria for sample selection evolved during the early phases of the selection process[17]. Initially, a hapkido[18] club in Middle England had been considered, with a view to extending the author's previous research in this discipline (Lutz, 2006), which she is also a practitioner

[16] Please refer to section 1.4.2 for an outline of these criteria.
[17] During this process the researcher had the opportunity to reflect on some difficulties that may be common to research with martial arts practitioners. These pertained to the organisational structure of clubs, and the cultural dimensions and power dynamics generated within this structure. Pertinent aspects of these are discussed in chapters III and IV, concluding reflections and appendix A.
[18] Please refer to the glossary in appendix B.

of.[19] However, conversations with instructor and students, and class observation and participation clarified that the club did not adhere to traditional practice. This observation confirmed that the type of martial art is a poor indicator of fidelity to traditional practice. Hapkido is not currently a well-represented martial art in the UK, making the identification of a 'traditional' hapkido sample unfeasible. Therefore, the researcher chose to exclusively consider fidelity to traditional practice regardless of discipline.

The researcher next approached a London-based aikido club that agreed to participate in the research. However this consent was withdrawn at a later stage. As the head instructor was unavailable for discussion the reasons for this development remain unclear.[20] Next, the researcher selected ten London-based clubs that advertised online and contacted them via email with an outline of the proposed research. Two clubs expressed an interest in participating. Concurrently, personal visits were arranged with two further clubs that appeared particularly suitable, judging from their promotional material. Through one of these visits the final club was selected. Class observation and discussions with the head instructor verified that the club met criteria for suitability. After considering the research proposal the head instructor gave consent for participation. The club teaches aikido[21] with elements of *kashima shinryu kenjutsu*, an older Japanese sword art.[22] While several senior students carried out occasional formal instructor duties the club's head instructor took the majority of classes and instructed all students. This was also reflected in the fact that all participants referred to their relationship with this head instructor when discussing their experience of the student-instructor relationship.

[19] The researcher's personal training experience stems from a hapkido club endorsing traditional practice. The initial attempt to recruit a hapkido club for this study was partly motivated by the researcher's interest in exploring how a martial art generally considered 'harder' than its more obviously contemplative counterparts (such as aikido or tai chi) can promote traditional practice and personal development.

[20] Subsequent discussions with other instructors at the club suggested that the club operated in a rather hermetic fashion, encouraging a degree of reluctance with regard to sharing club-internal matters with outsiders. A degree of wariness of outsiders may not be uncommon in martial arts clubs, as participants' accounts in this study suggest. Wariness on the instructor's part may also reflect power dynamics inherent in the hierarchical organisation of clubs.

[21] The club is not a member of the Aikikai but its lineage links it with a traditional aikido dojo in Japan, where the club's current grandmaster is based.

[22] The club was chosen by virtue of promoting traditional practice, not due to being an aikido club; the fact that an aikido club happened to be selected might be reflective of the overall popularity of aikido in the UK, and perhaps also the fact that the underlying philosophy of aikido is explicitly aligned with the notions of peaceful conflict resolution and personal development (see section 1.3.3).

2.2.2 Participants

2.2.2.1 Sample size and consistency

In IPA samples tend to be small in order to allow idiographic data analysis. Sample sizes between six and fifteen (Smith & Osborn, 2004) and even one and fifteen participants (Smith & Eatough, 2006) have been suggested as guidelines. The main consideration is whether the sample will allow the researcher "to do justice to each participant's account" (Smith & Eatough, 2006; p.327). Smith and colleagues (2009) recommended a number of between four and ten interviews[23] as customary and appropriate for professional doctorates. Accordingly, a sample size of eight participants (within a single-interview design) was considered small enough to enable high quality idiographic analysis, and large enough to befit the scope of a doctoral research project.

For the purpose of truly understanding the phenomenon from the perspective of the sample group, sample homogeneity (i.e., the internal consistency of a sample) is important. Homogeneity demands that all participants within a sample share certain characteristics, for instance pertaining to demographic factors or membership of a particular population group. Sample homogeneity enhances a study's generalisability. The concept of generalisability in qualitative research differs from the statistical generalisability used in quantitative studies, which is concerned with rendering findings statistically representative of a wider population (Yardley, 2008). In qualitative research this would neither be feasible nor meaningful. As qualitative studies typically investigate smaller samples and are interested in individual differences and contextual variations, the kind of generalisability aspired to is *'theoretical'*. This means that although strictly speaking the sample group defines the boundary within which claims for generalisability can be made (Smith & Osborn, 2004) findings can nonetheless be assumed to provide useful insights for other groups and contexts similar to the one examined (Johnson, 1997; Yardley, 2008). In IPA homogeneity is facilitated through a process of purposive sampling: participants are selected with reference to the phenomenon under investigation rather than through probabilistic methods. Typically, the process of sample selection will be 'naturally defined' by the research question, for instance on the basis of participants sharing a common experience, or belonging to a certain social group. Sometimes additional attempts are made to select participants according to similarity on demographic variables such as age, gender or socio-economic status (Smith & Osborn, 2004).

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[23] Interviews can be either with different participants or can include follow-up and multiple interviews with a smaller number of participants (Smith et al., 2009).

In this study purposive sampling was achieved through the use of inclusion criteria pertaining to the research question, as outlined in section 2.2.2.2. No further restrictions were imposed regarding participants' demographic make-up as the emerging profile was deemed sufficiently homogenous.

2.2.2.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

There were several inclusion and exclusion criteria for the present study, as follows:

Seniority. The main inclusion criteria for participation in this study were club membership and seniority. Seniority was deemed an important factor as it implied an immersion in the club's cultural context that was seen as essential to the participants' experience of their relationship with the instructor. Length of training (rather than belt rank) was chosen as best indicator of the participants' level of enculturation and commitment to the club's ethos.[24] Seniority was operationalised as a minimum length of training of two and a half years at the aikido club in question, assuming intermediate to advanced proficiency. Due to the importance of cultural context prior training at other martial arts clubs was not taken into account.

Dual role exclusion. An additional exclusion criterion was participants' involvement in formal teaching and instructing duties within the dojo or as a representative of the club. This was based on the consideration that such participants were likely to have a different perspective on the research topic, which might compromise sample homogeneity. The hierarchical structure integral to Oriental martial arts implies that in most traditions it is common for students to assist with teaching duties as they progress in seniority. Therefore, holding an assistant role within the dojo was not deemed an exclusion criterion; however, having formal instructor experience in addition to being a student was. Formal instructors were defined as individuals identified as instructors in the club's official promotional material. The participants' status with regard to this criterion was verbally confirmed prior to interviewing.

Personal development. This study's topic required participants to have some interest in, and to be prepared to discuss personal development within the context of aikido training.

[24] Existing studies have used varying criteria for seniority based on either belt rank or duration of membership, or a combination of both. For example, Konzak & Boudreau (1984) stipulated a minimum of 3.5 years of training to be considered an advanced practitioner. Columbus & Rice (1991) likened black belt level to between 2.5 and 3.5 years of training. Epstein (1985) classified brown belt level as advanced, with no membership duration reported, and Faggianelli (1996) stipulated 7 years of training for advanced (brown belt) level. It is generally accepted that commitment to training, length of training, and technical proficiency correlate (e.g. Konzak & Boudreau, 1984).

Due to the broad variety of motives for martial arts participation outlined in section 1.3.2 an interest in aikido as a tool for personal development could not be assumed; rather, the study's focus on personal development needed to be made explicit to potential participants in order to deselect students who were not interested in this aspect of training from the outset. This was achieved by referring to the notion of personal development when describing the research rationale in the participant information sheet, and by reiterating this emphasis during the interview.

2.2.2.3 Participant profile

All eight participants were males aged 27 to 53. The sample's homogeneity with regard to gender was a reflection of the club's natural composition as a predominantly male group and not due to particular selection criteria.[25] Six of the participants had achieved black belt level, and two held kyu grades.[26] Several participants were, or had been engaged in other martial arts or forms of body-oriented or philosophical practices. In some cases these alternative practices prefigured the participants' aikido training and in others participants took them up to supplement aikido. Table 1 provides an overview of individual participant profiles, outlining demographic characteristics, experience in aikido and alternative roles or practices. In order to ensure anonymity pseudonyms are used.[27]

[25] Martial arts participation in the West remains a predominantly male-oriented activity. A recent UK-based survey with participants of various martial arts found that over three quarters of respondents were male (Jones, Mackay & Peters; 2006). An earlier survey (Sport England, 2002) also reported a male gender bias for participation in martial arts and self-defence. This bias is in part reflective of greater overall participation rates for men in sports, which appear most pronounced in the London area (Sport England, 2002). Other possible reasons might be that combative and close-contact elements of martial arts appeal more to male identities and interests, or the fact that martial arts enjoy a certain 'macho' reputation in sections of popular culture (see sections 1.3.2 and 1.4.1).

[26] Many contemporary martial arts, including aikido tend to use the *dan/ kyu ranking system* to determine proficiency. Progress is assessed according to technical ability, attitude and conduct, and at an advanced level, leadership ability, teaching experience and dedication to the style. Unlike most other martial arts using the dan/ kyu system, aikido rarely makes visual distinctions within kyu grades through the use of coloured belts.

[27] Although no formal statistics on educational background were collected it emerged during the data collection process that many participants were educated beyond degree level and some were or had been involved in academic research. This phenomenon might in part be attributed to the wider demographic profile of the geographic area from which the sample was drawn (a predominantly middle-class area of London). Alternatively, it could also be reflective of participant self-selection (see section 1.4.2).

Table 1

Participant Profile

Participant	Age	Gender	Belt rank	Training duration	Additional roles/practices
Alexis	28	Male	First degree Dan	3 yrs 6 months	Yoga
Frank	27	Male	Second degree Dan	4 yrs	Feldenkrais Method[28]
Jeff	28	Male	Second degree Dan	6 yrs	Main assistant to instructor
John	53	Male	First degree Dan	3 yrs	
Luca	27	Male	Second Kyu	2 yrs 8 months	Tai Chi
Michael	18	Male	Second Kyu	6 yrs	
Phil	33	Male	First degree Dan	3 yrs	
Sean	44	Male	Second degree Dan	10 yrs	Zen Buddhism, Yoga

2.3 Interview Schedule

The study followed guidelines by Smith and colleagues (2009) who recommended using an interview schedule for semi-structured interviews in order to enable a priori reflections on the expected remit of the topic area and potential difficulties during the interview. The choice and order of interview questions followed a process of *'funnelling'* (Smith & Osborn, 2008), with questions moving from the broad and general towards the particular and specific. This procedure eases interviewees into talking about the topic area and facilitates a deeper penetration into the subject matter over the course of the interview (Smith et al., 2009).

2.3.1 The schedule in relation to the research questions

The final interview schedule (appendix G & figure1) consisted of eight questions designed to address the research questions. Table 2 shows how interview questions relate to research questions.

The introductory remarks together with questions 1 and 2 served as an introduction to the topic area and defined the parameters of the study. By leaving the concept of personal development open to interpretation and using funnelling for the subsequent questions the researcher intended to enable participants to approach the research topic from within their

[28] The Feldenkrais Method is an educational system that uses movement as a vehicle for generating increased body awareness and physical and mental flexibility. For further reading see Feldenkrais (1972).

own frame of reference. Question 3 provided an opportunity for participants to spontaneously mention their instructor. This was deemed an important source of information regarding the importance participants attributed to their instructor. As such it had the potential of contributing to research question 1 *(How do senior aikido practitioners perceive their instructor and their relationship with the instructor?)* and research question 2 *(How do practitioners evaluate the significance of this relationship with respect to their personal development?)*.

A two-route option in question 4 accommodated the two scenarios of participants mentioning and not mentioning the instructor without prompting. This allowed the interview to further focus on the instructor's significance to participants' training. Questions 4 to 6 provided scope to elaborate on research questions 1 and 2, as well as addressing research question 3 *(What aspects of the student-instructor relationship, or what instructor characteristics, if any, are perceived as facilitative or problematic for personal development?)*. Question 6 also incorporated two routes, depending on whether participants had previously mentioned problematic aspects of the student-instructor relationship. The question was intended to encourage participants to talk about potential negative experiences, which they otherwise might have been reluctant to discuss. Prompting the disclosure of less positive aspects of the relationship seemed important when considering the literature on the therapeutic relationship and the student-teacher relationship in Zen (see sections 1.6.1 and 1.6.2) that highlighted the pertinence of such issues. The concluding questions 7 and 8 served to provide orientation and containment while simultaneously allowing scope for further information-gathering. Question 7 informed participants that the interview was coming to an end and asked for further thoughts or comments on the subject matter. Question 8 concluded the interview by inviting participants to reflect on the interview experience. This question was intended to elicit feedback on the interview process and the participants' personal experience of discussing this topic area.

Table 2

Interview Questions in Relation to Research Questions

Research Question		Interview Questions
Question 1	How do aikido practitioners perceive their instructor and their relationship with their instructor?	You mentioned the importance of your instructor. Can you tell me more about this? I noticed that you did not mention your instructor as an important aspect/ influence. Can you tell me how you see the role your instructor plays in training, and for you personally? When you are thinking of your instructor now, can you describe to me how you experience him?
Question 2	How do practitioners evaluate the significance of this relationship with respect to their everyday lives, and their personal development?	What aspects of training have been important/ played an important part in this development? In what ways, if any, has your instructor helped you to develop/ challenged your view of things?
Question 3	What aspects of the student-instructor relationship, or what instructor characteristics are perceived as or facilitative or problematic for personal development?	Can you think of situations when your instructor said or did things that you found difficult to accept, unhelpful, or disagreed with?

2.3.2 Evolution of the schedule

A preliminary interview schedule was developed and revised[29]. Question 2 in version 1 of the preliminary schedule was amended to avoid making a direct reference to the instructor early on in the schedule and thus biasing participants' accounts. As mentioned in section 2.3.1, it was of interest to assess the extent to which participants mentioned the instructor spontaneously during the interviews in order to gain a relatively unprejudiced view of the importance the participants assigned to their instructor in training.

Smith and colleagues (2009) advised researchers to review their interview schedule following initial interviews. A review of transcripts from the first two interviews suggested that interviewees appeared to have some difficulty engaging with the fairly abstract first question (*Can you tell me what role aikido plays for you in your life?*). Therefore, the initial version of the interview schedule (appendix D) was amended to include an introductory question *(Can I first of all ask you what made you take up aikido?)*. This was to facilitate a narrative account, enabling easier access to the subject area. It corresponds with Smith and colleagues' suggestion to start the interview with a question about a relatively descriptive episode in order

[29] Please refer to appendices D to F for all preliminary versions of the interview schedule.

to put the participant at ease with discussing the topic. Figure 1 shows the final version of the interview schedule.

2.4 Data Collection

2.4.1 Recruitment

During the first phase of recruitment the researcher specified the inclusion criteria to the collaborating head instructor, who then forwarded the participant brief (version 1; appendix H) to the more senior proportion of eligible candidates via email. This approach was taken in line with the research's emphasis on seniority as outlined in the participant inclusion criteria. Four participants were recruited in this manner. This procedure was repeated in the second recruitment phase where an amended version of the brief (version 2; appendix I) was emailed to the remaining eligible candidates.[30] The researcher additionally visited the dojo twice to recruit participants after class. Interested students received a copy of the participant brief. Throughout the recruitment process the initiative to participate in the research rested with the participants, who made contact via email or telephone.

The researcher deemed it appropriate to disclose to the participants her own position as a martial arts practitioner. During the first recruitment stage this was done upon initial contact prior to the interview. During the second recruitment stage the researcher mentioned her involvement in martial arts when visiting the dojo. The main reason for this disclosure pertained to researcher transparency (see section 2.4.3). The researcher also anticipated that this disclosure could facilitate the recruitment and interview process. In her past experience of interviewing martial arts practitioners, several participants had commented on feeling more comfortable discussing their practice with a fellow martial artist rather than a researcher unfamiliar with martial arts practice. These sentiments were substantiated in the current study (see section 3.3).

[30] Section 2.4.2 describes both versions of the brief and the rationale for amending the original brief.

FINAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I would like to start off by asking you about your experience of doing aikido on a regular basis. As you know from the information sheet, I am particularly interested in your development as a person, and what kinds of things have influenced that.

1. Can I first of all ask you what made you take up aikido?

    How did you come to join this club?

    What were your initial expectations/ reasons for joining?

2. Can you tell me what role aikido plays for you in your life?

    What does training do for you, as a person, in your life?

    Can you give me an example?

    Do you think you have developed as a person due to taking up aikido?

3. What aspects of training would you say have been important/ played an important role in this development?

    How do you think this change has come about?

4(a) You mentioned your instructor. Can you tell me more about this?

    What role your instructor plays for you?

    For training/ everyday life/ personal development?

    In what ways has your instructor helped you to develop?

4(b) I noticed that you did not mention your instructor as an important aspect/ influence. I wonder if you see your instructor playing a role in your development as a person?

    In training/ everyday life?

    In what ways, if any, has your instructor helped you to develop?

5. Reflecting on your training, can you think of a situation (or episode) in which your instructor has had a particular impact on you?

    Does a specific situation come to mind?

6(a) You have talked about your instructor in a very positive way. I wonder if there has ever been a time when you experienced him as not so helpful?

    Struggled to accept something/ disagreed with him?

    Personal qualities/ Anything he has done or said?

    How do you view this issue now?

6(b) Coming back to what you said earlier, it sounds as if you experienced this as less than helpful. Can you tell me more about this?

7. We are coming to the end of the interview now. Is there anything else that you would like to add that might be relevant to this study?

8. What was it like for you to do this interview?

    Is this something you have thought about before?

    Did you find it easy/ difficult?

Figure 1. Final version of the interview schedule

2.4.2 Interview

Individual interviews were arranged at participants' convenience in public spaces (parks and cafés), hired room facilities (in a library and a complementary therapies centre), and at the dojo. All interviewees were telephoned prior to the interview and had an opportunity to ask questions or discuss any concerns about the study. Prior to the interview participants signed two copies of the consent form (appendices J & K) one of which was retained by the researcher and the other by the participant. The interviews lasted between fifty and ninety minutes and were audio-recorded. After the interview, participants received a debrief sheet (appendix L) and were invited to give informal feedback about the interview. All interviewees were offered the opportunity to receive a) a copy of their individual interview transcript, b) a summary of the analysis and c) a summary of study findings upon project completion.

One aspect of the interview process that underwent amendments concerned the information given in the participant brief. The original brief received by four participants described the research topic as *'Aikido practitioners' evaluations of the role and significance of their instructor'*. The researcher subsequently considered that mentioning the instructor as a focus of the study in the brief might bias respondents' expectations and responses. The brief was therefore altered for the remaining four recruits in line with the amended interview schedule by omitting this reference. The amended version described the research topic as *'Aikido practitioners' experiences of training and personal development'*. To test whether this change of brief had impacted participants' accounts (for instance with regard to statements pertaining to the instructor's importance) the data were thoroughly examined for potential differences in the accounts of participants with brief 1 and 2 during the analysis stage. No systematic differences seemed apparent. Almost all participants mentioned the instructor spontaneously. In particular, the consideration that participants primed to talk about the instructor might mention the instructor more frequently during the interview than those with brief 2 was not supported. It was therefore deemed permissible to include data from all interviews in the analysis.

2.4.3 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations form an essential part of any research design. It is the researcher's responsibility to ensure the welfare and protection of participants at all stages of the research (Barret, 2006). The current study was granted ethical approval through London Metropolitan University's research ethics review panel. The research further adhered to the ethical and

professional guidelines commissioned by the British Psychological Society (BPS; 2006). The main ethical considerations addressed in this study are outlined as follows.

2.4.3.1 Informed consent

In order to be in a position to give informed consent participants should be fully conscious of the scope and aims of the research from the outset. Researchers have a duty to inform participants of what the research involves and what happens to the data and research material (Barrett, 2006; Tindall, 1999). Participants should also be assured of the voluntary nature of participation. In this study participants were provided with an outline of the proposed research via the information sheet. The information sheet explained the study's aims and objectives and what participation involved, including issues of confidentiality, anonymity and consent. The voluntary nature of the study was made explicit by informing participants that they could withdraw from the research at any point and without giving reasons.

2.4.3.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

BPS ethical guidelines stipulate that for the purpose of participant protection research needs to safeguard the confidentiality of participants unless otherwise agreed beforehand, and the anonymity of participant data (BPS, 2006). In compliance with these guidelines all aspects of confidentiality and anonymity were agreed with the participants before interviewing. The information sheet informed participants that their data would be anonymised by replacing names with pseudonyms and by concealing the club identity. In line with the UK Data Protection Act (Office of Public Sector Information, 1998) the researcher kept any materials including identifying information in a locked storage facility. Participants were made aware of the researcher's intention to publish the study in a peer-reviewed journal upon completion.

Beyond the need to maintain public anonymity, further steps had to be taken to ensure anonymity within the social group from which the sample was drawn. Anonymity can be a controversial issue in qualitative research since personal details of participants are often required to make the research comprehensible (Tindall, 1999). These may increase the risk of participants becoming identifiable to others who know them. This was a relevant consideration in this study as the participants were part of a closely-knit social group. This issue was addressed by concealing participants' identities from one another in all correspondences. When providing participant feedback all participant-related personal data were omitted. It was further ensured that quotations or paraphrases used in the feedback were brief, generic and uncontroversial, and where possible, individual views were not identified as

such. In the event of publication the researcher will make every reasonable effort to disguise participant identities.

Since the instructor had been involved in part of the recruitment process it was necessary to ensure that participant anonymity extended to the instructor-student relationship. The instructor and researcher had from the outset agreed on his level of involvement in the study. The instructor was aware that despite his facilitation of the administrative aspect of recruitment he held no other stakes in the research, and that for reasons of anonymity the researcher was not in a position to disclose participant identities or provide him with study findings. This point was also discussed with participants during the initial telephone contact and prior to the interview, where participants were reminded that their decision to participate or not would have no bearing on their club membership.

2.4.3.3 Participant protection

Participant protection is an important consideration due to the inherent power imbalance between researcher and participant. Qualitative researchers should acknowledge and address this imbalance by seeking to equalise their relationship with the participants. One way of redressing the power imbalance is through researcher self-disclosure. Tindall (1999) maintained that participants should be given enough information to be able to sufficiently understand the researcher's position. In light of this the researcher deemed it appropriate to be transparent about her personal involvement in martial arts practice, as outlined in section 2.4.1.

While good qualitative research is likely to be interesting to both parties and can be a positive and even therapeutic experience for participants (West, 2002), the possibility of it evoking strong emotional reactions in participants, negative as well as positive, is unavoidable. Cieurzo and Keitel (1999) highlighted the role conflict inherent in in-depth interviews: the interviewer by default relies on basic counselling skills to facilitate the respondent's narrative but may be forced to re-negotiate the boundary between detached researcher and therapist if difficult emotional content emerges during the interview. West (2002; p.264) warned of "hit and run" research, where researchers leaves participants following interviews involving intimate disclosures, with little awareness of, or consideration for the emotional impact of the interview on the participant. To avoid this scenario West (2002) suggested that researchers should remain responsive to any distress the interview process might cause participants, provide opportunities for "ongoing renewed consent" (p.264) and use research supervision to manage potential conflicts. While these suggestions were mainly aimed at psychotherapy

research they may also apply to other forms of in-depth interviewing like in the current study. Although the research topic was not considered particularly sensitive or emotionally unsettling, and the risk of it causing distress was deemed low, several steps were taken to minimise potential harm in line with the aforementioned suggestions. Throughout the interview the researcher endeavoured to remain perceptive of participants' emotional states, and to respond to potential signs of distress. Following the interview participants had an opportunity to debrief and address any outstanding issues. Participants were made aware, both in the information sheet and immediately before the interview, that they could pause the interview or revoke their consent for participation at any point.

Although the interview process was in essence respondent-led, the researcher was mindful of the possibility of participants disclosing more information than originally anticipated. Cieurzo and Keitel (1999) highlighted this as a particular risk with conducting in-depth research in informal settings. In the present study there was a possibility of participants engaging in an unexpected exploration of negative aspects of their relationship with the instructor. This was particularly the case for those participants who had been unaware of the study's focus on this relationship at the outset. The researcher considered that discussing problematic aspects of this relationship during the interview could lead to participants experiencing cognitive dissonance or impact on their ongoing relationship with the instructor. This issue was addressed by minimising the power differential between researcher and participants in the following ways: in line with Tindall's (1999) suggestion to reassure participants of their right to decide on the level of disclosure, participants were informed in the brief, and reminded again immediately before the interview that they were not obliged to answer any questions they felt uncomfortable with. As discussed in section 2.4.3.2, participants were also aware of club-internal anonymity arrangements (i.e., that neither the other students nor the instructor were aware of their participation status in the study).

As another step towards equalising the power imbalance Tindall (1999) suggested giving participants ownership rights over their interview transcripts. This involves the researcher providing the participants with a copy of their transcripts for their information and reference, and informing them of their right of censorship. In line with this suggestion individual transcripts were made available to participants. Although participants did not have full ownership rights over transcripts (i.e., were not in a position to censor the original recording) they were made aware of their option to exclude parts of the transcript from the analysis (see section 2.5.1).

In conclusion, it must be noted that despite the researcher's best efforts it would be unrealistic to expect a complete suspension of the power imbalance in qualitative research as "[i]n the final analysis it is the researcher's version of reality that is given public visibility. It is not possible to achieve complete mutuality and equality" (Tindall, 1999; p.155).

2.4.3.4 Accountability

The aim in qualitative research to uncover people's experiences bestows upon the researcher a degree of accountability towards his or her participants (Tindall, 1999). The researcher is obliged to define the purpose of the research, its intended audience and prospective routes for dissemination. Marshall (1986) distinguished the research community, the researcher and the research participants as three potential audiences:

> Research is **for them** in that it contributes to understanding within the research community; it is **for me** as I use it to explore topics of personal interest and develop my competence as a knower; and it is **for us**, as taking part in research impacts participants' lives. (p.208)

In acknowledgement of this issue the researcher took several steps to honour her responsibility towards participants with regard to the dissemination of findings. Feedback on both the analysis and the completed study was offered to all participants (see section 2.5.2). In the event of publication with a peer-reviewed journal the researcher will contact participants who asked for a summary of the study findings to make them aware of the publication.

2.5 Analytic Process

2.5.1 Analysis of interview data

Following each interview the researcher noted her general impression of its process and content and of any pertinent issues.[31] Smith and colleagues (2009) suggested that this practice could aid reflection during the interviewing stage and provide useful data to help contextualise and develop the analysis.

Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim[32]. For the purpose of anonymity transcripts were identified via pseudonyms. All interviewees had the option of receiving a copy of their individual interview transcripts via e-mail. This was for the purposes of enabling interviewees to verify the accuracy of factual information provided (particularly with regard to the representation of aikido-specific terminology), censor information deemed particularly personal or sensitive, and reflect and comment on the interview experience. In accordance

[31] See appendix N for a copy of post-interview notes.

[32] For the purpose of interviewee protection the researcher has retained the original recordings and consent forms. These are available upon request.

with the notions of participant involvement and collaborative research this step was seen as an important contribution to research transparency. All interviewees opted in, with some asking for this option off their own accord. Seven out of eight interviewees commented on their transcripts. Out of these, five had no concerns or offered minor corrections on terminology. Two interviewees asked for small portions of their transcripts to be excluded from the analysis, either because they were seen as diversions from the topic area or because the interviewees felt they had misrepresented aspects of their view on instructor figures.[33] These sections were excluded from the analysis.

The data analysis chiefly followed the analytic process outlined in the literature (Smith, 1995; Smith & Osborn, 2008; Smith et al., 2009). Transcripts were read and re-read and annotated on the left hand margin with 'initial comments', focusing on descriptive, linguistic and conceptual observations (Smith et al., 2009).[34] In a slight deviation from the standard procedure emerging themes were generated from these initial comments and recorded on a separate word document rather than being annotated on the right hand margin of the transcripts. With repeated reading preliminary themes were generated from initial comments. These were recorded in a word document, using identifiers[35], which facilitated cross-reference with the original segments of text. In this fashion individual theme lists were created for each interview.[36] Next, similar themes between and within interviews were identified through the use of colour coding. This process formed the basis for a more thorough cross-case analysis and the collapsing of emergent themes.[37] This is in line with Smith and colleagues (2009) who recommend cross-case analysis as a practical solution for larger samples.[38] A comprehensive list of all themes was compiled and these were clustered according to superordinate themes. Throughout this process close attention was paid to

[33] This development appears to indicate a sensitivity on these participants' part, perhaps reflective of notions of respect and deference for one's instructor that appear typical of traditional martial arts settings. Nevertheless, it did not appear to me as though the sections omitted from the analysis would have substantially enriched it. The omitted sections were largely tangential to the interview questions, and as such it is highly unlikely that they would have been used for the analysis. Ethical and relational considerations around this are explored in section 3.3 and appendix A.

[34] Please refer to appendix O for an example of an annotated transcript

[35] Identifiers provided information about the transcript source and page number.

[36] IPA is a flexible approach and it is permissible to adapt elements of the analytical procedure as long as rigour is maintained (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Smith et al., 2009). In the present case, the deviation merely reflected the researcher's preference for word processor-based analysis. The use of identifiers and the cyclical nature of the analytic process ensured that the analysis stayed close to the original text.

[37] Cross-case analysis refers to a concurrent analysis of all transcripts leading to the generation of one theme list. In contrast, case-by-case analysis refers to a process of generating themes for each individual transcript and the subsequent merging into a single theme list. Both methods are permissible in IPA. See Smith and Osborn (2008) for an in-depth description of the analytic procedure.

[38] Smith and colleagues (2009) specify larger samples as those with over six participants, as in the present study.

'disconfirming' data (see section 2.6.2.2). The emerging superordinate and subordinate themes were checked for consistency by comparing them with all sections of the source text. Where necessary, themes were amended in order to capture the content and meaning emerging from the texts more accurately.[39]

Next, a diagrammatic model was developed in order to better make sense of and visually illustrate the themes in relation to each other. Smith and colleagues (2009) recommended the use of a graphic depiction when analysing larger samples. The model was developed on paper using paper copies of all pertinent quotes that had generated the themes. Themes were checked again for internal consistency by examining individual quotes; then relationships, overlaps and tensions between themes were depicted. In order to enhance the structure and clarity of the diagram 'topic areas' were added in which the themes were embedded. The diagram underwent several transformations throughout the analytic process. Once the theme-generation process was finalised a more in-depth and interpretative analysis of specific themes gave rise to further modifications. Finally, the model underwent further changes during the writing-up stage.[40]

2.5.2 Second analytic stage

Upon conclusion of the first analytic stage a summary of analytic insights (appendix M) was devised and emailed to all participants. The purpose of providing participant feedback was two-fold: firstly, it provided participants with an opportunity to be actively involved in the research process as recipients of generated knowledge. This was deemed to be in line with the principles of research transparency and participant involvement, and also with the value base of counselling psychology. Secondly, it provided a further opportunity to gather additional information in the form of participants' reactions to the feedback. This process is compatible with IPA's emphasis on knowledge emerging through an "iterative process" (Smith & Osborn, 2008; p.75). This can involve 'revisiting' respondents, for instance by conducting multiple interviews or, as in the present study, by eliciting participant feedback on aspects of a preliminary analysis. The latter effectively employs participants as co-researchers.[41]

Feedback provided to participants included an introduction of the diagrammatic model and a brief discussion of individual themes. Themes were illustrated with direct quotations, which were kept brief and to a minimum for reasons of anonymity. Only quotations that

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[39] Please refer to appendices R and S for preliminary versions of the theme table, table 3 for the final version, and appendix T for the final version including references to source quotes via page and line number identifiers.
[40] Please refer to appendices U to W for all preliminary versions of the diagrammatic model.
[41] This approach has been used, for instance, in Smith (1999). See Smith (1994) for a fuller discussion of this issue.

seemed fairly innocuous or where the expressed content had been shared by more than one participant were included. The covering letter attached to the summary outlined the rationale for providing feedback to the participants and invited them to comment on their reactions to it at their discretion. In order to pre-empt misunderstandings participants were reminded of the double-hermeneutic nature of the study. Only two participants responded. Their feedback was general and appreciative of the insights (see section 3.3).

2.6 Quality Assurance

2.6.1 Validity in qualitative research

Qualitative and quantitative methodologies differ with respect to the criteria by which they assess scientific validity. The epistemological position of qualitative research implies that objectivity and the absence of bias are not meaningful concepts. Consequently, positivist criteria used to evaluate the scientific value of research, such as reliability and statistical generalisability are not appropriate within a qualitative epistemology (Willig, 2001; Yardley, 2008). At the same time qualitative researchers agree about the importance of evaluation in order to maintain the scientific rigour and integrity of the enquiry.

Despite the broad range of criteria used for evaluating different types of qualitative research there is a consensus that research needs to be *'trustworthy'* in the sense of demonstrating rigour and relevance (Finlay, 2006b). Rigour is concerned with the integrity of the research process and includes various aspects of study design, procedure and analysis (Finlay, 2006b). Design-related criteria for rigour include the fit between the research question and the methodology adopted and the study's theoretical and philosophical compatibility with the epistemological framework in which the methodological approach is located (Yardley, 2008). Procedural aspects of rigour relate to practical and analytic considerations like sample choice or the thorough and systematic application of the analytic procedure. Such aspects have been addressed in preceding sections. Relevance refers to outcome-related aspects of validity and the impact and significance of a study in its research domain and beyond (Finlay, 2006b). In the present study, the conceptual and epistemological compatibility of the research questions and objectives with IPA has been discussed in preceding sections. Issues pertaining to relevance will be addressed in chapter IV. The following section will explore how procedural aspects of validity were respected.

2.6.2 Measures to ensure procedural validity

In the present study several measures were taken to enhance procedural validity, following principles outlined by Yardley's (2000) framework for evaluating validity in qualitative research.

2.6.2.1 Sensitivity to context

Qualitative researchers "seek to maximize the benefits of engaging actively with the participants in the study" (Yardley, 2008; p.237). One way in which researchers can demonstrate engagement with their participants is by showing regard for their perspectives (Yardley, 2000). By remaining mindful to the participant's particular situation, for example with regard to socio-cultural or setting-specific considerations researchers can facilitate a mutually meaningful exchange. Context specificity plays an important role in IPA in particular; researchers need to demonstrate awareness of issues pertaining to power differentials and potential barriers to communication arising from setting-specific parameters of the research. In the present study the researcher recognised the relevance of setting-specific hierarchical structures to communication and how these might impact on the participants feeling able to express themselves freely. One way in which she sought to address this issue was by reminding participants of anonymity arrangements and by explicitly clarifying that she was not affiliated with the instructor. She further attempted to counter-balance researcher-participant power differentials and establish rapport by disclosing her status as martial arts practitioner.

2.6.2.2 Commitment and analytic rigour

It has been suggested that the strength of IPA (and other phenomenological research) lies in its scope for capturing the richness and ambiguity of lived experience. Good phenomenological research encompasses an artistic dimension characterised by *'vividness'*, *'accuracy'*, *'richness'* and *'elegance'* (Polkinghorne, 1983), allowing the reader to penetrate the *'lifeworld'* (Husserl, 1936/1970) of others in novel and profound ways (Finlay, 2006b). As such, analytic artistry, through its commitment to careful and in-depth enquiry can be seen as enhancing analytic rigour.

Throughout the analytic process thorough grounding in the data was endeavoured by remaining faithful to participants' textual accounts. Emerging themes were subjected to ongoing comparisons with the raw data and checked for viability and completeness (see

section 2.5.1). A second analytic stage served to maximise opportunities for participants to offer feedback.

Another method designed to enhance validity used in the current study is disconfirming case analysis, which involves an attempt to actively seek out *'deviant cases'* (Creswell, 1998; Pope & Mays, 1995), or data not in line with the themes or patterns identified by the researcher. Disconfirming case analysis ensures a critical and rigorous examination of the data. It is regarded as enhancing a study's trustworthiness by assuring the reader that all data and not just those fitting with the researcher's viewpoint were included in the analysis. Additionally, it is credited with producing richer, more complex findings (Yardley, 2000).

2.6.2.3 Transparency

Transparency is largely synonymous with the notions of *'dependability'* and *'confirmability'* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and describes the extent to which the research process is made understandable to an independent readership. The current study employed several measures safeguarding transparency. Care was taken to ensure that participants' and researcher's perspectives were explicitly distinguished throughout and that the entire research process was described in detail (Smith, 1995; Smith & Osborn, 2008). In line with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) guidelines for qualitative research the study provides an 'audit trail', offering documentation pertaining to all analytic stages of the research. This allows the reader to verify and scrutinise the researcher's decision-making and theme generating process.[42]

Another important aspect of transparency is researcher reflexivity. The epistemological basis upon which qualitative research rests acknowledges the researcher's inherent and unavoidable influence on the analytic process, through his or her biases and preconceptions, and in interactions with participants. Consequently, qualitative researchers need to remain mindful of their role in the research and explicitly address their impact upon the analytic process through ongoing self-reflection. Yardley (1997; p.39) suggested that the practice of reflexivity can "defend the analysis from accusations of covert prejudice or excessive idiosyncrasy". The researcher's attempt to candidly disclose how his or her motives and circumstances may have impacted on the research gives readers the opportunity to judge the validity of the knowledge generated for themselves. This process has been recommended for IPA (Smith, 1995) and elsewhere in the phenomenological-hermeneutic tradition. Eliott,

[42] The audit trail includes extracts of raw data (interviews), information on data reduction, data synthesis (theme table, model, links to literature), analytic process, and instrument development (interview schedules, materials) as well as a reflexive account (see relevant sections in this chapter, reflections and appendix).

Fischer and Rennie (1999), for instance, referred to it as *'owning one's perspective'*. The present study incorporates reflexivity throughout in the form of reflective sections embedded in the main text and appendix.

Another suggested strategy to enhance transparency is researcher triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This is an attempt to corroborate the plausibility of one's findings through peer-review by team members or colleagues. Researcher triangulation has been deemed suitable "for corroboration of complex and subtle coding" (Yardley, 2008; p.241), making it appropriate for an IPA study. In the present study a colleague familiar with doctoral-level IPA research reviewed the analytic process and judged the outcomes according to their applicability and consistency with the data. In order to allow the colleague to scrutinise the theme generation process she was provided with original transcripts, all relevant word documents created in the process of theme generation and all versions of the theme table and model. Following an examination of the data that involved random cross-referencing of original quotations with themes she stated: "For the most part, I was able to clearly see a connection between the raw data and the themes." She commented on the model:

> The model provides an interesting pictorial representation of participants' experiences. Viewed in isolation, without an understanding of how the theme titles relate to participants' experiences, it is difficult to decipher. However, as I became more familiar with the content of participants' narratives and how they correspond to the author's theme titles I can see that the model succinctly captures the spectrum of participants' experiences of their training.

The use of members' checks or respondent validation is debated within the different camps of qualitative research. Whereas it has enjoyed popularity within critical realist epistemologies (e.g., Lincoln & Guba, 1985), Yardley (2008) warned that members checks may not be appropriate for phenomenological research as laypeople are often not in a position to comprehend the theories and methods on which a qualitative analysis is based. This point appears particularly relevant to IPA due to its double hermeneutic. Henwood and Pidgeon (1992) suggested that regardless of whether members checks are used researchers should be aware of participants' reaction to the generated outcomes and attempt to explain differences in interpretations if relevant. In line with these guidelines the participant feedback in the present study was not used as part of the validation process but as a transparency and inclusion measure, enhancing both the study's analytic process and its ethical integrity.

This chapter has summarised the research design and investigative methods employed in the current study. Chapter III will describe the themes and diagrammatic model generated in the analytic process.

Chapter III: Analysis

The analysis of this study has been organised and can be understood in two ways: through 1) a theme table (table 3) and 2) a diagrammatic model (figure 2). These two analytic devices correspond, but are not identical. The theme table reflects an interpretation of participants' accounts that remains relatively close to the raw data. The diagrammatic model emerged alongside the theme-generating process as a visually accessible means of describing relationships between themes. It was conceptualised according to a higher-order level of interpretation of data and organised around topic areas, which provide the overarching structure for both the diagrammatic model and the theme table. Sections 3.1 and 3.2 will provide, respectively, an outline of the diagram and a detailed account of topic areas and themes. Section 3.3 will describe and reflect on the interview process. This chapter is written in the first person perspective.

3.1 Diagrammatic Model

By contextualising the themes the diagrammatic model describes processes of psychological development extrapolated from students' accounts of their training experiences. The diagram reflects my meaning-making of 'what happens' through the lens of the participants' accounts. In the following outline, topic areas are represented in bold underlined italics, superordinate themes in bold italics, and subordinate themes in italics.

Central to the diagram is ***The Training Experience*** of participants, consisting of the ***Dojo Space and Group Dynamic*** and the ***Student-Instructor Relationship.*** The dojo space and group dynamic is characterised by *Enculturation and Group Support* and *Emotional Emergence.* The student-instructor relationship is characterised by *Role Modelling, Guidance* and *Provocative Containment.* The training experience is shaped by input from ***The Student*** and ***The Instructor.*** The instructor can be seen as ***Gatekeeper of the Art,*** conveying the art of aikido in accordance with the club's lineage and philosophy and creating a specific atmosphere in the dojo. The avenues through which the instructor conveys the art and establishes and maintains leadership are behaviours, attitudes or qualities, namely *Credibility, Empathy and Attentiveness, Facilitating Self-Governance* and *Boundaries.* Students bring their perspectives and histories to the training experience, conceptualised as ***Hopes and Expectations for Training*** and ***Beliefs about Authority and Trust.*** The student's perspectives are modified through the ongoing training experience, which encompasses interactions with the instructor and other students. This ***Process of Change*** is conceptualised

as a function of two pathways through which the training experience is consolidated and made relevant to the student's everyday life: ***Embodied Practice*** and ***The Internalised Instructor***. Whereas the latter emerges directly from the student-instructor relationship, the first relates to the wider contextual and structural aspects of the training experience (the dojo space and group dynamic). ***<u>Outcomes of Change</u>*** describe positive psychological developments reported by students as a result of training, namely ***Confidence and Competence***, ***Managing Emotions and Physical Discomfort***, ***Psychological Flexibility*** and ***Self- and Other-Awareness***.

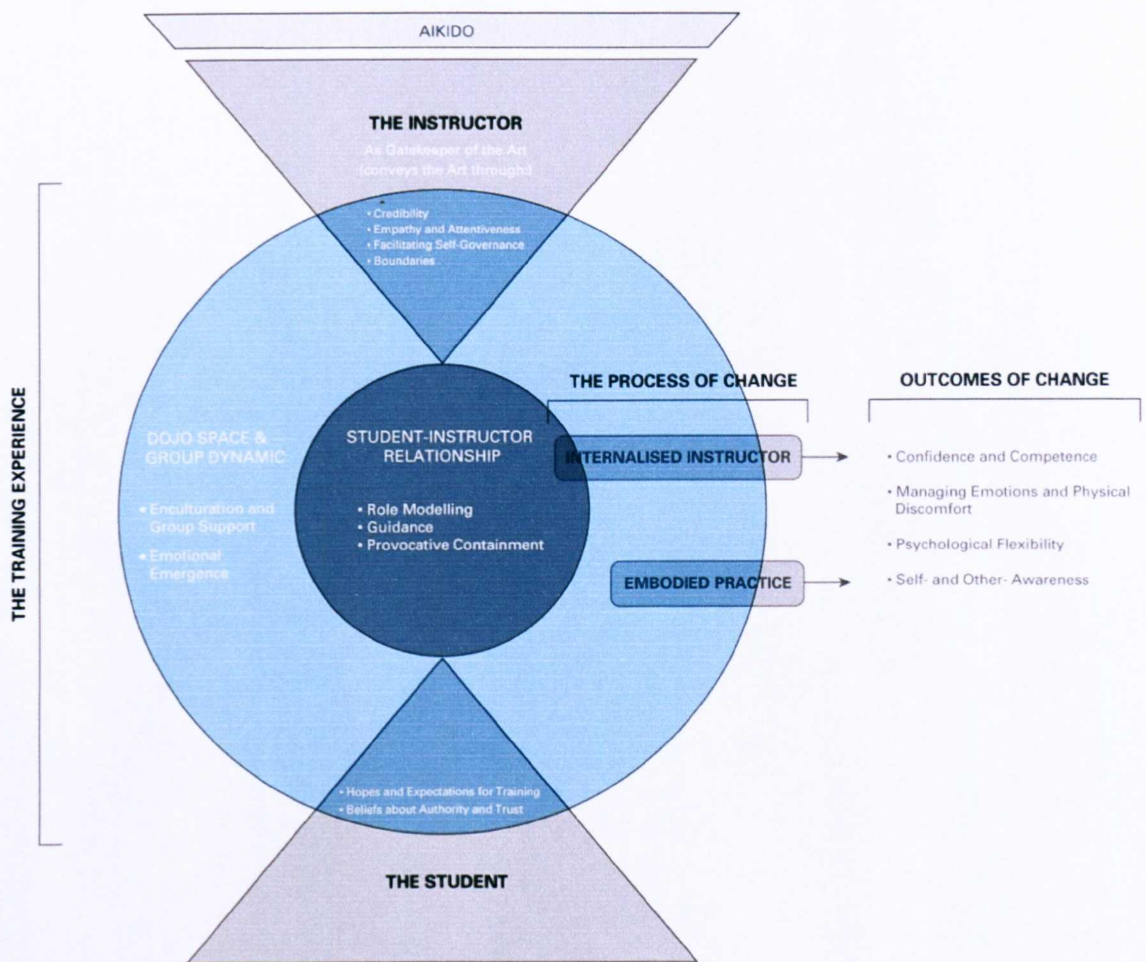

Figure 2. Diagrammatic Model

3.2 Themes

This section describes superordinate and subordinate themes subsumed within the topic areas, and outlines how these emerged from the data.[43]

[43] All direct citations are referenced with page and line numbers.

Table 3

Final Table of Themes

Topic Area	Superordinate theme	Subordinate theme
1. The instructor	1.1 The instructor as gatekeeper of the art (conveys the art through:)	1.1.1 Credibility
		1.1.2 Empathy and attentiveness
		1.1.3 Facilitating self-governance
		1.1.4 Boundaries
2. The student	2.1 Hopes and expectations for training	
	2.2 Beliefs about authority and trust	
3. The training experience	3.1 Dojo space and group dynamic	3.1.1 Enculturation and group support
		3.1.1 Emotional emergence
	3.2 Student-instructor relationship	3.2.1 Role modelling
		3.2.2 Guidance
		3.2.3 Provocative containment
4. The process of change	4.1 Embodied practice	
	4.2 The internalised instructor	
5. Outcomes of change	5.1 Confidence and competence	
	5.2 Managing emotions and physical discomfort	
	5.3 Psychological flexibility	
	5.4 Self and other-awareness	

3.2.1 Topic area 1 - The instructor

3.2.1.1 Superordinate theme 1.1 - The instructor as gatekeeper of the art

"[...] the mindset, the positioning, the focus, the perspective of the sensei defines the culture of the dojo." (Sean, 2: 3-4)

Several practitioners felt that the instructor played a significant role in shaping the training experience by creating the dojo atmosphere, and that his personal approach to aikido defined the dojo ethos and philosophy. Michael (29: 27) expressed this most succinctly by stating that the instructor "runs the show". He emphasised the instructor's effort and enthusiasm in creating the dojo environment (32: 7-11): "[...] he's put that view on the dojo. Because he's put so much energy and made it his. So strongly because he's such an amazing person. No-one else could really fill the gap like him and do it as well as he can."

Frank highlighted how the atmosphere and training ethos created by the instructor was transmitted to, and by, the students:

> '[...] the dojo relies a lot on the atmosphere of the people who are there... it's very much [the instructor]'s dojo and... it's... I wouldn't say it's entirely that he creates the whole ethos but largely it's his interests and his approach to the study.' (Frank, 4: 11)

This was echoed by Sean, who offered a retrospective view on the instructor's own embeddedness in a hierarchical system, made explicit in the club's lineage. Like several other practitioners, Sean commented on the grandmaster's influence as the instructor's teacher and representative of the lineage:

> [...] to err be in relationship with a person like that who <u>themselves</u> is in relationship with somebody who is maybe fifteen or twenty years <u>their</u> senior. Who has comparable physical...psychological...emotional qualities. It's very inspiring. Um, because you know that the...the sensei of the sensei...is actually err...a very tangible embodiment of a historical cultural tradition [...] that has been passed on from master to student [...] over numerous generations. (Sean, 7: 30-42)

From the practitioners' perspectives, the process of passing on the art from instructor to students was facilitated through certain instructor qualities, competencies and stances that practitioners described as helpful and trust inspiring. These are summarised within the subordinate themes *credibility*; *empathy and attentiveness*; *facilitating self-governance*; and *boundaries.*

Subordinate theme 1.1.1 Credibility

"Everything he does makes sense." (Luca, 18: 38)

For most practitioners the instructor's perceived credibility contributed to the overall appeal of training. When discussing the quality of teaching they received, several practitioners emphasised the practical usefulness of the training and the instructor's competence in the art. Training was described as having a "purpose" (John; 12: 26-27) or "use" (Luca, 9: 13-14) or as making "sense" (Luca; 18: 38). For Sean the functionality of the practice was intrinsically linked to the martial tradition:

> [...] it's very, very real...what we do. At the core these are martial arts. And in...in [...] a life or death situation I would feel confident that what I've been taught and the way I've been taught it...would be useful to me. It's not some...err odd-looking form of aerobic exercise. (Sean, 20: 32-36)

Others commented on the instructor's succinct yet precise manner of teaching. Alexis (14: 6) expressed his conviction in the instructor's ability to explain or demonstrate aspects of the training he felt unsure of or did not understand: "[...] if I go and ask him just to explain to me why we do this he will have the answer just in a split second." For Michael an important aspect of credibility was the instructor's committed and rigorous attitude towards training:

'[...] some people are very fascinated by people with amazing strength and amazing abilities [...]. I think [the instructor] as an individual isn't really so bothered about that. He more wants to just do what he knows and do it properly [...] He isn't so bothered about making it look amazing.' (Michael, 11: 38-42)

For Alexis the instructor's rigour pertained to the completeness of training, which satisfied his search for a holistic practice:

> [...] always, always, always, always, as far as I remember myself, I've always wanted to explore something new and find something that really satisfies my heart and my brain and everything. And I was always disappointed because, ok, that's the same thing, or this person is the same as the other one. Err... I've been with [the instructor] for [...] years now and... and then... just err... just err... The word perfect is just what I give to him. I mean, I can describe him with many adjectives. [The instructor], my teacher. (Alexis, 13: 2-11)

Another dimension of credibility was the instructor's perceived sincerity and personal integrity. Michael (10: 20-23) stated: "[...] the thing I most like about [the instructor] is that he's very genuine about what he does. Um, he's very sincere." The instructor's sincerity was experienced as a quality that revealed itself within his teachings through his conduct and dedication to the art, as outlined by Phil:

> [...] you can see a sense of maturity in what he's doing. [...] And that will [....] apply even to practical aikido techniques [...] if somebody's got that kind of common sense then you can think, yeah, what they're showing us is probably what they really think is useful. As opposed to just... err... advertising or trying to make people so busy that they keep coming back and spending money on the dojo [...]. (Phil, 22: 20-31)

In a similar vein, others noted that the instructor did not seem to be motivated by material gains. John (12: 19) stated never feeling "like a punter" in the dojo, while Michael (11: 21-22) appreciated that the instructor was not so "worried about the administration". This contrasted with his previous experience of kickboxing, which was "a bit more of a business" (10: 42).

Subordinate theme 1.1.2 Empathy and attentiveness

"[...] you always feel like his eye's...his eye is just on you. [...] That keeps my interest quite high I think." (Alexis, 5: 41-45)

To many practitioners, the instructor's capacity to listen, and to pay attention to their particular difficulties was important. Luca appreciated that the instructor provided constant advice while remaining mindful of his knee injury. Sean (7: 3-5) suggested that the instructor embodied "humility", "sensitivity" and "openness to other people". Michael commented that the instructor did not "turn a blind eye" (24: 14) to the students' efforts. He stated:

> He knows that people err don't do strenuous activities in their daily lives. And so if you do do it with him- and that's part of being in the dojo, that you will do that kind of stuff...[...] he talks to you about that afterwards and he will make sure that you um... have sort of thought about what you experienced from it. (Michael, 24: 15-20)

Verbal exchange and being asked for feedback provided valuable opportunities for Michael to explore his experience of training, as illustrated in this dialogue (24: 33-43):

> [...] in some more conventional types of activity, [...] like kickboxing, [...] there is more of a agreed way that you feel. So, I feel tired. Yeah, you should feel tired. You shouldn't feel like you have got energy. If you've got energy then something is obviously wrong, you haven't done it properly. If you feel...if you're not feeling the pain then you're not putting enough effort in. [...] it's not the activity that counts, it's... you've got to [...] feel this. Whereas in aikido it's more like, if you've done the activity properly then that's...[...] and then afterwards... how you...what you experience from it is your experience. It's nice.
>
> ML: And how does that make you feel when he asks you about your experience, when he...when he shows that he's interested in your experience?
>
> It often makes me feel like I don't really know what I'm feeling. (chuckles) [...] Cos when [...] someone isn't denying you the ability to express yourself [...] your instant reaction is nothing. Cos you haven't got anything to say to that. And you have to think about it [...] I often don't know what to say really because... except for the obvious.

Here Michael seems to express how the instructor's curious and accepting stance gave him permission to reflect on his experience on a deeper level and think for himself without pressure to conform, in a manner he was unaccustomed to from other social contexts.

For John the instructor's continuous regard stood out particularly during a past episode when he had been forced to interrupt his training. John recounted that during this time the instructor

> just sent me [...] three, four emails...and...they weren't elaborate, they weren't involved, they weren't...they were just three, four emails. And really just...err...he didn't stop being my sensei. [...] He didn't stop. It was just reaffirming ...the relationship. (John, 11: 44-12: 4)

To John (12: 14-15) the instructor's demonstration of sustained interest felt "like he thought I was [...] a worthy person or something, worth something".

Subordinate theme 1.1.3 Facilitating self-governance

"[...] he's passing along his information, his knowledge. And letting us, the students, run with it." (Jeff, 14: 43-44)

Many practitioners felt that the instructor's teaching encouraged autonomy. Phil (21: 27-28) described training as "a process of people making their own decisions". Michael (2:

16-17) stated: "[the instructor] lets you really own the practice, the study for yourself. He doesn't tell you how to think about it". Jeff felt that the instructor introduced ideas in a non-coercive manner. He described how during some episodes of training he had felt that the instructor had guided his personal learning process in this manner:

> [...] I think that he (...) really understood [...]. He, [...]'s told me stories, old stories, of his own training days. Perhaps is that [...] he hasn't actually s...said in a direct way to me, oh, do this or do that. He doesn't do that. [...]. He doesn't make you but he...I think he presents the idea there, and if you take it then it's good, but he doesn't say anything. It is the watching. (Jeff, 9: 19-27)

Sean (16: 1-2) stated that the instructor's stance had raised his awareness of "the need to be personally responsible...for one's development". Phil also valued the scope for personal responsibility and decision-making in the dojo in contrast to previous martial arts experiences where he had found a culture of subservience:

> [...] it's not a dojo where... you have to give up your house and... move to the local... local street [...] to get a promotion or anything like that. It that's certainly something I have seen in other places where...things can get much more intense. (Phil, 21: 30-35)

Phil's statement intimates an experience of instructors placing unreasonable demands on students and students perhaps relinquishing their common sense. While Phil did not explicitly mention the instructor here, his role in this situation is implicit when considering his perceived pivotal role in defining the dojo culture.

Subordinate theme 1.1.4 Boundaries

"[...] I think [the instructor] is very clear in what he wants to teach." (Phil, 26: 30)

Some practitioners talked about different ways in which the instructor maintained boundaries within the training. One aspect of this concerned the clarity and direction in his teaching and his "determination" (Jeff, 14: 34) to stick to his regime. Similarly, Phil (29: 33) praised the instructor's ability to "stick to what's [...] on the label". Sean (20: 28) cited the "rigour" of instruction as one of the reasons that kept him engaged in training. Like Jeff's statement, this suggests a disciplined adherence to the fundamentals of training. Another aspect of rigour may pertain to the instructor's demand for discipline, as elucidated later on in a statement by Michael (see subordinate theme 3.2.3). For Jeff (10: 15-16) the instructor's maintenance of formal boundaries and etiquette stood out: "[...] he's been kinda nice, yet at the same time he's keeping...I feel he's keeping his distance from his students." Phil also talked about "a sort of distance" (20: 29) in the dojo that he perceived as helpful.

3.2.2 Topic Area 2 - The student

This topic area illustrates the practitioners' hopes, expectations and beliefs shaped by their histories and current life situations, and comprises the superordinate themes *hopes and expectations for training* and *beliefs about authority and trust.*

3.2.2.1 Superordinate theme 2.1 - Hopes and expectations for training

"[...] for me [...] the dojo's first priority, nothing else matters. [...] I've taken to the dojo, um I've taken to aikido, the whole martial arts thing...um." (Luca, 8: 23-25)

Practitioners' motivations to start training emerged as an intensely individual topic, with a broad range of reasons mentioned, including spiritual needs, self-defence, stress-relief and physical fitness. Many practitioners had previous experiences of martial arts, martial sports or other mind-body practices that shaped their expectations for training. Luca (10: 13-14) cited self-defence as his main reason for training: "That's why I'm there for, you know. And everything else is a bonus [...]." In contrast, Frank (9: 45-10: 3) emphasised personal development: "I don't really think about the martial aspect in terms of my own self-development because it's not ... an area of my life that's... (laughs)... You know. It's not really an area of my life. Fighting with people." Similarly, John remarked:

> [...] I'm really not interested in you know, putting my fist through bits of wood or you know, I don't wanna get my foot behind my ear...or something, I just wanna...you know. I'm really interested in the kinda spiritual side really [...]. (John, 1: 39-43)

Jeff described how spiritual and existential concerns had informed his decision to start aikido. Returning home after a period of living abroad had prompted him to question his existing life style and search for a more meaningful way of life:

> [...] when I came back I had a different way of thinking about things, I thought more...kinda, I do things myself, or...[...] I felt there was just something...something quite empty. [...] I worked in another place and...and saw the guys who were at that time [...] just...late twenties, early thirties. They were going on, oh, I gotta go to the gym, I'm getting a bit fat and... I was thinking, no, I'm not gonna turn into this, wasting my life! Working. Eating. Getting fat, or...So, you know, there's something more. Perhaps it's err...you know I...I went, I turned to martial arts [...] to get a deeper understanding to what...life is [...] (Jeff, 22: 35-23: 7)

The notion of training providing opportunities for personal challenge emerged as an important theme. John stated:

> I never really studied anything. And so...err, that was really attractive to me, [...] the prospect of studying something. Because it was completely alien and ...disciplined. [...] I just found it something...err...probably something quite noble. Something to err attach myself to. (John, 2: 28-33)

For Phil (1: 24-27) training was an opportunity to challenge himself with regard to his physical skills: "[...] actually the thing that I found the most difficult in the training was rolling. [...]. So actually I decided to go into aikido for that very reason." Sean explained how he came to experience the challenge involved in training as rewarding and appealing through its absence in everyday life:

> '[...] a great deal of emphasis is placed around the um...the amount of time that it takes to...to realise certain levels of competence. There is no quick... fix. And this is what I find very attractive and very appealing and very radical. In the context of the broader...consumer culture. Which is about instant gratification...err, and the ability to get something... because you can pay for something, rather than because you've actually...err...extended oneself or committed oneself...' (Sean, 11: 12-20)

Despite differential motives for training, practitioners' accounts suggested that they attached considerable significance to their training. For some the significance had been present from the outset while for others it had evolved more gradually over the course of training. Sean (3: 7) said about his training: "It's very deliberate. It's not an activity that I do as a hobby." For Luca (8: 33-37), training also represented a holistic experience: "[...] it's completely, err...everything. Because...you know, O Sensei, the founder of the art...said, you know...aikido's...is your whole life, innit? It's just...it's not just the technique, it's just...everything, you know."

3.2.2.2 Superordinate theme 2.2 - Beliefs about authority and trust

"[...] it's a trust thing. [...] when we're going back to the... teacher again, you're always judging... them." (Phil, 22:14-15)

Authority and trust were regular themes in the practitioners' accounts, with many talking about issues pertaining to authority and dojo etiquette, and the importance of trusting the instructor and fellow students. However, practitioners differed in the extent to which the notions of deference and authority featured in their relational approach to the instructor. Some students, like John, aspired to a more casual, "matey" (18: 37) relationship. Similarly, Frank (15: 33-34) welcomed the opportunity of having informal discussions with the instructor outside of training: "I don't think it's problematic to have these disagreements, it's a nice way of um refining your understanding of things." In contrast, Luca (11: 4-6) advocated a stricter, more traditional style: "[...] I think... the teacher if he...tells you off and anything then you listen, you don't answer back [...]. You're the teacher's student. You're in the dojo. He's practised thirty years, you're a student. Stop. That's it."

Jeff expressed similar sentiments:

> [...] I feel that the teacher-student relationship should stay teacher-student relationship and...and it shouldn't, you know, it shouldn't become mates or buddies. [...] I think that he keeps it as...at that. And I...at the same time I sense that, and I keep it at that as well. (Jeff, 10: 23-28)

These different positions may be influenced by individual histories as well as expectations and requirements with which practitioners approached the relationship, with some seeking connection and communication and others structure and direction. Jeff's position in particular may be in part reflective of his dual role as the instructor's assistant, making him particularly mindful of his responsibility to display proper etiquette and conduct. This also emerges in other sections of his account, where Jeff describes how his feelings of loyalty towards the instructor at times felt overwhelming and burdening. For instance he illustrates a situation at an aikido social event where he was preoccupied with catering to the instructor's wellbeing to the detriment of his own enjoyment.

While these instances describe how individual circumstances and past experiences can shape practitioners' expectations about the nature of their relationship with the instructor, other accounts suggested that the opposite process also applied: practitioners' relationships with the instructor also had the potential of modifying their attitudes towards relationships more generally. Sean described how training had changed his attitude towards male authority figures:

> [...] in terms of what's been challenging...is um my relationship with authority. With other male figures who have authority. So I don't think that that challenge or that issue is about the sensei. That's my personal history of dealing with authority figures. Um...I...I...err...I'm not really a joiner.(...) For as long as I remember I have been very rebellious. And always questioning...err authority...wherever it stems from. So err...my...my practice in aikido and my practice in yoga and in Zen err are the three areas where I err...submit or surrender if those are the correct words. Where I don't try um to...lead but impo...um, am happy and am comfortable and am confident in...following. But by making that choice. (Sean, 19: 3-15)

Phil related that trust had played a mayor role in establishing a relationship with the instructor. He acknowledged having had initial reservations about the hierarchical nature of training due to negative past experiences at another club, and described how his experience of accepting authority had been conditional on establishing the instructor's and fellow students' trustworthiness:

> [...] martial arts can be quite challenging. And it can bring up a lot of emotions [...] I was quite wary to want to choose the right group of people to do it with. Only through other experiences in the past. So I was quite wary about who to train with [...].

> Because it's such a strong thing you have to make sure you choose the teacher very well. (Phil, 2: 4-11)

Phil (4: 29) described how he evaluated the instructor's trustworthiness through assessing the trustworthiness of his fellow students as "you very often see the strength of the teacher from their students". This gradual evaluation process eventually enabled him to "fall in line with the structure" (26: 14-18). He stated (15: 1): "[...] the more I'm into it it's fine." For some, the decision to trust the instructor seemed contingent on a sense of affinity between their own and the instructor's values and perspectives. Sean (9: 10-12) asserted: "I've made a very clear and deliberate choice...to pursue this particular martial art with this particular sensei. So, I think there's a very close...err correspondence between our positions [...]." Frank (13: 23-34) also shared his sense of sharing "similar concerns" with the instructor and experiencing "some sort of...sympathy between what he thinks and what I think" that kept him engaged in training.

Sean talked about the reciprocal relationship between trusting the instructor and fellow students, and trusting himself and his body in aikido, and how this process was essential to his progression:

> [...] trust is something that we don't readily tend to give to others because there's ... there's err... economic...err downsides to our doing so. Err, potentially there's a psychological or emotional downside to our doing so. [...]. So to be in an environment that's explicitly about err successive layers of opening up and trusting one self, trusting one's body, and trusting the err...the integrity of the teacher and the other people in the community of the dojo. It's a very interesting process. But it's only in the opening to trust that one can make progress. [...] So it's interesting...the more one trust to the process, to the teacher... the more rapid and the deeper the progress that one makes becomes. (Sean, 14: 8-21)

3.2.3 Topic Area 3 - The training experience

This topic area comprises the superordinate themes *dojo space and group dynamic* and *student-instructor relationship.*

3.2.3.1 Superordinate theme 3.1 - Dojo space and group dynamic

This superordinate theme comprises the subordinate themes *enculturation and group support* and *emotional emergence.*

Subordinate theme 3.1.1 - Enculturation and group support

"[...] there are very few...social contexts in contemporary society where men and women of different ages, different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, different err physical abilities and

types and sizes can come together in a mutually supportive, non-competitive, non-combative space." (Sean, 12: 4-7)

All practitioners cited aspects of the dojo culture, such as the diverse range of students and the supportive, non-competitive group atmosphere as important for their training. Michael (29: 5) appreciated the atmosphere created by the "dynamic pool of people" constituting the group. Phil (16: 14-17) suggested that the diverse and supportive environment was facilitated by the hierarchical structure of the dojo, which "[...] allows people who are very different to train together. And then between that actually it's very good process 'cos both seem to learn from the other." He offered the idea that the dojo operated "a bit like a society" (14: 18) where senior members provided 'invisible support' to junior members by anticipating and preventing or resolving problems, without the junior members' knowledge.

Some practitioners portrayed the social support received from the group as an important source of strength in their lives. For Sean (2: 24-25), who engaged in other more solitary forms of personal development, the ability to share his experience with others and develop through "close physical, psychological and emotional exchange with another person" was an important aspect of training. Phil (8: 4-5), who had returned to the dojo after living abroad, stated how peer support had helped him to re-settle: "[...] you've got friends that you know from the past. It gives you immediate continuity, friends." Alexis, who had moved to London some years ago, expressed similar feelings:

> [...] if you are brought up in a very small community as I and you find yourself in such a big city as London is err...[...] the experience is err a bit awkward. [...] I found these people here really friendly and err I decided to be with them and... to...to stay... (Alexis, 4: 24-32)

For Alexis this kind of peer support was a novel experience:

> My teacher, the senior students and err...the way we train here is err like, everyone helps each other [...] I never met that in my life. From colleagues, from... even when I was a child and we used to play football and all these things and it was so competitive. So then you come here, then you start practising, you see that someone you don't really know cares about the way you practise and does want to see you improving yourself, so...that's err the most important thing that err kept me here. (Alexis, 2: 5-16)

This socialisation experience seems to have affected Alexis profoundly. In a later section he alludes to difficult childhood experiences marked by emotional and relational deficits, and how he managed to partially repair those through his interactions at the dojo:

> I mean, I did not have a... easy life as a child. From here I learnt things that will be precious for me, for the future. Some other people, there are things that they learnt

from their family, their parents, but those things I never learnt. So just I learnt them here. (Alexis, 3: 4-7)

It seems that the dojo community fulfilled Alexis' unmet childhood needs for skills building and guidance, in essence acting as a parent figure substitute.

Other practitioners viewed the group dynamic more critically. Frank observed that the community had become less diverse, particularly with regard to gender and wondered whether the dojo atmosphere had perhaps become less inclusive over time. I was aware that the club's current membership was predominantly male, and in hindsight wondered if my presence as a female interviewer partly prompted Frank's reflection on this gender issue. Michael expressed a sense of isolation as a result of being much younger than most other practitioners:

> [...] it's quite frustrating cos I would really like there to be people my age whom I can talk about and do... experience it with... at home and stuff, out of the dojo. But there isn't really anyone like that [...]. (Michael, 28: 16-18)

Several practitioners emphasised the importance of safety in training. There was a consensus that the dojo culture promoted a safe environment marked by trust and respect that enabled engagement in a potentially dangerous practice. Luca highlighted that the nature of training necessitated focus, self-control and disengagement from negative affect:

> [...] when you go into the dojo you leave it outside because it could be dangerous for someone else. Say if you...say for example I'd be angry, whatever...I...people wind me up at work a lot of the time, so I go into the dojo and...it'd distract my practice cos I'm not concentrating properly [...]. It makes sense cos you could be doing a technique and you could stab someone's arm. Or...you could injure yourself. (Luca, 7: 2-11)

Phil emphasised mutual trust and challenge as important features of the dojo culture:

> From [...] previous experience I can see the importance of having a safe environment to train in. But when I say safe I don't mean that you're not having to do something very challenging. But you have to know that you can trust the people around you, that you think that they're good people, that they're... good at what they do [...] (Phil, 3: 17-19)

Michael commented on the uniqueness of training as a place where one could exert oneself physically in a controlled environment:

> [...] it's really nice to be able to have an environment where you can do that in a [...] safe place. Because normally, you'd never be able to...unless you escalate...[...] Whereas in aikido you can really exert yourself. And err...it can still be controlled, what you're doing. And you're not gonna damage the other person. They know what's happening, you know what's happening. (Michael, 6: 36-44)

Another much-cited aspect was the seriousness of training that permeated the dojo, and stood in contrast to other social situations. The atmosphere was described as "traditional",

"austere" (John; 7: 34 & 36) and "intense" (Frank; 5: 45). John described his impression of entering the dojo environment:

> [...] even when we're getting changed before and after the lesson is, there's a kind of quietness and stillness and a respect and err, people would just go and sit quietly in seiza on the mat and wait for the lesson to begin. [...] there's a...healthy...distance I think [...]. In the...people, you know...and a healthy respect for each other. (John, 2: 12-18)

John further explained how this atmosphere disallowed the use of conventional styles of social interaction, and particularly strategies like self-promotion that could be described as 'social manoeuvring':

> [...] Nobody's gonna come in and start...yup yup yup yup yup. [...] Like you maybe would at any social situation, if you're gonna go in and try and imprint yourself [...]. You go, hello, I'm so-and-so or whatever [...] But nobody's gonna do that in that place, or if they do it's kind of [...] met with...err...not offishness but...just a collective 'that's not really the way it is in here'. (John, 7: 42-8: 2)

Luca recounted a similar discovery with regard to the tendency of wanting to impress others:

> [...] in our dojo you have to park your ego outside the dojo. [...] if you've got an ego, you know, it just doesn't work in there. [...] You know, because I had in my mind when I first started, right, when it comes to the grading I'm gonna do like, you know...make four people fall down on the floor and you know [...]...but it doesn't work that way. (Luca, 16: 20-25)

Some practitioners described the dojo atmosphere as facilitating and inspiring their training. Michael (7: 27-30) stated that "[...] everything you do it's got to be very purposeful when you're in the dojo. Because everyone's around and...there's a whole community there". Frank (4: 41-43) suggested that "[...] doing it as part of a group allows you to let go of your own preconceptions of what you can do, physically or mentally". However, he later wondered whether this situation also implied a degree of coercion:

> I do wonder sometimes whether it could... that kind of group dynamic could be slightly coercive in that people are doing things that they don't want to do. And sometimes that's good, that people should make themselves do things that they don't wanna do but then other times, whether that is useful I'm not sure. (Frank, 5: 45-6: 4)

When asked to elaborate on this Frank qualified this statement by asserting (6: 14-15): "I'm not saying that anyone's getting damaged or err... it's causing anyone any great distress because I don't think that's the case at all." He clarified that his concern was merely a theoretical consideration informed by his background in educational studies. He referred to a situation where he had not agreed with a particular exercise the instructor had asked the group to perform, due to his background in studying the Feldenkrais system, which had a different

understanding of body mechanics. Although I was confused by this account at the time I now wonder whether Frank's statement was expressing a sense of cognitive dissonance he had experienced, perhaps as a result of engaging in two somewhat theoretically divergent practices. Alternatively, the physical discomfort of the exercises themselves might have created a similar sense of dissonance. Frank had talked about 'sincerity training', which I understood to refer to a type of endurance training. Such an interpretation would correspond with the accounts of other practitioners, who commented on the physical and mental discomfort involved in aspects of the training (as will be discussed later).

Subordinate theme 3.1.2. Emotional emergence

"All sorts of things come in with the training in the dojo." (Phil, 2: 4-15)

Some participants' accounts portrayed the physical space and the atmosphere of the dojo as factors impacting on their emotional experience. John (26: 40) described the dojo as "a special place". For Alexis (2: 3-4) the dojo space became a place of refuge and an antidote to the bustle of everyday life: "Just the urban life is a bit too much, so... as I get inside here ...I come to peace. So I found it a really peaceful place. The most peaceful place. Everyone here says this." For some practitioners being in the dojo made them more aware of different internal experiences. There was a view that being in this very sombre, structured environment brought one's emotions and inner dialogues to the fore. Michael (7: 24-25) observed: "[...] it's very calm in the dojo, every time you walk in the dojo you suddenly feel a different feeling." Phil noted a heightened awareness of patterns occurring in the dojo with regard to practitioners' emotions, behaviours and physical experiences:

> [...] it does tend to show up a lot... things that are going on with people. [...] also certain people have a slightly sort of more.... sort of cyclical thing. Certain things come up more often than others. So some people might be more stiff than others and some people might be more aggressive than others. [...]. (Phil, 20: 34-41)

This included a heightened and simultaneously more detached awareness of his inner dialogue and emotional reactions:

> [...] personally there's lots of times when you think, ah, why you're doing that? Or, ah, you got that wrong, or you know, no, that's not right. All... all the sort of things that are going on, the little sort of dialogues that are going on in your head [...] And... but over a period of time [...] I've noticed that you start to think, oh, actually they might be right or they might be wrong. It doesn't matter. [...] it's very interesting to see the emotions that come up through all that [...] Sometimes it's... when I first started training it was more to do with... err just downright fear. (chuckles) Being afraid of rolling round [...] Not... not, not knowing how to deal with what was happening to you. (Phil, 13: 15-39)

Luca (6: 36-43), on the other hand, emphasised the need to let go of everyday concerns and worries when entering the dojo:

> If you got personal problems...if you're thinking about bills or something, whatever, it all stays out the dojo. Once you get in there you drop it. [...] he or myself or anyone else could have...a massive problem about a bereavement or whatever. [...] But when I go into the dojo that stays outside. [...] when you go in there everything else stops. (Luca, 6: 36-43)

Luca's objective of 'dropping' preoccupations at first glance seems contrary to the experiences described by Michael and Phil. However, suspending habitual preoccupations could facilitate one's ability to attend more fully to one's moment-to-moment experience, and in this sense the mental state described by Luca could be seen as intensely present-focused. Sean (10: 20-24) also experienced an increased sense of self-awareness, and related this to the way in which the dojo environment disallowed evasion and concealment[44]: "Somebody's ability is very evident...in the dojo. However much they might talk about what they can do, they can only do what they've learnt. [...] It's very err exposing." He continued by saying:

> So much of our lives, I think, is about masking what we are, who we are, what we're good at, what we're not good at, what we're comfortable with discussing, what we're not comfortable with discussing. A lot of err the, in inverted commas techniques in social lives are about evasion, about non-disclosure. In the dojo there's no scope for that. (Sean, 10: 27-31)

The sense of vulnerability implicit in this statement also emerged in other practitioners' accounts. Michael (12: 31-33) acknowledged often feeling "[...] very...sort of emotionally um...like...pushed to the edge. [...] very delicate" after training. Phil described how the dojo environment had forced him to cope differently with difficult emotions through the unavailability of 'quick-fix' compensatory means such as alcohol. His statement conveyed that this could be an exposing experience at times:

> [...] you have good days, bad days. You have days when you're grumpy or you're err downright angry...or whatever it is. Or someone does something that you personally don't like. And... and that whole process is very good because you have to deal with that. Because it's a structured environment, it also shows that up quite clearly. [...] there's no alcohol, it's a very clear...stage like that [...]. (Phil, 13: 15-25)

3.2.3.2 Superordinate theme 3.2 – The student-instructor relationship

The practitioners' unprompted references to the instructor during the interviews suggested that they perceived him as a central feature of training. Seven out of eight practitioners mentioned the instructor early on in reference to their development, either with regard to

[44] These statements resonate with John's observation of the dojo atmosphere in section 3.1.1, demonstrating the fluid nature of the categories by which the data are organised.

technical skills-building or personal growth.[45] Many expressed feelings of attachment and commitment towards the instructor. For instance, both John and Sean anticipated that the instructor would remain their teacher or mentor in years to come, even in the event of them leaving the dojo. In contrast, Frank initially referred to the instructor but did not explicitly talk about his influence until prompted. This might have been a reflection of Frank perceiving the instructor mainly in his capacity as a facilitator of the group, and perhaps placing less emphasis on his personal relationship with him. Other statements suggested that for Frank the collective nature of training featured as an important factor. This superordinate theme comprised the subordinate themes *role modelling*, *guidance* and *provocative containment*.

Subordinate theme 3.2.1 Role modelling

"[...] I think he's a... he's an embodiment of what he teaches. He's... he does what he teaches. He's a great example to have in the dojo for people to... to see [...]" (Frank, 12: 40-42)

Most practitioners commented on their perception of the instructor as a role model. Sean (20: 11-13) stated: "[...] the instructor represents um...an example...err, a good example. Err [...] if we were...bio-scientists I would say the instructor [...] represents a good specimen." For Sean (20: 17) the instructor signified a benchmark in terms of his personal development, leading him to continuously strive to become more like him: "the challenge is to...how much like that can I become." John (16: 27-28) described the instructor's influence as surpassing the realm of teacher-student interactions and impacting on more fundamental aspects of self like his sense of identity: "He's this huge influence...err...[...] as a man, as a human being, as a man as well as a...an aikido teacher." Alexis conveys similar sentiments in his wish to emulate his instructor's relational qualities:

> I feel extremely lucky that I have this person in my life. [...] Extremely lucky. Just err...err... yeah, because (...) the place I was born, the family and everything wasn't so... there wasn't so much sweetness and light. Just found [the instructor] and in a way... not just as a teacher, how he is with his wife, the way he is with his daughter...The way he is with his students. Just I say, yes, I do want to be like err... just like he is. I do wanna try. Cultivate my character. (Alexis, 12: 27-42)

Sean also alluded to a more pervasive kind of influence when underlining the instructor's importance in providing direction with regard to the principles of conduct he aspired to:

> [...] it's very important [...] to have regular contact with somebody that you feel has reached a particular level of...of err embodiment of the...those principles because it

[45] Key indices of unprompted mentions are identified by asterisks in the original transcripts.

creates for you a clear model as to what it means and how it is that a person conducts themselves. (Sean, 7: 11-14)

Despite such strong sentiments most practitioners found it difficult to identify specific instances or key experiences in which they had become aware of the instructor's influence on their learning. There was a consensus that rather than specific things the instructor had said or done, his overall manner and attitude were important. John stated:

> [...] I'm sure there might be millions of things that I can think of where [the instructor] imparted that words of wisdom, it's not really like that. [...] I don't think it's something that you can reference...in pinpoints...like that. [...] It's more just like a general...way of being. (John, 16: 23-27)

Jeff expressed a similar view:

> [...] the nature of how [the instructor] teaches is a kinda ver... I think is a very subtle way. Which is why I...I think it's hard to...put in words as is, it's... I wouldn't say a lifetime's worth of interactions and experience but [...] years...worth of interaction is hard to...kinda put into a sound like...kinda hard to put into a... hard to describe. (Jeff, 22: 6-15)

This felt sense that the nature of the instructor's influence was difficult to pinpoint might be a reflection of the experiential quality of instruction. Luca, for instance, explained that he learnt from observing the instructor, regardless of whether verbal instruction was given or not:

> [...] I get feedback from both. Not just, you know, if he won't, if he don't speak that much explaining what it is I still get feedback from it because of the way he shows you. You have to see it. [...] It's the same, him talking or not talking, you still get information from him. That's why he's such a good teacher. (Luca, 19: 29-36)

Similarly, Jeff (16: 33-34) emphasised the importance of observation in order to "pluck out all the...secrets. All the subtleties of the technique...".

Subordinate theme 3.2.2 Guidance

"[...] it's...a bit of attaching myself to some sort of guidance." (John, 2: 45-46)

As an extension of the notion of role modelling, many practitioners commented on the instructor's role in providing guidance within and beyond the training experience. Luca stated that he often thought about the instructor during his everyday life. John compared his training experience to 'finding religion':

> [...] it's err...what I was looking for, you know, some kind of.... (...) It's a bit difficult to s...s...not sound like, you know...a ...a...err, I found religion, or something. [...] in a way...it's kind of quite similar to people that do do that, you know. Just some kinda guidance... (John, 2: 39-45)

Despite his somewhat offhand delivery John's comment highlighted the profundity of this experience and the importance he placed on receiving guidance. Similarly, Sean recounted how training had helped him to manage the complexity of everyday life with regard to negotiating social situations:

> [...] it's very helpful...because [...] our experience of life is challenging, it isn't always easy.[...] It's complicated...Err...so to have [...] some fundamental principles of managing oneself amidst that complexity and being able to extend those qualities into the social realm is very valuable. (Sean, 4: 32-39)

For Michael the instructor's use of metaphors had been helpful and direction-giving:

> [...] he's got a lot of ideas about like nature and trees and people being....sort of like they're trying to do the same thing as a tree, you're trying to be really strong, and blowing in the wind and not being a rigid block. And it's these kinds of things that he's explained to me that have really been enlightening. (Michael, 19: 22-29)

In contrast, Phil (27: 39-43) de-emphasised the importance of personal guidance beyond the remit of training: "[...] when it comes to aikido [...] err, I'd expect [the instructor] to sort of challenge me and telling me what's right and wrong on those things, but he doesn't necessarily start try and tell you what's right and wrong about the rest of my life [...]."

Some practitioners intuited that the instructor was guiding and facilitating the students' development in a manner not necessarily apparent to the students. Luca alluded to the idea of the instructor possessing a more comprehensive awareness of processes occurring in the dojo:

> [...] the teacher can see...even from your action of sitting, what level of training you're at. Cos he...he's told us, well, I can read you like a book. And you know, he can tell by your pre warm-up, you know, your attitude in what you're doing. He can tell, you know. (Luca, 12: 21-24)

Similarly, Jeff (14: 4-5) stated: "[...] he doesn't really intrude in the development of the students. So, obviously, he's going to help you he... you know, he doesn't tell you about it, I don't think". Sean (16: 44-17: 2), referring to a recent developmental achievement, also ascribed a superior perspective to the instructor: "[...] you then realise somebody else could see this process happening. That you were inside of, but...unaware of."

Subordinate theme 3.2.3 Provocative containment

"[The instructor] will always be my teacher, really." (John, 5: 46-6: 1)

The instructor's importance to the practitioners' training also became apparent in more specific discourse relating to aspects of containment and challenge provided by the training. Even when not explicitly mentioned the instructor's influence in this process seems implicit,

by virtue of facilitating a constant learning environment and offering an on-going invitation for training. Michael (17: 20-22) relayed his experience of the rigour and discipline expected and enforced by the instructor as a powerful and perhaps even invasive process: "He really sort of um... put that training into me. He just got me to do it. In a way that other teaches wouldn't really... um do." The potency of this process is underlined by the physical metaphor of having something put into him. This also suggests a degree of passivity on Michael's part that appears juxtaposed to other statements where Michael asserted his active participation in the training process. This discrepancy could be accounted for by the high esteem in which Michael appeared to hold his instructor compared to other teachers, and may reflect a somewhat idealised view of the instructor and his abilities. Sean stated:

> [...] there are times when the dojo is really the ability to hold and focus our energetic capacity to maintain my commitments elsewhere in our lives. So it's not only about the martial application [...] but it's much more about ...forging oneself...if you like...or polishing...the...polishing ones intention. In terms of what's commitment...in life more generally. (Sean, 6: 30-36)

Jeff (23: 27) described the constancy of training as "the normality" in his life. The following comparison with a well-known concept from the Japanese samurai literature reveals the emotional significance this held for him and the strength he drew from it:

> [...] afterwards, there's something I can...cling on, you know. [...] Perhaps that's why they call it [...] iwa no mi or the 'body of rock' [...] this body of rock is like an iceberg. Err, the majority of it is buried underground, it's only the tip showing at the top. So it's an immovable rock [...]...perhaps, you know, I'm kinda off the wall here now, perhaps that's what another meaning of iwa no mi is. The body rock where your training is the body rock and it's immoveable. And that's constant. So you can constantly go back to it. (Jeff, 23: 17-25)

John conveyed an evocative mental image, likening his aikido training to a development that appeared radical, invasive and transformative at once:

> I keep thinking of [...] those little things in the Amazon or somewhere that swim into your body and they...then they kinda put these claws out and you can't get them out [...] it's kind of almost like that. It's almost like being injected with something. [...] It's almost like you're barbed. And you can't get it out of you. (John, 13: 7-16)

The centrality of training to his life emerged more fully in a later passage when John revisited his experience of taking an enforced break from training and his endeavour to maintain a connection with aikido:

> [...] I just got this [...] core thing, I just wanted to...you know, take my aikido and...strangely, you know, I wanted to keep my aikido here. (pointing at his chest) [...] And just keeping my aikido here in this little... in this little box. (John, 15: 42-16: 3)

Holding on to aikido in this way had profound significance for John (16: 7-11): "[...] it becomes like sacred. [...] As much as anything can be. It does become a little sacred...err...spot...err."

Some practitioners referred more directly to the instructor. John (11: 29-30) conveyed a sense of familiarity with the instructor, which he seemed to experience as bewildering and comforting at once: "I don't know why I feel like this either but I feel like I have always known him. Somehow." Alexis contrasted the temporary pleasure he experienced through material comforts with the subtler, yet sustaining influence the instructor had on his life:

> [...] Money is important in our lives. Things like cars, houses, big cars, whatever, is nice. Buying some clothes, trendy clothes, yeah. They're all good. They give a nice feeling but in my opinion they're just like err... err... fireworks? Err, just they give a bit of heat and light for maybe a couple of seconds. [...] [the instructor] is like err... what he gives is like coal. Just err...it's every day. Every day you will experience something new. [...] Something that doesn't give so much...but it does give something and it gives it constantly. (Alexis, 13: 24-39)

Some practitioners construed a similar sense of constancy within the context of ongoing challenge. Phil (24: 11) stated: "you want it to be a process where you can continually keep learning". For John, the knowledge of his relative inexperience in comparison to a more advanced martial artist was containing and reassuring. His own sense of "uselessness" (23: 14) experienced through training appeared in juxtaposition to the awareness of a stronger, more competent other (23: 16-18): "[...] you just feel like,...way, way, a long way to go. You know. (chuckles) You don't know anything. There's a nice...there's a sort of reassurance about that."

Sean spoke about the ongoing challenge of attempting to emulate a teacher who himself continuously developed his abilities and understanding further:

> You have very clear consistent objectives. Which is to at least reach the level of your sensei. [...] Every occasion that you are in dialogue or physically in practice with your sensei is an opportunity to...measure...the distance. And over time one would hope there's a narrowing. But of course it's important to remember that although you're moving toward your sensei, your sensei is also moving towards his or her sensei. [...]. So...it's a push-pull... relationship. (Sean, 9: 39-10: 1)

Sean made the provocative nature of this relationship even more explicit:

> I would say the biggest challenge [...] is when you regularly turn up ...there's this person that's there, that's already gone through whatever the relative travail is that you are experiencing. They've been there already. They're having a whole different set of travails. They...they're in a very different place, or one assumes them to be in a very different place. (Sean, 19: 34-41)

For Sean this relationship highlighted his perceived skill deficits and challenged his self-image as a competent adult. This tension seemed tempered, however, by his experience of the instructor's attunement to him. In Sean's account the presence of an adequate level of challenge constituted an important and welcome element of training that provided scope for ongoing learning. This is evident in Sean's comparison with previous training experiences where teachers had not offered him "sufficient resonance" (10: 14). Reflecting on his current training experience Sean described how his relationship with the instructor was characterised by both containing and provocative elements and how the gradual and consistent amplification of challenge over time was facilitated by, and in turn facilitated the establishment of trust:

> [...] this consistent development with his particular teacher and the approach that we...that we...make means that over time you deepen the level of trust...between one another. (...) Which enables you to engage in more...err challenging and sophisticated aspects of practice. Which means that... every time you reach a level of relative stability and security [...] you're led a little further so that you're moving from a place of relative security and stability to a position of being not so secure and not so stable. (Sean, 9: 29-36)

3.2.4 Topic Area 4 - The process of change

This topic area consists of the superordinate themes *embodied practice* and *the internalised instructor.*

3.2.4.1 Superordinate theme 4.1 - Embodied practice

"[...] you can no longer observe it as you're observing it. You can no longer see the changes occurring cos you are ...looking at it. [...] it's like ice melting, if you look at it long enough...it doesn't really change." (Jeff, 6:13-18)

'Embodied Practice' describes the phenomenon of change as an implicit process, and suggests how this might be in part due to the process of 'learning something through the body'. Many practitioners struggled to describe how they thought they had developed through the practice of aikido, with some expressing uncertainty and even scepticism. One reason for this difficulty concerned the lack of comparison with alternatives. Several practitioners noted that they had been training for a long time and did not know how their lives might be different, had they not engaged in the practice. Michael (3: 26-27) stated: "(...). I'm not sure. (laughs) I'm sort of, I've done aikido for such a long time that I've really err sort of lived out the consequences of all the training, so..." Similarly, Jeff commented:

> [....] in terms of what my training is, and what physical and mental aspects I have felt have changed, it's difficult for me to say because... in order for me, I guess, in order

> for me to best... give you that answer I'd have to quit training. For a long period of time. And I'm not about to do that. (laughs) (Jeff, 6: 19-24)

Sean found it equally difficult to pinpoint specific gains but acknowledged that his personal development was a motivating factor for training:

> [...] it's very hard to um say, here's a direct illustration or example of how aikido or my meditation practice or my yoga practice directly influences how I go about myself, my daily business. But what I would say is that the reason I practice these disciplines as regularly as I do...is in order that they do have err an influence in my everyday life. (Sean, 2: 42-3: 2)

Frank and Alexis were unsure to what extent changes they had experienced could be attributed to aikido, due to their involvement in parallel mind-body practices. Sean and Jeff wondered about their ability to evaluate the process of change 'objectively', given their 'inside perspective'.

Practitioners' difficulties in capturing the process of change also seemed to be a reflection of the physical nature of aikido training, experienced with the bodily self, through the bodily self. Some accounts suggested that practitioners struggled to integrate this experiential knowledge with an intellectual understanding, or at least struggled to verbalise these visceral experiences. Alexis (11: 25-27) seemed bewildered by his inability to explain his experience of change: "[...] I just can't explain it why. Martial art is physical and mental training so... I don't know what happens inside our bodies and inside our minds." John stated (25: 26-27): "You're learning stuff that you're not even aware of, I suppose." Nevertheless, some practitioners described how the 'lived experience' of training had had a profound impact on them. John (5: 26-27) talked about how his pre-existing personal philosophy was enriched and transformed through the felt experience of aikido training:"[...] I've always known that in principle but to actually...feel it, live it is...different." Phil (7: 24-25) valued physical repetition as a training tool that allowed him to embed an understanding of the practice through a physical way of being: "[...] what you can remember, what's in your body, what you still got the feeling for that's all you got." Sean (12: 16-19), the most senior practitioner interviewed, suggested that the ability to conceptualise and articulate the process of change through training emerged gradually over time: "I certainly couldn't have talked about my engagement in mindfulness practice or aikido the way we are today ten years ago [...]...because I think it takes time [...] to find the correlation and to find the vocabulary to express the dynamic range in the process." For Sean being able to make sense of his training experience required the acquisition of an appropriate vocabulary, and awareness of the theoretical and philosophical context of the practice:

> [...] it's actually having a broad enough frame, culturally, to know that there is err...a whole tradition, a whole lineage, a whole err cosmology, psychology...err, err technical, theoretical...err range of systems that one can engage with. That will resonate with this practice. They are not necessarily...connected err...from the get-go. [...] Nobody wrote all of these things in one book. (Sean, 12: 24-30)

Others also mentioned the importance of time as a factor in the meaning-making process. Alexis (4: 11-12) stated: "It took me... err nearly six months to understand... how...how it works. [...]. It really, really took time." John (13: 28-29) declared: "After like eighteen months or something you actually start to...realise what it's about." Luca (16: 11-13) acknowledged: "[...] I still don't understand certain things. (...) That would probably be [...] thirty years down the line until I understand...things properly." These statements convey the impression that that the ability to make sense of the training experience was perceived as a gradual process with practitioners finding themselves at different points in this development. Sean hypothesised that the lack of a vocabulary for verbalising such experience was due to the fact that practitioners' personal development was not an explicit topic of discussion within the dojo:

> [...] I think there are very subtle transformations...of one's thinking err...and being... that happen through this process.[...] And...it's hard even in the beginning to appreciate that. While it's happening. And even when you're inside that process after some years it's still err...a challenge to be able to articulate it because...this is not a typical conversation [...]. (Sean, 17: 9-19)

3.2.4.2 Superordinate theme 4.2 - The internalised instructor

"Um...for me, even in a confrontation situation I always think of my teacher. Goes through my mind. Remember what sensei says. Do what sensei says." (Luca, 6:2-5)

Several practitioners talked about the importance of self-discipline and commitment as prerequisites for training. Alexis (3: 23-25) remarked: "I never expected myself changing so much but...err... Yeah. I mean, I do have to practise, [...] I do have to <u>be here first</u>. No matter if I'm tired or not." Similarly, Michael (30: 43-44) noted: "I go there with commitment. I go there with my energy and my time. And I've done it for a long time." He highlighted how this commitment had developed despite considerable internal struggle:

> It hasn't always been good. So I mean there have been times when I just really opposed what I'm doing. I thought, I don't wanna be... I wanna be big and strong [...] Like all my friends going to the gym and doing weights and being... But I thought, well... in the end I can do that and aikido. (Michael, 31: 4-7)

Michael (31: 15) described how adhering to a routine helped him to overcome these difficulties: "I've just said, don't make a fuss about it. Just go now. Just go into aikido." Phil

(6: 10-11) also emphasised personal responsibility and self-discipline: "[...] it's gotta come from yourself rather than from someone behind you shouting." Frank (16: 25-26) was the only practitioner who subscribed to a more relaxed approach: "Sometimes I feel like going and sometimes I don't, and when I don't, I don't go." (laughs, mutual laugh)

While many practitioners talked about self-discipline as an act of personal commitment, they perceived the instructor as a source of strength enabling them to mobilise this commitment. For Michael the instructor's interest and attunement to his training experience had played an important role in this process. He stated (25: 2-5): "[...] I appreciate it in a deeper way. Sort of feel more like I own what I'm doing. It's my...it's my ability. It's my dojo. [...] I go here." Similarly, Luca recounted his experience of drawing strength from the instructor when engaged in strenuous exercises:

> [...] sometimes...if I think, my arms, they're just about to drop off. But I push myself a bit more. So when we're doing them exercises I stare at the teacher. Stare at the teacher to draw inspiration so I can carry a bit more...from the teacher. [...] But gradually then you build up your own resistance inside and then...then hopefully one day...I might not have to stare at the teacher for inspiration but have it... inside myself. (Luca, 17: 15-30)

This statement suggests a process of absorbing and internalising qualities attributed to the instructor through the process of observation and intense engagement. Some practitioners reported how thinking of training and the instructor helped them to exercise greater self-discipline outside the training context. Luca (12: 43-45) talked about maintaining a good posture at work: "I try not to... loll about and slouch. [...] The...the way we stand in the dojo when we do things, I try to even stand in stance when I'm at work, you know." Similarly, Jeff stated:

> I think it is good because this sort of teacher-student relationship, I think that perhaps I've used...I've taken it, carried it across over to my work...life. With my own boss. [...] he says you do it and you do...you do it. (Jeff, 13: 21-25)

For Luca visualising the instructor served as a coping strategy when he felt physically threatened in his job as a security guard:

> [...] going back to confrontations at work um (...), guy's come towards me and in my head I was thinking of the sensei...Cos obviously sometimes sensei stands there and he talks...he's talking about what you should be doing with your centre. And I usually replay that in my head and it comes in automatically. And err...you know, just visions of sensei sometimes. (Luca, 6: 9-14)

Other practitioners expressed feeling enabled more generally as a result of internalising the instructor's teachings. Michael stated that he felt able to apply aikido principles to unrelated aspects of his life through the quality of teaching he had received:

> [...] aikido, because it's been such a strong quality... of teaching...I'd be able to use it for other things. Completely other things. [...] Just the quality of teaching... enabled me to do that. In the way of looking at um [...]... bigger concepts. (Michael, 34: 15-24)

Phil (6: 27-32) expressed a sense of sustainability and empowerment resulting from this process:"[...] you take it inside...you so that when in the future you might change your... health might change or abilities might change [...] somehow if you take notice of it right... very deeply before you can get it back yourself."

Similar sentiments were conveyed by Luca (18: 7-12) who suggested: "You take his teachings away. You keep them inside and then you work off that." Sean (16: 13-16) illustrated the empowering sense of progressing "from having a teacher [...] to being your own teacher". He recalled the experience of his black belt test, which he had taken on his instructor's suggestion despite not having felt ready for it:

> I was surprised. It's like being a child... And err...spending lots of time trying to ride a bike without stabilisers. And the day that you do it (...) you thought it was going to be harder than it was. But all of a sudden you're riding a bike. [...] It's that kind of, a-ha, I can do this now. That kind of moment. (Sean, 16: 28-38)

3.2.5 Topic area 5 - Outcomes of change

This topic area covers the superordinate themes *confidence and competence*, *managing emotions and physical discomfort*, *psychological flexibility*, and *self- and other-awareness*.

3.2.5.1 Superordinate theme 5.1 - Confidence and competence

"I've definitely championed...myself. So that I'm now very...I feel very able to do stuff." (Michael, 4:5-6)

Many practitioners acknowledged an increased sense of physical and mental confidence through training. Some felt more prepared for physical confrontations and more able to defend themselves and loved ones. John (10: 8) talked about "an inner strength" he could mobilise in threatening situations, making him feel more assertive and capable than a few years ago:

> I wouldn't be confident, actually about you know, about dealing with somebody [...] Like something off the TV. But I would feel confident if someone tried to whack me. I'd be err a lot more capable of...not getting whacked, or not getting whacked so hard. [...] Or someone tried to hit...um, harm my child or something like that. I'd be a lot more confident about being able to strongly...um get my way. (John, 9: 41- 10: 6)

Michael (8: 5-7) noted: "Aikido really trains you to be able to use all your energy and all your inner safe... and not feel that you're being overpowered. So you're in a stressful

situation but you're...you feel...confident. You feel secure." Frank talked about increased social confidence:

> [...] socially I think it's made me more confident [...] I think there's a quite common attitude that martial arts make you feel more confident because you feel... you know, able to cope with... err martial situations. [....] I feel relatively confident in that sense but...just generally in that's a very... very social...[...] practice. [...] it's about practising with other people, so just that practice allows me to kind of be more comfortable with other people. (Frank, 9: 24-32)

Similarly, Phil acknowledged a greater capacity to assert himself in the face of challenges:

> [...] at the beginning it was a very, very amazing feeling. Ah, I've regained that ability to... stand up for yourself and you go through to deal with the attack or something that's coming at you. Um, certainly where I'm working at work, where you're managing things, you get lots of challenges like that. It might not be a person with a stick, it'll be a person with a problem or a person with a... a challenge. (Phil, 11: 12-18)

Some students described a sense of being in possession of tools that better enabled them to manage their lives. Michael reported how aikido had enabled him to feel more confident about managing physical and emotional states:

> 'Before I would be like, I had to go somewhere to relax. Now um I can just sit down, I can just sort of stretch my legs. [...] I can do a lot of...um things that I have picked up from aikido. And so it's sort of given me tools. Tools to deal with a situation. (Michael, 4: 11-17)

Sean (4: 12-19) talked about "waza", or "the range of techniques that we have available to us". He stated: "We have them about us, so that in a situation when it arises, should it arise we can spontaneously grab the most appropriate response to the situation."

3.2.5.2 Superordinate theme 5.2 - Managing emotions and physical discomfort

"[...] it just made me a bit more patient." (Alexis, 15: 6)

Several practitioners talked about a change in their temperament as a result of training, leading to greater calmness and patience. Luca (2: 3-7) remarked: "[...] before I started martial arts...[...] I used to be like a typical you know lads...you know, boisterous um... Err, aikido has completely calmed me down. Um...it's completely calmed my temper down." Michael described using aikido movements as a cathartic and expressive medium:

> Sometimes though when I [...] have an argument with someone, if I get angry, I feel like practicing aikido because I get a lot of energy in my body and I feel like....sort of doing some sword work or something just to express that. (Michael, 5: 15-17)

He further reported using imagery to deal with strong emotions:

> Often when I'm feeling stressed I just imagine in my mind walking through a jungle with a sword and just cutting up vines and trees and just...sort of clearing my head of all that confusion with this sword. (Michael, 16: 15-17)

Jeff (5: 21-22) described how training enabled him to gain a different perspective on his emotional experience and develop a greater capacity for accepting difficulties: "[...] through... hard practice [...] you sort of like...forget everything. Your mind becomes sort of, somehow seems to forget the day's worries."

The physical discomfort of training was mentioned frequently. Michael (12: 42-43) stated: "[...] you get changes, and often they're uncomfortable changes." John (20: 43-46) had similar sentiments: "[...] it's not an easy process. [...] you have to kind of persuade yourself that you're doing the right thing." He proceeded to describe why a greater tolerance for one's discomfort might be useful in other physical or psychological confrontation situations:

> [...] standing around for hours, sitting in seiza and all that, it does cause extreme discomfort unless you can really stay with it. So I think that means as well if somebody is coming at you with an iron rod in the hand...you can focus on what's going on. Because that's an extremely uncomfortable place to be. (John, 21: 3-10)

Phil concluded that aikido had taught him the importance of surrendering to experiences he was struggling with:

> [...] you have to learn to let go of things and... and... give in... give in to... you can't struggle with it. You gonna try and give in to it and um and actually do what you're told to do and um... and go through that. And that's the only way you can make the thing you want happen. (Phil, 9: 13-16)

Frank, reflecting on his observation of changes, offered a suggestion of how training might facilitate the development of increased tolerance for discomfort:

> [...] is err...useful for... not identifying with your... self... so much. So I suppose in like maybe meditative terms sort of creating a feeling of spaciousness inside yourself through maybe not identifying with your own... err maybe experience of discomfort. (Frank, 4: 22-25)

Practitioners expressed their conviction of the long-term psychological benefits of being able to tolerate discomfort, for instance with regard to future adverse life events, as described by John:

> [...] you wanna be able to have some way of...of not going to pieces I suppose. If something happened to you. [...] And it's kind of like, so if you train, and you're training and you're training. It's gonna help. (John, 26: 1-5)

Similarly, Phil explained how training had fostered a sense of resilience:

> [...] as I'm getting older and more and more I see the benefit. [...] So I see there are things in life that you realize are just not great. But there's nothing you can do about it. Or there's work and there's more pressure... The more... more and more uses I see for what I do...in the dojo and stuff to... as a balance to all those things. (Phil, 8: 16-21)

3.2.5.3 Superordinate theme 5.3 - Psychological flexibility

"[...] one of the things that we're...that we're learning all of the time in aikido practice is there's never one solution to a situation, there are always multiple responses that one could make." (Sean, 4: 1-3)

Several practitioners reported greater flexibility in response to their emotional and cognitive experiences as a result of training. This included an increased ability to consciously decide on one's actions rather than just reacting, and a greater awareness of choices. Luca (16: 41-42) stated: "[...] aikido teaches you to sit back...and assess the situation [...]." Similarly, John talked about the effect of training on his decision-making:

> [...] I'm more apt to kind of...err...consider now before acting in a...in a lot of ways. And...and then the opposite of that is...um...my kind of, (chuckles) the opposite of that is my reflex...my reaction, you know, my immediate kind of reaction to the things...are...[...] are a lot more sensible, I think. (John, 3: 14-17)

Michael (8: 14) commented on his capacity to "make decisions without being ...stressed into them", leaving him feeling more in control when faced with a threatening situation.

Phil (8: 10-13) described how aikido training had helped him to "spring clean" himself. The need for total concentration facilitated mental flexibility by enabling him to disengage from his thought processes:

> [...] when you're training hard, it demands that you switch off to other things. Yet those things are still happening. But it allows you to have that moment of...being able to not be completely caught up in your own mental process [...] you get something in your head and it... overtake... takes over your life. And the benefit of aikido [...] is that... even if you go to the dojo on a day when you feel... your head's full of worries [...] in the end you think, ah, I've just had an hour and a half where I haven't thought about it. (Phil, 8: 25-27)

Alexis (2: 39-44) reported a similar process: "I stopped thinking so much and started doing more things other than thinking. [...] I also discovered that too much thinking is negative thinking. [...] from this training here [...] I learnt how to... err... keep my mind quiet." Other practitioners reported feeling more able to tolerate a degree of uncertainty in their lives, expressed through a more relaxed approach towards the here-and-now. Sean reflected on his reaction to an unexpected turn of events in the dojo that made him question his prior conception of progress:

> [...] it makes you think about these grand intellectual...err houses of cards that you build... about what you expect, or what you think should happen, or when it should happen. And actually, all of that is fruitless...really, because it will become apparent when you're able, when you're ready [...]. (Sean, 17: 4-7)

John (5: 32-35) described a re-focusing from searching for meaning to engaging with the present moment: "[...] the search is over. I'm here. This is where I am. [...] I'm just enjoying the journey."

3.2.5.4 Superordinate theme 5.4 - Self- and other-awareness

"[...] there's always a lot to develop, a lot to look at. For yourself." (Michael, 2:13)

Several practitioners reported a greater capacity for observing their own experiences in a more detached manner. Frank (4: 27-28) saw this process as occurring parallel to the acquisition of greater interpersonal awareness: "[...] I suppose the practice of imagining someone else's interior sensation is another way of broadening your own... self-image."

For some practitioners training had provided opportunities to confront themselves with personal weaknesses, either with respect to technical skill or attitude. Phil (14: 2-7), for instance, talked about observing and overcoming feelings of arrogance: "That's quite good to have that kind of arrogance knocked out of you. And um... yeah, just downright thinking, ah, I'm better than him. (laughs) [...] it is very interesting to see that builds up in side yourself." Alexis (16: 13-21) referred to a greater capacity to challenge his own internal dialogue regarding the technical application of skills: "[...] the self again makes you think that you're doing it in a very right way. That you are completely right." Phil illustrated how his willingness to expose himself to his own mistakes had emerged partly as a consequence of the training emphasising the effectiveness of techniques:

> [...] there's the thing of... actually really owning... If it doesn't work it's because of something <u>you</u>'re doing. So you've got to look at...[...] what you're doing. Am I just being too stubborn? Yeah, all right, I am, so... go with it (...) (Phil, 13: 10-13)

Sean (21: 18-20) described the difficulties that the process of facing his weaknesses presented to him: "What's challenging and difficult and confrontational <u>at times</u> is meeting one self and one's own relative shortcomings or um...blind spots, in both one's physical ability and in one's mental attitude."

Some practitioners also talked about an increased awareness for others. Alexis (2: 25) reported a greater appreciation of the importance of teamwork: "[...] here I learnt that being part of a team is really helpful for daily life." Sean and Alexis commented that they had come

to appreciate the importance of listening to others through training. John stated that training had played a role in enabling him to become more tolerant of other people's transgressions:

> [...] if somebody kinda cuts me up now, this is...this is not totally down to the aikido...but down to other stuff, other reading and stuff as well [...] I'm much more apt to just realise that people make mistakes.[...] It's not per... somebody's personal vendetta or they don't set out to upset me at the end of the day. (John, 3: 40-45)

Practitioners talked about the physical nature of training requiring an attunement to other people's physical and energetic condition. Frank suggested that this process fostered a degree of empathic awareness:

> [...] there's inter-subjective aspects in that you're looking at how... trying to image the other person's... interior...sensation. So I suppose... although it's not necessary an emotional empathetic awareness it's still trying to work out how the other person... feels. (Frank, 3: 14-18)

Both Sean and Frank talked about the implications of developing self- and other-awareness within their wider cultural environment. Sean stated:

> [...] we spend a lot of time learning to anticipate the [...] the action, the intention of another person. This is a very err...prominent part of our practice. So when one takes that from the dojo and...and has that sensibility in a broader social context...one is almost um...without realising it, reading situations and has a sense of poise. In terms of, there's a choice as to how I respond...to what is happening about me [...]. (Sean, 5: 31-35)

Both highlighted the potential of self- and other-awareness to create change within the social and political spheres. Frank (11: 44) talked about their "functional use" in interacting with others. Sean (21: 31-37) envisaged martial arts training as providing scope for more wide-ranging social change through its capacity for engendering "self-awareness and compassion [...] and tolerance", which he described as "pretty...useful survival qualities" in modern society.

3.3 The Interview Process

In this section I will summarise and reflect on participants' comments and reactions to the interview, as communicated during the interview, in subsequent informal feedback, and in feedback on individual transcripts.[46]

Participant feedback on the interviews suggested that they had welcomed the opportunity to discuss their training experience. Sean (18: 31-33) considered the opportunity to communicate his experience "useful and necessary because it enables us to share". Luca, Jeff and John described the interview as stimulating and thought provoking and Luca stated

[46] For further personal reflections on the interview and aspects of the analytic process see appendix A.

that he had enjoyed telling me about his instructor. I hypothesised that the participants' apparent interest in telling their story was partly due to a shared sentiment that opportunities for discussing their training, personal development or instructor were limited. Sean explained that verbal exchange and reflection on this level was not the norm in the dojo. He said about the interview (17: 19-21): "[...] this is not a typical conversation, it's a very...interesting conversation. But I wouldn't... usually have a conversation in this context with my peers in the dojo." Some participants also expressed wariness about discussing their training experiences with outsiders, as they felt they would not understand, or react with scepticism or disinterest. For instance, Luca and Alexis both alluded to incidents where attempts to discuss their training experiences with outsiders had led to negative experiences. In this context my decision to disclose my involvement in martial arts emerged as an important factor. This decision had been informed by the experience of conducting a previous IPA study with fellow practitioners in the hapkido club I train in. During this study participants had naturally been aware of my 'insider' status and described this awareness as helpful in building rapport and enabling them to talk about the topic. In the current research I also felt that my disclosure had a facilitative effect. I was aware of my dual position as 'outsider' (in my capacity as interviewer, as an outsider to aikido and a non-member of the club) and as 'insider' (in my capacity as fellow martial artist). Owing to this, I felt that practitioners perceived me as occupying a sort of middle ground, and that this situation facilitated the establishment of greater trust and rapport than if I had been a non-martial artist. In this context my interview with Alexis was particularly memorable. Alexis had initially been reluctant to participate and during the interview it emerged that this was due to reservations about discussing his martial arts experience with outsiders. He seemed to be debating whether my martial arts experience allowed me to understand him:

> [...] all these changes that have happened to me is understandable for people that are here. Maybe for you as well because, I don't know, you practise martial arts... But from people that have never practised martial arts before and they never practised yoga before they look me in a way that, like, ok, you don't belong to our society anymore. It's like, even friends [...] they don't understand [...]. (Alexis, 8: 38-45)

As the interview progressed Alexis seemed able to relinquish his reluctance and provided a very intimate account of his experiences. He later reflected that the interview had been a positive experience for him.

Reflecting on the interviews I was struck by how intensely some participants had engaged with the topic, particularly given the aforementioned considerations. Many had

provided rich and evocative accounts of their experience. I was pleased that participants had trusted me enough to share their experiences.

As noted in chapter II, the impact of power dynamics is an omnipresent ethical consideration in qualitative research. Power issues surfaced in the analytic process when upon reading their interview transcripts two participants asked for small sections of their transcripts to be omitted from the analysis as they felt they had misrepresented their view of the instructor in their account. This appeared to illustrate an interesting parallel process where power dynamics in the martial arts setting highlighted power dynamics in the research setting. I feel that my own martial arts experience attuned me to how a sense of loyalty arising from being situated in a hierarchy might have given rise to participants' concerns that their discourse could in some way be perceived as a breaching proper etiquette or showing a lack of respect for the instructor. Given the potential of in-depth interviews in informal settings to invite unanticipated levels of disclosure (see section 2.4.3.3) it seemed possible that these participants had been more inclusive initially than what they felt comfortable with on reflection. Although I deemed the sections of text in question innocuous and not central to the narratives, it seemed important to respect my participants' requests.

Efforts to enlist participants as co-researchers through a 'second analytic stage' produced only a limited response. Only Michael and Sean responded. Michael described the summary as "very interesting". Sean stated:

> I think the way you have organised your findings is very clear and coherent- a very useful model for future work around pedagogy/ the learning process- perhaps an initial framework for developing a workbook/ methodology for learners in somatic learning/ personal development contexts?

It is possible that a more structured and personalised approach to eliciting feedback on the preliminary analysis, for example via a second round of interviews, might have generated information from more participants. However, it seems more likely that the other participants were not interested in further pursuing the discussion, perhaps because they felt they had exhausted the topic fully.

Chapter IV: Discussion

The present investigation produced useful insights into how a group of senior aikido practitioners perceive their instructor and their relationship with their instructor, and how they evaluate the significance of this relationship in the context of their everyday lives, and their personal development. Section 4.1 will provide a brief synopsis of insights. In section 4.2 significant themes and phenomena will be explored in detail and their pertinence to the study's research questions will be discussed. Section 4.3 will summarise key insights, and the implications of these for theory, research and practice will be discussed in section 4.4. Finally, section 4.5 will offer a concluding summary.

4.1 Synopsis of Insights

The synopsis broadly follows the organisation of topic areas determined by the diagrammatic model (figure 2), which can be regarded as a 'road map' to the phenomena deemed most salient. As described in chapter III, it represents a narrative of practitioners' process of enculturation within the club, their journeys towards personal growth, and the impact of relationships and relational modes of being that facilitated this process.

Most practitioners perceived the instructor's personality, attitude and perspective as crucially important in shaping the dojo atmosphere, and by implication, their training experience. The personal significance the instructor held for practitioners was evidenced by the frequency with which they referred to him spontaneously during the interviews. Practitioners described the instructor as embedded in, and representative of the wider systemic framework of their training, namely the club's lineage and hierarchy. Some practitioners mentioned other figures within this framework, like their grandmaster.

When discussing the instructor, practitioners highlighted certain qualities, characteristics and stances as positive or helpful. These were the instructor's perceived credibility, empathy and attentiveness, and his facilitation of self-governance and maintenance of boundaries. Practitioners appeared to experience these qualities and stances as facilitative in negotiating the inherent power imbalance implied in the hierarchical world of aikido; they enabled them to legitimise the instructor's authority, and thus defined the culture and nature of relationships within the dojo.

Practitioners reported various motives for entering and continuing training. These included self-defence, fitness, skills acquisition, personal and spiritual growth, as well as a sense of lacking and seeking meaning, direction, discipline, and challenge. Practitioners'

approaches to training were influenced by their attitudes towards trust and authority, which were diverse and idiosyncratic and shaped by personal histories. Many practitioners identified a shift over the course of training towards increased trust and acceptance of authority, with regard to the instructor and senior students. This development was frequently described as challenging as it clashed with personal styles and beliefs or perceived societal norms, or evoked negative past experiences.

With regard to the actual training experience practitioners identified two important and formative elements: the dojo space and group culture, and direct interactions with the instructor. The instructor was perceived as a role model, guide and provider of containment and challenge. Practitioners' accounts suggested that different elements of their relationship with him facilitated a developmental process, which enabled practitioners to gradually internalise aspects of the instructor's functions or qualities, such as a sense of discipline. Contextual and structural aspects of training were experienced as helpful and transformative. Practitioners described how peer relationships enhanced enculturation via modelling, social reinforcement and support, over time modifying beliefs around trust, authority and responsibility and facilitating greater social awareness. Other structural and cultural components of training facilitated self-awareness by instilling an emphasis on attending to present-moment experiences. While most practitioners struggled to verbalise the process of change or identify specific elements that engendered change, many described concrete and visceral experiences. This was interpreted as reflecting a process of 'embodied practice', where learning occurred on an experiential level and was less amenable to verbal description.

Finally, practitioners described a range of changes they had experienced over the course of training, summarised as increased confidence and competence, ability to tolerate difficult emotions and discomfort, psychological flexibility and self- and other awareness.

4.2 Detailed Exploration of Insights

The current study sought to explore 1) how senior aikido practitioners perceive their instructor and their relationship with the instructor, 2) how practitioners evaluate the significance of this relationship with respect to their everyday lives and personal development, and 3) what aspects of the relationship, or what instructor characteristics practitioners perceive as facilitative or problematic in the context of their personal development. This section will address these questions and contextualise the insights gleaned within the existing literature on martial arts research, general and counselling psychology, and psychotherapy. Relevant

parallels and differences between the student-instructor relationship in martial arts and the client-therapist relationship will be explored.

As mentioned, the diagram serves as a contextual framework for the current research and as a means of providing the 'bigger picture'- a broad narrative of practitioners' development. This framework (and the data it derived from) was seen as essential in equipping the reader with a contextualised understanding of the phenomena considered salient to the current research. However, upon reviewing the diagram, topic areas and themes, their narrative breadth emerged as transcending the investigative focus of the current research, with some elements appearing less centrally relevant to the research questions. Since the breadth of the full analytic framework precluded a meaningful discussion of all of its components within the scope of this study, a selective approach has been taken to the extent to which elements of the framework are covered in this discussion. The discussion loosely follows the diagram structure but gives differential emphasis to its components; some components have been condensed or only touched upon. Particularly, the superordinate theme *hopes and expectations for training* and the topic area *outcomes of change* (covering perceived psychological benefits of martial arts participation) were deemed only tangentially relevant to the current investigation and will not be discussed in more detail. These topics have been covered in the existing literature[47] and the current outcomes largely conform to existing insights.

4.2.1 Trust versus power

Due to the limited scope of this study, the discussion of the instructor's and student's positions (corresponding with the topic areas *the instructor* and *the student*) will be confined to two interlinking key phenomena: 1) the power differential between instructor and student and the resulting tension experienced by the students; and 2) instructor qualities and stances that were experienced as helpful and seemed to ameliorate this tension. These two phenomena reflected a dialectic of trust and power that defined the overall dojo dynamic and permeated all aspects of the practitioners' training experience. Instructor qualities and stances were further linked to the students' perception of the instructor as a gatekeeper, the importance of trust in the development of their aikido, and pre-existing beliefs about authority and trust.

[47] See, for instance Columbus and Rice (1998), Kim (1991), Madden (1990) and Wingate (1993); all cited in chapter I.

4.2.1.1 The instructor as gatekeeper

The experienced power differential between instructor and students correlated with practitioners' perception of the instructor as a 'gatekeeper', who was embedded in a cultural context and defined the club culture and approach to training. The instructor's perceived significance emerging from the data resonates with other martial arts research locating the instructor at the centre of students' learning experience (Dykhuizen, 2000; Konzak & Boudreau, 1984; Lantz, 2002). Konzak and Boudreau (1984) highlighted the influence and responsibility held by martial arts instructors. Dykhuizen (2000) conceptualised instructors as cultural channelling agents who were instrumental to students' meaning-making process. Exploring this idea through a 'group psychology' lens it may be understood from the perspective of social influence theory, and its notion of *'social gatekeeping'* (Cartwright & Zander, 1968; Lewin, 1951). According to Cartwright and Zander social gatekeeping can apply to any social system in which materials, objects, information, or personnel "flow through channels" (1968; p.223). They described this process as operating on the basis that "anyone who can significantly affect the critical properties of groups has ecological control over its members" (1968; p.222) and can thus affect changes in these members.

The instructor's function as a gatekeeper corresponds with the notion of enculturation discussed in chapter I. The process of enculturation can be seen as providing practitioners with the philosophical underpinnings and principles of the martial art through which skills and techniques are contextualised and acquire meaning. James and Jones (1982) highlighted how socialisation into martial arts not only imparts physical skills but also a new set of values and beliefs. As such, enculturation is intrinsically important for practitioners' meaning-making, and likely to engender profound and enduring changes in their perceptions of their training experience and more generally, themselves in the world. This process resembles socialisation processes in psychotherapy, where interventions and strategies are embedded within the wider theoretical framework of the approach adopted, for instance with respect to negotiating ground rules for the therapeutic encounter, clarifying therapy objectives and developing a shared problem conceptualisation. The pertinence of such elements to the psychotherapeutic process, engagement and outcome has been discussed in the literature (e.g., Hardy, Cahill & Barkham, 2007; Hubble, Duncan, Miller & Wampold, 2010; Orlinsky & Howard, 1987; Orlinsky, Rønnestad & Willutzki, 2004). In both situations, the instructor or psychotherapist is at the heart of this process, monitoring, facilitating and guiding socialisation through encouragement, clarification, boundary-setting and modelling. This will

be explored in later sections of this chapter, together with the differences between the two roles.

Assuming one's place in the hierarchy was experienced as a difficult and gradual process, activating existing beliefs about trust, power and authority. Practitioners' accounts suggested that they were acutely aware of the existing power differential, which initially was often experienced as provocative and sometimes prompted a degree of wariness or suspicion. Reservations about accepting the instructor's authority and one's place in the hierarchy in some instances reflected previous negative experiences of power abuse or a lack of containment (from other martial arts clubs) or a more general hesitancy to yield to authority. For many practitioners the process of accepting authority became associated with the need to entrust oneself into the power of the instructor and by extension, other more senior practitioners in the hierarchy. Trusting the instructor and fellow practitioners was seen as an immediate requirement for learning and progressing. Some practitioners explained how trust between group members acted as a prerequisite for safe practice in a potentially dangerous activity. The importance of trust between student and teacher has also been discussed in the martial arts literature (e.g., Rosenberg & Sapochnik, 2005).

4.2.1.2 Facilitative instructor qualities

Practitioners perceived several instructor qualities and attitudes as helpful for their development.

Credibility. The instructor's credibility was defined by his competence in the art and ability to effectively convey learning. The perceived functionality and practical usefulness of techniques played an important role in judging credibility. The intrinsic importance of functionality to martial arts practice and its multi-facetted nature have been highlighted in the literature. Parsons provided a historic account:

> In a violent culture they were ways of not getting killed, and, if necessary, of killing an adversary instead. So they had to work. But they also gradually became disciplines for gaining insight into one's character and enlarging it and for understanding the forces at work in the world around one. Their goal is self-awareness and growth towards a new mode of being [...]. (Parsons, 1984; p.458-459)

Credibility was further linked to the instructor's perceived ability to exercise restraint and humility. Practitioners described the instructor as less susceptible to ostentatious skills displays and more interested in successfully conveying his understanding. This corresponds with Nardi's (1984) comparison of the vocational similarities between martial artist and psychotherapist. He identified humility and self-discipline as essential qualities for both

"master martial artist" and "master psychotherapist" and concluded that for both "[t]he goal is assistance, not awe" (p.14).

In the therapeutic relationship the therapist's credibility to the client is essential (Corrigan, Dell, Lewis & Schmidt, 1980; Heppner & Claiborn, 1989). Within social influence theory, Strong's model of influence counselling (e.g., Strong, 1968; Strong & Claiborn, 1982; Strong & Matross, 1973) suggests that clients evaluate therapist credibility on three dimensions: perceived expertness, attractiveness (likeability) and trustworthiness (sincerity and fairness). The model proposes that after establishing themselves as an important resource to the client in line with these criteria therapists can effect therapeutic change through the powers of social influence. A related framework (French & Raven, 1959; 1968) proposed five types of social power, including *'expert power'*, which is associated with a leader's credibility and sincerity.

In the current study sincerity also featured as an element of credibility, for instance expressed in discourse about the instructor's common sense and good intentions (Phil), or the perception that the instructor was less concerned with financial gains (John and Michael). This aspect of credibility seems synonymous with personal integrity, which has featured elsewhere in the martial arts literature. For example, Lantz (2002) found that practitioners and their families evaluated the instructor's character and integrity as a crucially important factor in training.

For some participants the instructor's credibility seemed to be enhanced through a sense of shared values, attitudes and objectives. This phenomenon could partly be a manifestation of self-selection processes as discussed in chapter I, but may also imply a process of identification with the instructor, as will be explored later. On a basic level a sense of shared values and goals is likely to foster mutual engagement. In psychotherapy perspective and attitude convergence and agreement on goals and tasks between therapist and client appear to facilitate the therapeutic relationship and are associated with better outcomes (e.g., Bachelor & Horvath, 1999; Beutler et al., 2004; Crastnopol, 2001; Orlinsky et al., 2004; Reis & Brown, 1999; Whiston & Coker, 2000).

Empathy and attentiveness. Empathy and attentiveness were perceived both verbally and non-verbally. Practitioners valued concrete advice, the fact that the instructor remained mindful of their particular problems, and that he encouraged self-reflection and feedback. Accounts conveyed that empathy and attentiveness were also experienced through subtler, non-verbal communications, for instance, through a sense of being 'seen' (for example feeling that the instructor had his eyes on them, or was not 'turning a blind eye'). Practitioners

expressed a sense of containment under the instructor's watchful gaze. They felt their efforts recognised and the relationship re-affirmed through the instructor's non-intrusive but consistent contact. In John's case this contact transcended the boundaries of regular practice and provided containment over a period where he had disengaged from training. For some the experience of being seen by the instructor not only served to validate internal experiences they were aware of but also to promote reflection on less conscious experiences. Michael described the opportunity to express himself in this way as a novel experience that allowed him to engage with thoughts and feelings previously not fully acknowledged or articulated.

Participants' experiences of containment and validation through the knowledge of being 'seen' by the instructor, or existing in his mind, resemble the process of mirroring between mother and baby described in object relations and attachment theory. These regard the parental attention afforded to the infant as essential in promoting self-recognition and autonomy. Winnicott (1967; 1971) suggested that by mirroring the baby and acknowledging her presence the mother fosters the baby's developing sense of self. Such processes are not restricted to child development; it has been suggested that they can also be worked with in adulthood through a "process of controlled regression" (St Clair, 2004; p.80).

In psychotherapy, the therapist's empathy is a core skill in establishing a therapeutic relationship across theoretic orientations (e.g., Bohart, Elliott, Greenberg & Watson, 2002; Gilbert & Leahy, 2007; Greenberg, 2007; Rogers, 1965). Both client and therapist convey attentiveness verbally and non-verbally (Gilbert & Leahy, 2007). Non-verbal communication conveys relational and emotional information through facial expression, voice and eye contact and may shape affect regulation and facilitate emotional processing (Greenberg, 2002; 2007). According to Greenberg (2007) the relationship is in and of itself therapeutic by serving this affect-regulating function, which is internalised over time through the availability of a soothing, affect-attuned bond, characterised by the therapist's presence, empathy, acceptance and congruence. Hence, "[t]he therapist both promotes and validates awareness and acceptance of emotional experience and coaches clients in new ways of processing emotions" (Greenberg, 2007; p.44). The therapist's physical attunement to the client's experience is important in a process of emotion coaching defined as a "partnership of co-exploration in a growth-promoting process aimed at helping people achieve goals of emotional awareness, regulation, reflection and transformation" (Greenberg, 2002; p.58). Participants in this study may have conveyed comparable experiences. As aikido is a physical discipline that relies heavily on non-verbal cues in instruction, physical attunement is likely to be particularly

important. Moreover, the collective experience of training may render physical attunement an important factor in peer interactions, as discussed later.

Facilitating self-governance versus boundaries. Another helpful instructor quality noted by participants was the instructor's non-authoritative stance towards giving instruction, which they experienced as empowering and promoting personal judgment and responsibility. Many participants appreciated the instructor's indirect use of instruction via personal life stories, metaphors, and modelling.

Other theorists (e.g., Oulanova, 2009; Weiser et al., 1995) have noted that like in psychotherapy, the instructor's non-directive stance in martial arts practice can facilitate change. The idea of learning through metaphors resonates with the author's previous work (Lutz, 2006) in which hapkido practitioners reported the instructor's use of metaphors as a teaching tool. Historically, instruction through metaphors and analogies is intrinsic to Zen and mindfulness practice (e.g., Groth-Marnat, 1992; Konzak, 2009) and also common in traditional interpretations of martial art.[48]

While valuing the instructor's non-authoritative style, practitioners also expressed a need for boundaries during training. They appreciated that the instructor stuck to 'what's on the label' (Phil) and demanded a serious and disciplined attitude towards training. Some practitioners commented on their perception of mutual distance or formality that was experienced as an expression of respect and facilitating a sense of purposefulness. Others talked about potential risks involved in a physically dangerous activity like martial arts and identified the instructor's boundary-setting as reassuring and containing. In the martial arts literature, the importance of boundary-setting as a regulatory measure to control potentially dangerous aspects of practice as well as contain psychological threats is well-established (e.g., Konzak & Boudreau, 1984; Rosenberg & Sapochnik, 2005). The provision of clear, unambiguous guidelines and behaviour codices is likely to offer a degree of consistency in an activity that might otherwise be experienced as overwhelming and frightening.

The polarity between non-directive and directive elements is a common theme in the social psychology of leadership. The abilities to initiate structure and display consideration may both be important criteria for effective leadership (Fleishman, 1973; Stogdill, 1974). A similar polarity of collaborative and prescriptive elements is inherent in psychotherapy. Therapist collaboration and transparency are associated with good therapeutic outcome (Tryon & Winograd, 2001; 2002), while at the same time boundaries are essential in

[48] Metaphors as learning tools are also used in psychotherapy, as discussed later.

psychotherapy, both with regard to external and structural aspects, and maintaining treatment focus. Psychodynamic approaches refer to structural boundaries (like those defining time, place and fee) as the *'therapeutic frame'* (e.g., Lee, 2004). The maintenance of boundaries therefore fulfils an important protective function for all parties in both psychotherapy and the martial arts. While the protection of physical and psychological safety assumes varying degrees of importance across the two contexts, in both cases adherence to boundaries is a contractually agreed means of facilitating consistency.

4.2.1.3 Trust versus power in martial arts and psychotherapy

When contrasting the relational dynamics in aikido with a psychotherapeutic relationship, some interesting observations can be made. At first glance, relationship dynamics described by participants in this study appear quite different from a client-therapist relationship. Unlike a therapeutic endeavour, a martial arts encounter provides relatively little scope for negotiation on an individual level, for instance with respect to goal setting. The objective is not in the first instance healing but knowledge and skills acquisition. There is a strong emphasis on the instructor as expert and authority figure, and interactions are less idiosyncratic and more task-oriented. The power differential in martial arts encounters is characterised through the hierarchical organisation of training. However, psychotherapy is also subject to an inherent power imbalance. The therapist's dominant position in the therapeutic endeavour is undeniable and his or her power constitutes a vital force in the therapeutic process (Puskar & Hess, 1986). Even in an explicitly collaborative approach like CBT that aims at putting the client "at the centre of the recovery process, with the therapist as guide", "the concept of collaboration becomes hazy in the shadow of the power dynamics" (Gilbert & Leahy, 2007; p.10). By recognising the importance of containing, guiding, and controlling the pace of therapy the therapist remains "in some measure expert, knowledgeable and agenda guiding" (Gilbert & Leahy, 2007; p.10).

Social influence theory as it has been applied to psychotherapy, suggests that therapists influence their clients on the basis of social powers afforded to them (Strong & Claiborn, 1982; Strong & Matross, 1973). Power is not so much imposed by the therapist as established through a process of negotiation, as evidenced, for instance by the association between therapist influence and therapist credibility discussed earlier (Corrigan et al., 1980; Heppner & Claiborn, 1989). The perceived influence becomes a tool for development, as described by Hardy and colleagues:

> Power in this context includes that offered through the role and status of the therapist, and the negotiated power through agreement of the therapy contract and through the therapist's interaction. Clients, through their engagement in and compliance with their role and respect they offer to therapists, legitimise the power then given to the therapist. (Hardy et al., 2007; p.35-36)

The process of legitimising power is facilitated by the client's trust in the therapist, which in turn constitutes an important factor determining psychotherapeutic change (Lambert & Ogles, 2004). The present accounts suggest that in martial arts, trust was also seen as a prerequisite to progress and mediated the legitimisation of power discrepancies between students and instructor, and amongst students.

In summary, both martial arts and psychotherapy relationships are based on fundamental power inequalities and are subject to tensions: in both contexts the student's or client's trust is an essential pre-condition for change, and involves the voluntary legitimisation of the instructor's or therapist's power. Interestingly, the instructor qualities and stances students described as facilitating the development of trust in the present study overlap considerably with facilitative therapist skills and stances. These, in turn, resonate with effective leadership skills explored in social psychology (e.g., Borg & Bruce, 1991; Conyne, Harvill, Morganett, Morran & Hulse-Killacky, 1990; Posthuma, 1996). For instance, Posthuma (p.95) suggested: "[...] most of the attributes and skills that do contribute to effective leadership are the same ones that make a counselor or therapist effective in one-to-one interactions". Thus, facilitative therapeutic skills may be congruent with social and relational skills needed across different professional contexts and relationships.

4.2.2 Making sense of the training experience

The martial arts training experience as a whole encompasses the totality of the students' exposure to the art. In this sense student-instructor encounters can occur directly as actual relational exchanges, and more indirectly, through the instructor's influence over the overall training context, and his or her role as a facilitator of training. The latter is expressed through the superordinate theme *dojo space and group dynamic* and will be discussed first, before exploring practitioners' direct relational experience with the instructor.

4.2.2.1 Dojo space and group dynamic

Enculturation and group support. Participants described their engagement in aikido as a process of assimilation into a very particular culture they experienced as different from other social situations. This corresponds with the notions of enculturation or socialisation in martial arts, as discussed in section 1.5.2. The process of enculturation is reinforced and perpetuated

through peer relationships. In disciplines, which like aikido have a strong focus on dyadic and small group work in close physical proximity, this aspect may be particularly pertinent. Fuller (1988; p.324) suggested that through aikido students learn "both literally and metaphorically, to take the place of their aggressor", and that constant role reversal necessitates a collaborative, non-competitive attitude, therefore enhancing "affective as well as perceptual components of empathic ability" (p.325). He concluded that peer interactions contained "a natural set of checks and balances which continually confront each student with a mirror image of his own behaviour and its effect upon others" (p.324).

In this study, peer relationships were generally experienced as positive and facilitative, for instance by enabling participants to challenge themselves physically. However, participants also expressed feelings of vulnerability resulting from the realisation that their abilities were exposed to the group's scrutiny. Practitioners noted that the dojo allowed limited scope for resorting to habitual strategies with which one might normally promote or protect one's social persona (such as rhetoric, concealment or evasion) or manage arising feelings of anxiety (such as alcohol). This mirrors observations of other theorists and researchers investigating aikido training. Seitz, Olson, Locke and Quam (1990; p.461) suggested that feelings of vulnerability emerged as a response to the physical intimacy of training: "Levels of vulnerability and intimacy increase as the physical and psychological areas of interaction grow closer, and strategies for coping with such encounters change correspondingly." Faggianelli (1996; p.223) stated that a "kind of transparency develops in aikido practice which precludes hiding". Similarly, Weiser and colleagues (1995; p.120) observed about general martial arts practice: "As physical and psychological space grow nearer, strategies for coping with increasing levels of vulnerability and intimacy must change." Participants in this study appreciated the peer support experienced in training. For some this experience of mutual support and non-competitiveness was novel and contrasted previous social encounters. This process is reminiscent of benefits commonly attributed to group therapy exposure, such as a sense of universality, altruism and corrective and socialising effects (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). Indeed, Seitz and colleagues (1990) likened the social experience of aikido to group therapy encounters, where psychological and (to a lesser degree) physical closeness are also important factors. Bates (2005) suggested that a key feature of group therapy might be the development of compassion, as through the experience of compassionate, accepting and non-attacking responses from others individuals may be able to internalise a more compassionate stance towards themselves. These ideas correspond with an evolutionary perspective on human development highlighting the power of social

relationships. Gilbert (2007) suggested that our sense of self is "shaped via social relationships in which the self is embedded" (p.109) and that we need others to understand our emotions in order to develop a coherent sense of self. This idea informs group therapeutic approaches addressing social deficits in specific populations, such as mentalisation-based treatment in borderline personality disorder (Bateman & Fonagy, 2004). The aforementioned martial arts literature suggests that the cultivation of empathy and compassion may also feature in aikido training.

Drawing on evolutionary psychology, Gilbert (1995) emphasised the importance of feeling safe as a fundamental human need and prerequisite for the development of affectionate and affiliative behaviours in relationships. Social safeness is linked to a positive affect system promoting sensations of soothing and calmness and feelings of interpersonal connectedness (Depue & Morrone-Strupinsky, 2005), as well as beneficial physiological changes (for instance in pain perception and immune and digestive functioning). Gilbert (1995) described the safeness system as one of several competing modes of cognitive-emotional processing that include a threat-focused mode. According to Gilbert, psychological difficulties are often due to the safeness system being overridden by the threat-focused system. While the safeness system has a well-established neurophysiologic basis (Carter, 1998; Depue & Morrone-Strupinsky, 2005; Uväns-Morberg, 1998; Wang, 2005) it can be strengthened through the promotion of mental wellbeing, for example in psychotherapy. The inhibition of threat-based processing enables the safeness system to access new cognitive-emotional processing options that can be incorporated into self- and other- schemas (Porges, 2001). Positive experiences of peer interactions, as described in the current study may have a similarly facilitative effect on the safeness system. Another aspect of peer interactions described in this study was the imitation or assimilation of senior peers, as an extension to the role modelling function held by the instructor.[49] This will be discussed in more detail later.

Emotional emergence. Apart from interpersonal aspects of their training experience, practitioners commented on the importance of the dojo as a physical and psychological space. Practitioners described a sombre and purposeful atmosphere facilitated through structural factors like etiquette. They experienced this environment as non-distracting, and both facilitating and demanding focus. Some participants described an increased ability to observe their own thought processes. The dojo environment seemed to aid an ability to be in contact

[49] The structural arrangement of martial arts training may be particularly suited to inspire this extension of role modelling functions, as a senior student can be regarded as an instructor in the making. In other words, the hierarchy allows for the gradual transformation of novice into expert, of student into instructor. This idea will be explored later.

with the present and to develop heightened self-awareness within this moment-to-moment experience. The martial arts literature frequently cites the pursuit of *'mushin'*, a state of 'no mind', in martial arts in which practitioners achieve optimal focus by suspending their thought processes (e.g., Rosenberg & Sapochnik, 2005). Rituals like etiquette and attire may help practitioners to "differentiate the physical engagement from ordinary states of mind" (Rosenberg & Sapochnik, 2005; p.453).

The pursuit of mushin corresponds with the psychotherapeutic aim of increasing awareness that is particularly central to insight-oriented and mindfulness-based therapies. ACT sees contact with the present moment as enriching a person's awareness of internal and external events. Present-focused awareness fosters an experience of the self as *'self as context'* and facilitates the ability to adopt an observer perspective on one's internal experiences (Pierson & Hayes, 2007). This is also the aim of meta-cognitive approaches to CBT (Wells, 2000; Wells & Matthews, 1994; 1996). The current study suggests that these capabilities may also be advanced through aikido training by promoting the experience of a novel way of being.

4.2.2.2 The student-instructor relationship

This section describes three phenomena characterising the students' relationship with their instructor: role modelling, guidance and provocative containment. These concepts are fluid and overlap at times.

Role modelling. Role modelling and observational learning through imitating the instructor emerged as a central theme in practitioner accounts. Some explicitly described the instructor as a role model. Practitioners emphasised the importance of non-verbal alongside verbal instruction, suggesting that they just as much assimilated what the instructor did as what he said. 'Do as I do' (as opposed to 'do as I say') is an essential tenet of social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and its concept of role modelling, which is ascribed an important function in learning and behaviour change. While role modelling is most commonly associated with childhood learning, its mechanisms are also exploited in adult relationships, for instance in individual and group psychotherapy: the therapist models for the client interpersonal and psychological ways of being and behaving (e.g., Bandura, 1961; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005).

The participants' focus on role modelling may seem self-evident given that martial arts training is based on physical practice and skills acquisition where the emphasis on demonstration and imitation is explicit. Nevertheless, practitioner accounts suggest that

observation and imitation were not limited to technical skills. Practitioners described observing the instructor in his relationship and interactions with others, and in his 'general way of being'. Some practitioners struggled to identify any specific instances of learning but reported forming a more holistic and general impression of a person they wanted to emulate. This phenomenon is consistent with the existing literature on group processes in martial arts (e.g., James & Jones, 1982; Konzak & Boudreau, 1984) as discussed in chapter I. It also corresponds with social learning theory, which suggests that successful learning through modelling heavily depends on students' appraisal of the teacher possessing desirable qualities and their desire to be like the teacher. This idea can be illuminated from French and Raven's (1959) social influence perspective. This framework cites referent power as a type of social power, conferred through a process of identification; the person acknowledging the leader's authority does so on the basis of evaluating the leader as attractive, feeling close to him and desiring to become like him. This generates a circular process where identification is established and maintained through imitation, and this identification in turn strengthens the motivation to imitate the teacher or leader. Participants in this study might have encountered a similar process in their learning endeavour.

Guidance. Participants described the instructor as a guide. The perception of the instructor as a wiser, more experienced person appeared to transcend the training context and in some instances took on spiritual dimensions, with John likening training to 'finding religion'. Practitioners also tended to idealise the instructor and assign to him attributes of omnipotence. This highlights his influential role in their development and perhaps reflects a more general, universal need for guidance, as will be discussed later. Accounts suggested that practitioners experienced training as providing the guidance they had hoped for and that they perceived themselves as being in a long-term psychological relationship with the instructor. Most practitioners saw this relationship as strong and important in their lives, with some (John and Sean) predicting it to outlast their engagement in training.

The literal meaning of sensei, as discussed in chapter I, implies the instructor's role as a guide. Nevertheless, some theorists have expressed pessimism with regard to the instructor's ability to provide guidance in modern-day martial arts settings. Fuller suggested that the instructor's "therapeutic role has gradually been stripped away" (p.321), while Aubrey (1985; p.59) lamented that "the complexity and changing values of modern life have discouraged martial arts teachers from taking on the burden of students outside the dojo, leaving it up to therapists to give advice". The present study, however, suggests that practitioners *do* perceive the instructor as providing guidance, and that this guidance has a pervasive and profound

significance beyond the remit of technical instruction. Contrary to Aubrey's point, practitioners' accounts suggest that whilst perceiving guidance as useful and relevant, they did not necessarily expect the instructor to get involved beyond the training context. For instance, Phil explicitly stated that he expected the instructor to respect the boundaries of training when providing guidance and advice. This may indicate a process of students assuming an active role in making the insights gained during training relevant to their everyday lives. In a similar vein, current conceptualisations of the psychotherapeutic process see clients as actively engaged in selecting and applying those elements of therapy most helpful to their current situation (Bohart & Tallman, 2010). Later, two possible ways in which practitioners might achieve such learning will be explored.

The teacher's role in providing guidance emerged as an important factor in Young-Eisendrath's (2003) comparison of the student-teacher relationship in Zen Buddhism with the therapeutic relationship in psychoanalytic therapy. She identified teacher and therapist in both disciplines as potent figures catering to the student's or client's need for renewal in life, and awakening the student's or client's yearnings for compassion and wisdom. She suggested that these yearnings "are known often only through the hope that this therapist/ teacher can be helpful with things that no one else has ever seemed to help with" (p.316). Current participant accounts also suggest that the instructor was perceived as providing solutions to a previously unsatisfied sense of seeking. Young-Eisendrath further described how processes of idealisation in the therapeutic encounter in which the therapist is "spiritualized" (p.308) might also apply to the student-teacher relationship in Zen. She highlighted the enduring nature of this "transformative relationship" and suggested that in both disciplines the relationship "never really ends; its effects live on forever" (p.317). Again, this corresponds closely to the sentiments expressed in the current study.

Unsurprisingly, the notion of guidance has attracted considerable attention within the psychotherapeutic literature. Luborsky (1990) identified the client's perception of the therapist providing guidance as one factor determining good therapeutic outcome. This notion may reflect a universal phenomenon centring on a psychological need for guidance exploited in many healing endeavours (Gilbert, 1989; 2000b; 2004; Liotti, 2007). The experience of feeling contained, safe and guided may be linked to perceptions of the guide as a figure imbued with power, wisdom and influence, possibly in the context of care-seeking behaviour, as discussed in attachment theory (Bowlby, 1979). Care-seeking behaviour has been associated with the "innate disposition to actively search for help or soothing from a member of the social group perceived as stronger or wiser than the self" (Liotti, 2007; p.143).

Another way of understanding this phenomenon might be via the psychoanalytic notion of transference. More recently transference has been explored within a social cognitions paradigm (Miranda & Andersen, 2007) where it was described as the manifestation of old relational patterns re-experienced with new people, and rooted in the basic needs for satisfaction and security. Miranda and Andersen viewed transference as a ubiquitous phenomenon not limited to therapeutic contexts that leads to changes in how people view themselves and themselves-in-relation. They proposed that the emotional qualities of self- and other-experiences are interwoven and that by viewing others positively we tend to view ourselves more positively. Research suggests that people develop regulatory responses to protect their transferential view of others, and particularly of others that are liked (Andersen, Reznik & Manzella, 1996). We seem to have a self-protective preference towards maintaining role consistency by construing information about other people in line with the social roles attributed to them (Sheldon & Elliott, 2000). This bias also applies to the perception of authority. An experimental study (Baum & Andersen, 1999) showed that participants' mood deteriorated if their social role perceptions of another person regarded as an authority figure was challenged through conflicting information (such as suggestions that the person might be a novice). This indicates that a tendency to idealise or 'spiritualise' authority figures is a common interpersonal phenomenon, and may be particularly pronounced in relationships designed to offer forms of physical or psychological healing, guidance or development.

In many arrangements promoting healing, guidance or development the client's, patient's or learner's transferential view of the guide may further be heightened through contextual or structural factors. Csordas (1996; p.94) called this the "rhetoric of transformation" which achieves its therapeutic objective by "creating a disposition to be healed, invoking experiences of the sacred, elaborating previously unrecognised alternatives, and actualising change in incremental steps". The healer's success is usually mediated by "the socially constructed powers invested in the healer, the emotional and relational experiences shared by sufferer and healer, and the mutually agreed steps for change" (Gilbert & Leahy, 2007; p.3). Thus, it appears that in many therapeutic and educational endeavours both transferential idealisation and contextual factors contribute to the client's, patient's or learner's process of legitimising power. Within the psychotherapeutic tradition, these factors are fairly commonplace, albeit with certain approaches relying more heavily upon them than others. Young-Eisendrath maintained that

> idealized feelings and beliefs about the therapist/ analyst are enhanced by, and even dependent upon, the analytic or psychotherapeutic setup: the relative anonymity of the

> therapist/ analyst, the ethical conduct of the therapist, and the predictability of the therapeutic ritual. (p.305)

She defined the therapeutic set-up as "the regular time-space-fee- routines, the relative lack of retaliation [...] against the patient on the part of the therapist, certain ways of speaking, and the absence of social chatter" (p.305). In this study practitioners' accounts of the dojo space and group experience suggest that similar processes may be operating in a martial arts training context. Like in psychotherapy, these contextual factors can be described as physical and psychological constants that not only offer containment and facilitate enculturation but also cement the student's role as seeker and learner, therefore enhancing transference.

Provocative containment. Practitioners emphasised both containing and provocative elements in the relationship with the instructor. The instructor's provision of containment and challenge was seen as important, and these seemingly opposite functions were experienced as having a profound effect on practitioners' development. Furthermore, some features of the relationship were experienced as simultaneously containing and provocative. One example of this was the instructor's superiority and advanced position as an aikido practitioner, and the recognition that this inequality was likely to persist throughout training, as both parties continuously progressed. This dynamic arrangement meant that practitioners' goalposts for their own training were constantly shifting. It enabled students to feel reassured and contained in the knowledge that it provided ongoing scope for learning, at a level appropriate to their current stage of training. Simultaneously, this arrangement was also experienced as provocative as it precluded the possibility of ever transcending the teacher's level of development whilst under his guidance. This situation created considerable cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957; Festinger & Aronson, 1968) for some practitioners, as expressed in Sean's notion of a 'push-pull relationship'. In a social context, cognitive dissonance arises when an individual's efforts to reach a particular goal are thwarted (Festinger & Aronson, 1968). Festinger and Aronson suggested that in order to reduce dissonance one would attempt to find "something about a situation to which he could attach value" (p.127). In Sean's case, this process appeared to involve a re-focusing on similarities rather than differences between himself and the instructor, in turn fostering identification and modelling. Another way in which the resolution of this dissonance may be achieved is through the development of an 'internal instructor', as outlined later.

The present insights correspond with the author's previous research (Lutz, 2006) where hapkido practitioners commented on the importance of being challenged at the right

level. These findings were conceptualised within a developmental model (Hendry & Kloep, 2002), which describes exposure to challenges as a key developmental factor. A challenge in this context is defined as any new task that "just matches or slightly exceeds" an individual's "current resources" (p.28). In line with Gore and Eckenrode's (1996) definition of successful coping, the resolution of a challenge is achieved when the process of fulfilling the task enriches a person's resources rather than draining them. According to this conceptualisation, various tasks, including unpleasant and stressful ones can be '*catalysts for change*' (Fiske & Chiriboga, 1991). Hendry and Kloep's model has conceptual overlaps with Vygotsky's notion of the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD; 1978) and the idea of scaffolding. Originating from child developmental theory, the ZPD is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978; p.86). The ZPD signifies the difference between what a learner can do with and without help. Similarly, scaffolding refers to the process in which a teacher or more competent peer aids a student in his or her development and decreases this aid as it becomes redundant through the student's progression. Hence, scaffolding provides support with the performance of tasks that are later performed independently (Greenfield, 1984; Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). Vygotskyan theory offers a framework in which practitioners' relational experiences can be understood as manifestations of interpersonal processes, enhanced through the particular structural characteristics of martial arts training; it can account for the instructor's central role in the student's development and the special relationship that exists between student and instructor.

Within psychotherapy, the concept of containment plays a major role. Gilbert's evolution-focussed perspective of social relationships emphasises the prevalence of human safety-seeking behaviour, in contrast to '*safeness*' (Gilbert, 1989; 2005a). Gilbert described safety-seeking as an evolved, defensive orientation associated with specific behaviours like fight-flight reactions, avoidance or submission, emotion potentials such as anger, anxiety and disgust, and threat detection and processing heuristics along the lines of '*better safe than sorry*' (Gilbert, 1993; 1998; 2001; 2007; Marks, 1987). Research suggests that safety-seeking behaviours not only emerge in response to external threat, but can also be triggered by internal stimuli, like emotions, motives, fantasies or desires evaluated as overwhelming or unacceptable (Leahy, 2001; 2005). Safety-seeking behaviours tend to be only effective in the short-term, since blocking the behaviour re-activates the fear system. From a cognitive-behavioural perspective, safety-seeking behaviours play an important role in the maintenance

of psychological difficulties (Salkovskis, 1996). Safeness, in contrast, is said to create conditions in which individuals can process the threat itself in a different way and consequently become desensitised to the threat stimulus. In childhood, the transition from natural fear and safety-seeking to feeling "safe with" (Gilbert, 2007; p.110) and being able to explore and engage with others crucially depends on parental soothing and social referencing (Schore, 1994). Not only does access to parental care offer protection but parent-child interactions can also soothe and calm the infant. This process may enable the child to develop psychological mechanisms sensitive and responsive to care-providing behaviours (MacLean, 1985), and foster the evolution of a safeness system that is attuned to social cues like touch, facial expression and tone of voice (Gilbert 1989; 1993; 2005b). Gilbert maintained that these cues not just indicate the absence of threat but actually deactivate fight-flight and threat responses, and that experiences of safeness occur not simply via the absence of threat but "are conferred and stimulated by others" (Gilbert, 2007; p.113). Therefore, social relationships may regulate processing of external and internal stimuli and their construal as safe or threatening. Essentially, the concept of safeness underlies the notion of containment in psychotherapy: the therapist's capacity to acknowledge and survive the client's distress or anxiety provides and models a sense of safeness and containment. It communicates to the client that unwanted experiences do not need to be avoided but can be managed. This process is compatible with the notion of providing a secure base in attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1973; Cassidy & Shaver, 1999) as well as with the wider psychodynamic understanding of emotional containment originating from the early developmental function of primary care givers (e.g., Bion, 1962; 1967).

As illustrated here, the psychotherapeutic relationship plays a key role in facilitating a client's sense of safeness, enabling a move from threat evaluations and safety-seeking towards exploration and coping (Gilbert, 1989; Holmes, 2001). The therapist can stimulate self-soothing in clients by helping them to "(re)code their inner world as safe" (Gilbert, 2007; p.110). While the importance of providing containment emerges as an overriding therapeutic concern across approaches this does not preclude challenge: within many psychotherapeutic approaches the provision of a safe base is used as the foundation on which more challenging elements are built. For example, Gilbert's compassion-focused approach assumes that experiences of the therapist as compassionate, especially via non-verbal interaction can be internalised by the client, paving the way for self-compassion and healing. However, the therapist's compassion is not synonymous with 'rescuing' but rather creates the basis for new learning and conditioning (Gilbert, 2007). Cognitive-analytic therapy (CAT; Ryle, 1990),

which draws on Vygotskyan theory, takes a similar approach. Within CBT challenge is conceptualised as an important element of change that can only be achieved within the context of a containing relationship. Similarly, 'third wave' therapies such as DBT and ACT are constructed around the two poles of acceptance and change. Essentially then, these and other psychotherapies describe the provision of provocative containment; the therapist does not provide what the client might be asking for (such as reassurance or the removal of anxiety), but instead offers a way of managing difficult and unwanted experiences that is more adaptive and effective in the long-term.

4.2.3 The process of change

Following this exploration of aikido practitioners' experiences of the student-instructor relationship, this section suggests two pathways through which aikido practitioners may use the relational processes proposed earlier to further their personal development. In contrast to the preceding discussion, which adhered more closely to participants' accounts, the conclusions offered in this section are based on a higher order analysis of a more interpretative nature, and as such should be treated as exploratory.

Two processes are suggested through which practitioners might assimilate learning experiences and make them relevant to their everyday lives. These are described as *embodied practice* and *the internalised instructor*. The latter describes a form of internalised student-instructor relationship and is therefore depicted as arising directly from the student-instructor relationship. *Embodied practice* describes a more diffuse process originating from the overall training experience (as described in *dojo space and group dynamic*). *Embodied practice* is conceptualised as a process emerging from the experiential nature of aikido as a physical activity, in the particular cultural and social environment defined by the instructor. This is explored next.

4.2.3.1 Embodied practice

Embodied practice attempts to account for the embodied nature of training described or implied by many participants by proposing a process of 'learning through the body'. This interpretation was informed by different ideas expressed by participants, including descriptions of the physicality of practice, the distinction made between lived experience and theoretical understanding (for example, by John), and the emphasis on the importance of repetition as essential in retaining a long-lasting and adaptable understanding of aikido. The author also drew on her own observations of the interview process, such as the visceral

quality of practitioners' accounts, and participants' struggle to verbalise their experience of development.

The embodied nature of training has been noted throughout the literature exploring the psychological benefits of martial arts more generally, and aikido specifically. Dykhuizen (2000; p.7599) described aikido as a "non-discursive, bodily experience" whereas Faggianelli (1995; p.3) proposed that it focuses on "experientially unifying mind, body, and spirit". The idea of learning through the body is also ubiquitous. Martin (2004, p.239) suggested that "learning takes place through the body, and the body itself acquires understanding and wisdom". Fuller (1988, p.323) located martial arts training within the wider tradition of somatopsychic therapies, all of which "have addressed problems of psychological growth through the medium of physical re-education". He said about the practice of aikido:

> Within this physical activity framework certain psychological processes are apparent which might generate systematic changes in thinking, feeling and action. Aikido training gives primacy to an enactive mode of learning and de-emphasizes verbal explanations as a route to understanding. (p.324)

Some participants (e.g., Phil) highlighted that one way in which martial arts training promoted understanding was through repetition. The importance of repetition as a learning tool has been noted elsewhere in the martial arts literature. Parsons (1984) cited 17th century Japanese swordsman Miyamoto Musashi who in *A Book of Five Rings* (1974, p.53) instructed his readers not only to read, memorise and imitate the principles of martial practice, but also to "absorb" them into their bodies. This reflects the importance of embodied learning in Zen, which holds that true understanding can only be achieved through experiencing (Suzuki 1949). The importance of repetition has also been acknowledged by contemporary science and Western phenomenology. Merleau-Ponty's (1945/ 1962) philosophy of embodiment described the body as the context and locus of experience, as outlined by Moran (2000; p.425): "The body discloses the world for us in a certain way. It is the transcendental condition for the possibility of experiencing objects at all, our means of communication with the world." Merleau-Ponty's work emphasised the importance of the habitual body, "as it has been lived in the past, in virtue of which it has acquired certain habitual ways of relating to the world" (Langer, 1989; p.32). According to Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, routine everyday actions like playing an instrument or driving a car could be seen as synonymous with being "transplanted into them, or conversely, to incorporate them into the bulk of the body itself" (1981/ 1961; cited in Langer, 1989; p.47). This conception of the body as a reference point for experiencing and of the body acquiring certain ways of being by virtue of routines has found

support from cognitive psychology and neuroscience (e.g., Damasio, 1999; Edelman, 1992; 2004; Ramachandran, 2003; 2005; Ramachandran & Blakeslee, 1998; Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1991) and contemporary cognitive linguistics (e.g., Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; 1999). For instance, the discovery of neuroplasticity substantiates the notion of repetition facilitating the formation and reinforcement of experiential qualities. Neuroplasticity suggests that the human brain's structures and organisation can be modified by experience, resulting in the altering or strengthening of neural pathways (e.g., LeDoux, 2002; Schwartz & Begley, 2002).

Emerging from these different strands of enquiry is the conjecture that embodied experience is vital to human learning. Psychotherapy has embraced the idea of embodiment as a vehicle for change, for instance through the recognition of non-verbal influence and communication (e.g., Decety & Jackson, 2004). Therapeutic approaches like Gestalt Therapy (Perls, 1969; 1973; Perls, Hefferline & Goodman, 1951) emphasise somatic experiencing, expressed through the notion of *'body wisdom'* (Parlett & Hemming 1990). Change is sought by affecting not only clients' cognition but the entirety of their lived experience. Similarly, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR; Shapiro, 2001) and recent mindfulness-based therapeutic approaches also focus on immediate experiencing and emphasise the body as a medium for expression and change.

There is a common notion within the psychological martial arts literature that embodied learning through the martial arts is transferable to other contexts (e.g., Columbus & Rice, 1998; Faggianelli, 1995; Rice & Columbus, 1989; cited in Columbus & Rice, 1991; Wingate 1993). Faggianelli (1995) found that aikido practitioners who were also psychotherapists applied aikido principles to their therapeutic practice. He concluded that philosophy and training provided practitioners with "experiential and symbolic references" (p.2) which they transferred to their clinical practice. Others suggested that martial arts can provide memorable physical analogies for everyday conflicts and problems (Epstein, 1985; Fuller, 1988; Oulanova, 2009; Windle & Samko, 1992). In the author's previous research (Lutz, 2006) hapkido practitioners reported using physical experiences from training as experiential reference points that they applied to creatively resolve everyday obstacles and challenges. Similar observations were made in the current research, for instance by Michael.

By virtue of providing experiential references that can be accessed to inform everyday situations, martial arts training can be regarded as a metaphor. This corresponds with suggestions from cognitive linguists equating metaphors with embodied experience (Feldman & Narayanan, 2004; Gibbs, 2003). Cognitive psychology has long recognised the impact of metaphors on all aspects of human life and learning. Pinker (2007, p.272) described

metaphors as "evolutionary gift that allows us to co-opt old ideas [...] for use in new realms". In metaphoric learning, experiential factors are crucial. Research suggests that individuals struggle to apply metaphors that are abstract or outside their radius of experience (Gick & Holyoak, 1980; Newell & Simon, 1972) and that personal experience can enhance the ability to make metaphoric leaps (Blanchette & Dunbar, 2000; 2001; Chi, Feltovich & Glaser, 1981; Dunbar, 2001). The use of metaphors as a pathway to understanding is being exploited in many learning endeavours, including psychotherapy; their use as a conduit to "tacit knowing" has also been discussed in relation to counselling psychology research (e.g., West, 2011; p.42). Metaphors are used therapeutically in psychoanalytic psychotherapy (e.g., Bettelheim, 1984), ACT (Hayes, Strosahl & Wilson; 1999), CBT (e.g., Blenkiron, 2010; Stott, Mansell, Salkovskis, Lavender & Cartwright-Hatton et al., 2010) and pan-theoretically (e.g., Kopp, 1995). Teasdale (1993) associated metaphors with implicational, holistic meaning-making based on sensory and proprioceptive information, while Stott and colleagues (2010, p.25) described them as providing "a cognitive bridge between our more concrete, familiar world, and the more abstract, opaque concepts and constructs with which we grapple". In summary, the physically grounded nature of aikido training may facilitate a process of practitioners applying experiential memories from training as metaphors for everyday life situations. The participants' difficulties in verbalising this developmental process without referring back to physical experiences may be a reflection of the experientially embedded nature of metaphoric learning: it may suggest that experiential knowledge did not fully translate into verbal awareness.

Developmental models in psychology (Piaget, 1959/67; 1971; Stern, 1985) suggest that learning based on kinesthetic, sensory pathways plays an important role in cognitive-affective development. The enactive nature of martial arts training and its suitability as a vehicle for non-verbal learning is well established within the psychological martial arts literature. Theorists have positioned martial arts as a physical alternative to verbal psychotherapy, particularly for populations with limited verbal or cognitive abilities (e.g., Hasson-Ohayon, 2006; Heckler, 1985; Trulson, 1986; Twemlow et al., 2008; 1996; Twemlow & Sacco, 1998; Weiser et al., 1995). Weiser and colleagues (1995) suggested that in these populations, martial arts participation might facilitate the physical expression of emotions, aiding identification and verbal articulation. In the current study Michael expressed a similar idea, where he described using aikido exercises as an emotional outlet. Stern's developmental framework (1985) suggests that the physical mode of experiencing may remain present throughout adult life. Rush (2000) who explored karate training as a Zen-based activity,

referred to Stern when suggesting that through karate a student "may contact an earlier stage of his or her inner self [...] where feelings and emotion precede a vocabulary to express them" (p.78). Rush compared this process to the therapeutic process in insight-oriented psychotherapies incorporating experiential elements. He maintained that according to a Zen perspective, experience always surpasses the articulation of experience and that consequently, embodied learning can still be processed cognitively and emotionally. This view corresponds with Sean's suggestion in this study that practitioners might be lacking a verbal or theoretical framework in which to express and locate their experiences of aikido training.

Notwithstanding these considerations, participants still noted the importance of sharing experience. Sentiments expressed during informal feedback suggested that participants had welcomed the opportunity to discuss their training experience. This contrasted with a perception that such opportunities were limited within and beyond the dojo: several participants articulated reluctance and wariness about sharing their training experiences with outsiders.

Rush also discussed the importance of sharing experience, citing Yalom's (1985) proposal that affective sharing of experience is important for growth. However, he suggested that such sharing did not necessarily rely on verbal exchange: "In karate-do sharing is often done without words, on a deeply intimate and self-revelatory level. [...] The shared, cathartic experience introduces a student to another level of meaning in karate-do, a level beyond physical technique and accomplishment" (p.78).

It may be that for participants in the current study non-verbal sharing of experience within the dojo was an important, yet subtle and implicit aspect of the training experience itself, in turn fostering group cohesiveness and a sense of wariness towards outsiders.

4.2.3.2 The internalised instructor

Several practitioners described experiencing a progression from 'having a teacher' to 'becoming their own teacher' (Sean). This implies a gradual process move from a position of relative dependency to one of relative independency and agency. Accounts suggest that practitioners negotiated this transition by internalising the instructor figure. For example, practitioners described instances outside training where they recalled or visualised the instructor and his teachings, and practised behaviours in line with the guidance they imagine the instructor would provide in this situation. By internalising the instructor's teaching practitioners seemed to be able to transfer them to their daily lives. The notion of an internalised instructor also emerged in the participants' choice of language, which conveyed a

process of 'taking something inside oneself' and drawing upon this internal representation as an everyday resource.

The process of internalising a representation of a more powerful or knowledgeable figure evokes the notion of internalised objects in objects relations theory, according to which infants internalise and represent aspects of primary care givers. Winnicott (1965) suggested that the primary caregiver constitutes a child's *'facilitating environment'*, a concept comparable to the secure base in attachment theory discussed earlier (St Clair, 2004). The child creates a *'good object'*, an internal representation of this care-giving relationship, enabling him to "rest contented even in the absence of external stimuli" (St Clair, 2004; p.72). Through this process the child builds up a capacity to be alone (Winnicott, 1965). A related idea is that of the transitional object (Winnicott, 1971). This describes an external or symbolic object representing the caregiver, through which the child is able to negotiate increasing levels of individuation and separation from the caregiver and the anxiety associated with this. Transitional objects may have a place in adulthood through the use of illusions, symbols and objects (Young, 1989; 1994). Young cited the use of objects experienced as comforting or luxurious, such as clothes, portable music equipment or personal organisers. The latter, for instance, may offer comfort by metaphorically representing one's attempt to control and organise one's life. With regard to participants' accounts in the present study, however, it would appear that the internalised representations participants referred to transcend the notion of comfort. This is illustrated in Alexis' comparison of the instructor with coal, and his statement that clothes and other material objects 'give a nice feeling' but are like 'fireworks': the instructor and his internalised representation seem to take on a subtler, yet more enduring importance for students as they are engaged in a long-term psychological relationship with the instructor. Another feature of this internalised relationship may concern its pragmatic usefulness or functionality. Some participants felt that the quality of teaching had enabled them to *use* aikido principles for other life areas, underlining the perceived transferability of training. Other accounts describe the transferability of learning as a process through which the teaching is gradually identified with and 'owned' by the student. This is illustrated by the idea that one can move from having a teacher to becoming one's own teacher; in other words, take charge of a previously external function by internalising it. A similar concept is expressed in Vygotsky's (1978) notion of internalisation, which he saw as facilitating the human development of higher psychological functions. According to Vygotsky (1978; p.57), higher functions emerge as a result of real social interactions that have become internalised over time: "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social

level, and later on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological)." Essentially then, internalisation signifies a transformation of inter-psychological into intra-psychological processes. With reference to the current study one could say that practitioners' internalisations of the instructor render the instructor a mental representation, tool or metaphor that practitioners can use in everyday life.

Processes of internalisation occur in martial arts relationships and psychotherapeutic relationships. In psychotherapy clients internalise ways of being modelled by the therapist. In martial arts the strength of internalisations may be enhanced through the fact that the developmental difference between student and instructor, as acutely as it may be felt by the student, can be described as one of degree, not kind. The hierarchy promises and makes tangible *an eventual* progression to the instructor's level or position. The instructor becomes a direct representation of the student's developmental potential. One psychotherapeutic approach featuring a somewhat similar dynamic is CBT: its strong focus on skills acquisition and the conception of the client as a therapist in the making- namely, his or her own therapist (Beck, Rush, Shaw & Emery, 1979)- offers an 'apprenticeship style' view of the client-therapist relationship. Beyond the client-therapist relationship, another 'apprenticeship style' relationship akin to the martial arts relationship is the supervisory relationship in psychotherapy. Casement's (1985) model of the internal supervisor offers a comparable description of a process of internalisation facilitating personal and professional development in psychotherapy. It suggests that supervisees gradually internalise their supervisor as they progress and gather experience, until they can use the internal supervisor function for self-supervision.

4.3 Summary of Key Insights

The emergence of psychological change is a much-discussed topic in the psychological martial arts literature. Numerous studies have explored the apparent transferability of positive psychological development beyond the remit of training. However, the processes through which this generalisation of learning occurs have so far remained largely unexplored. Similarly, there has been no targeted exploration of the role and importance of the student-instructor relationship in this process, despite the fact that several papers have referred to the potential influence of the instructor on the students' training experience (Dykhuizen, 2000; Jones et al., 2006; Konzak & Boudreau, 1984; Lantz, 2002). This seems especially surprising when considering that martial arts training has repeatedly been likened to psychotherapy, and given the central role the therapeutic relationship in psychotherapy plays in client change. The

present study aimed to address these gaps in the literature by exploring the perceived role of the instructor in the training and developmental experiences of aikido practitioners.

Practitioners' experiences of the student-instructor relationship were compared and contrasted with the client-therapist relationship in psychotherapy. The resulting insights suggest that the instructor plays a central role in the students' experience of training, with regard to both the direct student-instructor relationship and to shaping the training environment. The relational dynamics described by participants were complex and marked by tensions and ambivalence, owing to the power differential between the different positions. Students had to negotiate two diametrically opposed tasks perceived crucial for learning: accepting the instructor's power and submitting to a hierarchy; and cultivating trust towards the instructor and fellow practitioners. The relative resolution of this situation can be explained via the process of legitimising power, facilitated by perceived instructor characteristics denoting aspects of competence and integrity. Thus, the power differential appeared to act as a catalyst for the students' personal development. Participants' training experiences incorporated both broad socio-cultural aspects (enculturation and peer support, and the training space as a place of emergence) and the direct relationship with their instructor (characterised by role modelling, receiving guidance, and by simultaneously being challenged and contained). The current insights further suggest two potential processes enabling students to transfer their learning onto other life areas: a process of metaphoric learning, grounded in an experiential sense of embodiment; and a process of identification with, and assimilation of the instructor;

To summarise, the current study's principal focus was on the impact of developmentally facilitative relationships in two systems: the martial arts and psychotherapy. While these systems are very different in many ways they share a common concern with the propagation of personal development and psychological change. Section 4 will consider some potential implications of the insights gleaned here on the application of martial arts practice, and offer practical pointers. Subsequently, it will explore how these insights are relevant to the domain of counselling psychology and may be used to inform its theory and practice.

4.4 Implications for Theory, Research and Practice

4.4.1 Power relationships in the martial arts

The present insights suggest that the influence held by traditional martial arts instructors is a) necessitated and reinforced by the hierarchical organisation of clubs, and b) strengthened by interpersonal processes such as identification, imitation and idealisation. These insights

support previously articulated notions of the instructor's interpretation of the art being essential in shaping the students' training experience and meaning-making process (Dykhuizen, 2000; Jones et al., 2006; Konzak & Boudreau, 1984). Participants in the present study described the instructor's influence as transcending formal training and impacting on their everyday lives.

The considerable influence of martial arts instructors over their students is perhaps most tangible when considering its potential for misuse. Konzak and Boudreau stated that

> [...] it is little wonder that an effective teacher can have a powerful impact on a student in an established program. It is also quite obvious and most disturbing that an improperly trained and incompetent teacher can have a detrimental impact on his or her students. (1984, p.7)

This issue remains poignant and relevant: safeguarding newsletters issued by the National Association of Karate and Martial Arts Schools (NAKMAS), a UK national governing body for martial arts, continually report cases of instructors' misconduct or malpractice leading to students' injury or even death, as well as sexual abuse of underage students (e.g., NAKMAS, 2009; 2010; 2011). Such incidents underscore the substantial responsibility instructors carry for the wellbeing of their students and the importance of their commitment to ethical teaching. The risk of malpractice might be reduced through instructor training in areas like risk management, health and safety, first aid and child protection. Other helpful measures might include routine criminal records checks on instructors and senior students fulfilling teaching duties, and the safeguarding of student welfare through the appointment of independent welfare officers and clear policies on incident reporting and complaints procedures. Difficulties with top-down regulation in the martial arts may disallow a unified monitoring system. Nevertheless, the aforementioned considerations could inform best practice guidelines for clubs, which these could adhere to through their own initiatives or by joining a safeguarding umbrella organisation like NAKMAS.

Beyond issues of safeguarding and fitness to practice instructor-specific factors like interpersonal and leadership style, general attitudes and integrity appear to play a fundamental role in determining quality of instruction and a club's overall direction. One interesting consideration in this context is the potential of a club's lineage to provide clues about such characteristics: the hierarchical organisation of martial arts clubs and club-specific curricula encourage an apprenticeship-style situation where a club's values and methods are transmitted through its cultural and philosophic tradition, its lineage. Just as an instructor's influence is apparent in a club's culture, the club's cultural and philosophic tradition is likely to permeate

the instructor's stance and teaching style. Exploring a club's lineage may therefore provide useful indicators of an instructor's orientation and approach, particularly for prospective students. Nevertheless, identifying a good instructor may still be in part, subject to trial and error. Konzak and Boudreau (1984, p.7) suggested: "there is no air-tight solution to quality control. It is fundamentally a question of choice and observation." Notwithstanding the instructor's general teaching approach it may be particularly a prospective student's impression of the instructor's relational and personality style that shapes decision-making. This situation is reminiscent of choosing a suitable psychotherapist. Particularly in areas of psychotherapy provision allowing full client choice like the private sector, a prospective client's initial choice of therapist might be guided by technical factors such as therapist orientation. However, psychotherapy research suggests that ultimately a therapist's personal characteristics and the client-therapist fit may be deciding factors in therapy adherence and success. The impact of therapist factors on the therapeutic relationship and treatment outcome is well established within psychotherapy, and insights have been incorporated into therapist training, evaluation and accreditation procedures. In the martial arts scene, however, the impact of instructor characteristics on the student-instructor relationship and the student's learning experience is not commonly recognised and in the absence of overarching regulatory systems such factors may not be universally considered important in instructor training and practice. The onus is therefore on the prospective student as a consumer to find a suitable instructor.

4.4.2 Power relationships in counselling psychology

As previously discussed, student-instructor and client-therapist relationships share many commonalties; one way in which they appear to differ considerably is in their conception of power dynamics. Whereas martial arts relationships are based on a hierarchical framework, psychotherapy relationships strive for greater equality. This difference in relational dynamics reflects general relationship patterns in East and West, with Western relationships tending to be more horizontal, and Eastern relationships more vertical (Aoki, 1976/1982; cited in Rush, 2000). As counselling psychologists we are concerned with equality and collaboration and may be wary of power differences. The value base of counselling psychology is diametrically opposed to power inequality and emphasises the creation and maintenance of non-hierarchical relationships (Cooper, 2009). This unease with power inequality is justified: power abuse, exploitation and compliance are all very real phenomena that can threaten the therapeutic relationship (e.g., Masson, 1988; Norris, Gutheil & Strasburger, 2003; Penfold, 1991; 1998;

Peterson, 1992; Webster, 1992; Wohlberg, 1997). Therefore, considering the therapeutic potential of a vertical relationship like the student-instructor relationship engenders questions about the ethical foundations of such an arrangement.

However, upon closer inspection, the positions of martial arts and psychotherapeutic relationships may be more similar than assumed: Rush (2000) suggested that although psychotherapy relationships occur in a horizontal cultural and philosophical context they incorporate elements of a vertical structure due to the therapist's relative level of expertise. Conversely, student-instructor relationships occur in a vertical cultural and philosophical context but positions are mediated by the mutual involvement and responsibility required of both parties: according to Rush, mutual responsibility obliges students to learn and to accept the instructor direction in every aspect of their lives; similarly, instructors are obliged to teach and take responsibility for all aspects of the student's development. Power differentials in the student-instructor relationship also seem moderated through the student's voluntary engagement, which has been described as a process of legitimising power. Similarly, an instructor's ongoing relationship with his or her own teacher (formally expressed in a club's lineage) can clarify accountability and aid transparency.

These considerations suggest that psychotherapy and martial arts relationships are both defined to a greater or lesser extent by vertical parameters. As proposed by Rush, an accurate measure of an ethical relationship may not be its power differential but the extent to which it encourages and necessitates mutual responsibility. For Rush, Zen is the guiding principle through which mutual responsibility is preserved; Zen also places the relationship at the centre of the student's development: "In a Zen perspective, it is the relationship between student and teacher that serves as the essential vehicle for the transmission of knowledge and wisdom" (2000; p.430). A Zen conception of a facilitative relationship prioritises learning through experience, and this can apply to martial arts or psychotherapy relationships:

> A sensei is a martial arts teacher. A psychotherapist is a teacher. On one level these teachers perhaps utilize different processes of teaching. But on another level these teachers share a common process and purpose: the communication of experience for the purpose of instruction and enlightenment. (Rush, 2000; p.429)

In this sense, the notion of mutual responsibility also pertains to psychotherapy relationships: successful therapy requires clients to take responsibility for their actions and contributions in the process. While the therapist guides the therapeutic endeavour ultimately only the client can do the work. Equally, therapists need to fulfil the task of passing on experience responsibly without assuming superior knowledge, as ultimately "[i]n a Zen model

of therapeutic interaction a therapist is both a teacher and a student" (Rush, 2000; p.415). This conception is approaching an apprenticeship-style situation like in the martial arts by emphasising the continuous embeddedness in supervisory and other developmentally facilitative relationships for the role of a therapist. It requires an engagement in ongoing reflection and development. With regard to therapist training and continuing professional development it highlights the importance of experiencing therapy from both perspectives: the therapist's and the client's. Quality supervision and training, ideally including live observation where "a student observes and watches a sensei or master psychotherapist performing therapy" (Rush, 2000; p.446) may inform the first perspective. Gaining first-hand experience of being a client through personal therapy, "in both an individual and a group setting" (p.446) may inform the second. Beyond the engagement in personal therapy, the onus on transmitting experience may call for therapists seeking personal growth more generally. According to Rush (2000; p.447), a Zen conception of psychotherapeutic practice stipulates an ongoing involvement in activities enhancing personal development, such as mind-body practices: "A student of psychotherapy grows in his or her ability to effectively direct a client towards healing and growth through his or her own participation in a physical activity that stimulates self-awareness and self-growth."

Seitz and colleagues (1990; p.461) proposed that the "description of a martial art encounter can enrich the perspective of what mental health professionals consider a relationship encounter". The present discussion highlights two ways in which the student-instructor relationship could inform the practice of counselling psychology: firstly, the Zen perspective underlying a martial arts encounter emphasises mutual responsibility and transmission of experience. In a clinical context, these principles underscore the importance of practitioner development with respect to continuing professional development and personal growth. Multiple avenues, from supervision and observation to personal therapy and other holistic practices, may be required (Lane & Corrie, 2006). By endorsing the importance of personal therapy this discussion contributes to the ongoing debate around the utility of preserving the mandatory requirement of personal therapy in counselling psychology training (Rizq, 2010; Simms, 2008). It further suggests that personal development is not limited to personal therapy or reflective practice activities of counselling psychology training (like personal development groups or journal writing) but may encompass experiential mind-body or creative practices. Similar views have been articulated in the literature (e.g., Richards, 1999; cited in Galbraith & Hart, 2007; Simms, 2008). Lane and Corrie (2006) suggested that the interest in Eastern-based approaches to personal growth calls for further exploration of

their utility as legitimate forms of continuing professional development in counselling psychology. The current discussion suggests that a Zen perspective on personal development is compatible with the conception of continuing professional development in counselling psychology: the development of counselling psychologists is seen as a lifelong venture (Lane & Corrie, 2006) that occurs "in spirals" rather than in a linear fashion, and is shaped by "[w]ider life experiences and the breadth of the world at work on the therapist as a person" (Martin, 2010; p.556). A Zen or martial arts model of learning also views practitioner development as continuous, through a process that is always iterative and experiential.

Secondly, the recognition that facilitative relationship arrangements exist outside the mould of conventional psychotherapy may provide a focus for the exploration of change processes in everyday non-clinical contexts. Gianakis and Carey (2008) highlighted that psychological change is not limited to psychotherapy. They suggested that exploring the experience of change in individuals who have not had psychotherapy would advance our currently limited understanding of what change is and how it occurs. This in turn may uncover novel therapeutic opportunities:

> Psychotherapy will, undoubtedly, remain a valuable experience for many people. With a more coherent understanding of the change process, however, we may be able to provide options and additional assistance more systematically and strategically for people who do not benefit from the usual psychotherapeutic experience. (Gianakis & Carey, 2008, p.35-36)

This study indicates that besides the direct student-instructor relationship other aspects of martial arts training like the group context and the impact of embodied learning were experienced as developmentally facilitative. These aspects might constitute further fruitful foci of investigation when exploring the therapeutic potential of martial arts. The next section will discuss how such an exploration could be achieved, and might find practical application in a counselling psychology context.

4.4.3 Utilising martial arts within counselling psychology- opportunities and challenges

The martial arts have successfully been applied in the service of mental health promotion, either as stand-alone approach, adjunct to psychotherapy or as part of an integrated psychotherapeutic package. Existing interventions have often targeted particular vulnerable or special needs groups (see section 1.4.3). However, there might also be scope for utilising martial arts training in its own right as a mainstream psychological wellbeing intervention. Martial arts training could be an attractive, non-stigmatising and non-intrusive means of aiding psychological change and enhancing wellbeing for groups who may not access, or

benefit from, psychotherapy. For instance, Weiser and colleagues (1995) suggested that martial arts training might benefit individuals experiencing sub-threshold emotional difficulties like mild depression and anxiety, low self-esteem or poor body image. Adolescents and young adults who often struggle with body-image problems (HM Government, *'No Health Without Mental Health';* 2011) might also find martial arts training helpful. The experiential focus of martial arts training and its social dimension might also appeal to men; men are overall more reluctant to engage in psychological therapy due to their perception of it as a 'female' pursuit and may do better with a non-verbal, exercise-based activity (Wilkins & Kemple, 2011). Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups are underrepresented in mental health services. Some cannot engage with a Western psychological model (Sashidharan, 2003) but might find a more informal and social activity-based intervention more acceptable. The UK Government's mental health strategy for England *'No Health Without Mental Health'* (2011) cited as key objectives the promotion of psychological wellbeing, community empowerment and equity of access, as well as tackling co-morbid physical and mental health problems. The social aspect of martial arts training could make it a valuable community resource. As a physical discipline benefiting mental as well as physical health, martial arts could supplement existing exercise-based holistic health promotion schemes like the Department of Health's 'exercise on referral' programme (DoH, 2001). The stepped care model to mental health endorsed by the National Health Service and the 'Improving Access to Psychological Therapies' (IAPT) scheme (DoH, 2007; 2008) focus strongly on the use of self-help and wellbeing resources in the service of mental health promotion. Martial arts training has also been described as a self-help resource due to its scope for psychosocial development (see section 1.4.3). As such it might constitute a viable addition to existing resources.

Including martial arts training within a wider mental health promotion repertoire could be a project well suited to the remit of counselling psychology: Cooper (2009) suggested that whilst an overall orientation towards wellbeing and utilising "potentiality-based models of psychological functioning" (p.124) is an objective on the agenda of UK national health frameworks and wider policies, this issue is particularly relevant to counselling psychologists as "a deepened commitment to understanding clients as intelligible, wellbeing-orientated beings would make us ideally placed to take a lead in the development and implementation of recovery and well-being initiatives" (p.125). Counselling psychologists might in future advance their work as "facilitators of psychological well-being" (Cooper, 2009; p.127), thus helping individuals and communities enhance "levels of fulfilment and life satisfaction"

(p.125). According to Cooper, an important contribution of counselling psychology might be to 'give psychology away' through awareness raising, promotion of self-help, community involvement, and fostering peer support and befriending schemes. With an expertise in forming relationships, "helping clients and communities to develop more satisfying and intimate means of relating" (p.125) may be a major contribution of counselling psychologists. Edge and West (2011; p.20) also highlighted the importance of counselling psychologists working within "informal, community-based, 'below the radar' support systems". Thus, a future role of counselling psychologists might be getting involved in exploring and raising awareness for the curative potential of naturally existing relationships in non-psychotherapy arrangements like the martial arts, and exploring avenues in which such relationships may be used in the service of mental health promotion.

In the current economic climate and in the face of financial cuts to health and social care services the prospects of exploring such avenues may seem rather gloomy. Edge and West (2011) suggested that a collective and community-based approach to addressing common mental health difficulties, despite financial, practical and political challenges might offer greater sustainable wellbeing to individuals and communities. They proposed that counselling psychology practice could be "developed and enhanced by linking up statutory organisations with locally based community workers, community organisers, voluntary groups and religious groups, which might result in therapeutic skills being put to use in the service of improving community mental health" (p.20). These suggestions seem useful when considering the idea of exploring the potential of martial arts training as a wellbeing resource. Practically, such a project could be realised through partnerships between statutory health providers, voluntary and community organisations, social enterprises, and local martial arts clubs, utilising self-referrals and a discounted memberships structure (as used in the 'exercise on referral' scheme). Such a project could serve a dual purpose of promoting wellbeing while simultaneously exploring the process of psychological change outside the domain of psychotherapy. Section 4.5, which addresses suggestions for further research, will discuss how such a project could be evaluated. The next section will critically evaluate the present study's relevance.

4.4.4 Relevance of the present study

As outlined previously in sections 2.2.2.1 and 2.6.1, rather than seeking exact replications of findings qualitative researchers aim for *'theoretical generalisability'* (Yardley, 2008). Theoretical generalisability implies that insights derived from studying a particular context

"would prove useful in other contexts that had similarities" (Yardley, 2008; p.238). This guideline provides considerable scope for flexibility, as there are various ways in which contexts can be similar (Yardley, 2008). With regard to the current research this means that the insights gained cannot claim to be representative of a wider, or general martial arts climate. As noted, martial arts in Western cultures are extremely heterogeneous and context-dependent, a fact that is reflected, for instance, in the researcher's initial difficulty in locating an appropriate sample. Nonetheless, it could be hypothesised that the current insights would bear some relevance to the experiences of martial arts practitioners in other clubs operating within similar parameters. Rather than considering the style of a martial art, context similarity might more usefully be determined by the emphasis on traditional practice and personal development. The present study can be regarded as a pioneer project into previously uncharted research territory. Hence, the extent to which processes and phenomena encountered here are transferable to other contexts will need to be explored in further research. Nevertheless, the parallels between the current insights and those gained from the author's previous research involving hapkido practitioners, might suggest that insights are indeed transferable.

The study's scope for theoretical generalisability is in keeping with the objectives of IPA, which is concerned with elucidating context-bound phenomena as they are experienced by individuals or population groups (Smith & Eatough, 2006). IPA advocates an inductive approach to data collection where knowledge is generated through a cumulative process (Smith & Eatough, 2006; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Building up evidence from an idiographic level is an effective way in which IPA can advance a more general understanding of a topic (Smith & Eatough, 2006).

4.4.5 Suggestions for further research

The present insights could be expanded through further qualitative studies focused on practitioners' training experiences within the context of personal development. This would serve the purpose of enhancing the existing knowledge base and accumulating a body of research from which more general conclusions can be drawn. Students' training and relationship experiences could be explored in other traditional martial arts clubs. Commitment to traditional practice could be determined by applying observational criteria such as Nosanchuck and MacNeil's (1989) or an adapted version (see section 1.4.2). In the first instance, IPA might be a suitable methodology. At a more established stage this topic area could be advanced via larger-scale studies using template analysis (King, 1998) or

constructivist grounded theory (e.g., Charmaz, 2006) designed to achieve a more conceptually focused exploration of inter- and intra-personal processes. Future IPA or GT studies could also investigate the potential significance of other factors practitioners might experience as impacting on their personal development, such as the social dimension of training, their perceptions of a lineage and their experiences of embodiment in training. Particularly the latter might benefit from further exploration to inform our understanding of embodied learning in mind-body disciplines more generally. Advances in cognitive theory like Teasdale and Barnard's (1993) *model of interacting cognitive sub-systems* or Bennett-Levy's (2006) *declarative-procedural-reflective model* emphasise the importance of experiential and embodied forms of learning in change processes, and these principles are exploited, for instance, in mindfulness-based interventions or therapist training. Other theories like *distributed cognitions* (Hutchins, 1995) focus on the use of tools and metaphors in problem solving. Such approaches may provide useful angles from which to conduct further research on processes of change and personal development in martial arts training and related disciplines.

As discussed in section 4.3, much could be gained from exploring the viability of martial arts training as a psychological wellbeing resource. The emphasis on evidence-based practice in the current healthcare climate may call for the effectiveness of such a programme to be demonstrated through experimental studies. One way of generating experimental data would be through small-scale, exploratory randomised controlled trials conducted within the IAPT scheme. Clients presenting with mild depression or anxiety could be randomised to martial arts training or pure self-help conditions and outcomes measured through IAPT outcome measures (IAPT, 2011). Outside IAPT, voluntary and community organisations catering to specific client groups like young people, BME groups or men, could conduct similar trials. Outcomes could be assessed via recently developed validated wellbeing self-report measures, such as the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS; Tennant et al., 2007), which focuses on positive aspects of mental health.

While realistically speaking, experimental research may be necessary to bring the potential of martial arts into clinical discourse, it is of limited usefulness in meaningfully representing the contribution of martial arts training to psychological wellbeing. Existing research suggests that the benefits of martial arts participation develop over a longer time frame, and may therefore better be accounted for with a longitudinal design. Randomised trials might be able to address this issue by aiming for long-run designs. More importantly, however, it must be noted that unlike psychiatric conditions, which lend themselves to

measurement according to clinical symptoms, psychological change, personal growth and wellbeing are subtle and subjective phenomena. As outlined by Gianakis & Carey (2008), the experience of psychological change operates in the "realm of meanings" (Gordon 2000, p.12; cited in Gianakis & Carey, 2008; p.33) and "qualitative methodology is better suited to understanding how people construct and interpret this experience" (Gianakis & Carey, 2008; p.33). Therefore it seems essential that at the very least quantitative studies should be accompanied by qualitative inquiry.

There is an ongoing debate in counselling psychology about what constitutes valid evidence. Corrie and Lane (2011) argued that evidence is always socially and politically embedded, and that current developments like the increasing politicisation of research, competitive commissioning of services, rigid performance criteria and funding cuts required a re-evaluation of the types of evidence apt to address research questions arising from different "professional spaces" (p.14). Linear spaces are characterised by high agreement about the nature of a problem and high predictability about the outcome of an intervention (such as in the treatment of a simple phobia). Non-linear "emergent integrative" (p.15) spaces, by contrast, are marked by high agreement but little predictability (for instance, where issues are novel, cause-effect relationships are unclear, or where there is no precedent or established evidence base). According to Corrie and Lane, empirical studies are suited to linear spaces; qualitative studies "that aim to uncover the unique, nuanced experience of the individual" (2011; p.17) to *'emergent integrative'* spaces. On balance, research into the psychological benefits of martial arts and its components (such as the impact of the instructor-student relationship) seems more at home in the second category.

As counselling psychologists we need to engage more in researching aspects of psychological wellbeing, which "could lead us to draw on a much wider body of psychological knowledge as the basis for our profession" (Cooper, 2009; p.127). We might also subscribe to Goldstein's suggestion that "meaningful research which generalizes with good validity requires an inversion of the classical randomized control methodology" (2010; p.678) where research starts with unselected community samples and later progresses to experimental studies. In line with this, the author hopes that in the future, naturalistic studies in existing clubs employing longitudinal designs and phenomenological methods (as proposed earlier) may significantly contribute to exploring the viability of martial arts as a wellbeing resource, in addition to experimental studies. This could inform an emergent body of research on how counselling psychology can promote wellbeing. Despite the ongoing challenges

facing qualitative research in the current climate it may be important to remember that qualitative inquiry does change, and has changed public policy (Martin, 2010).

4.5 Conclusion

The present study has explored the process of change in a developmentally facilitative arrangement outside the sphere of psychotherapy. It offers first-person accounts of a previously unexplored phenomenon, namely the student-instructor relationship in aikido, from the student's perspective. The study provides important insights into how aikido practitioners make sense of their relationship with the instructor within the overall context of their training and personal development. Chiefly, these insights suggest that martial arts instructors play an important role for students in providing teaching, mentoring and guidance beyond the training context.

The study has theoretical and practical implications for martial arts and counselling psychology. While the current insights emerged from a martial arts context it is plausible that similar experiences would also apply to other activities sharing a broadly therapeutic or developmentally facilitative objective: mind-body practices or activities involving coaching, teaching or mentoring relationships could be investigated in a similar way. In line with the Rogerian conception, British counselling psychology acknowledges the therapeutic relationship as a ubiquitous and universal phenomenon (e.g., Strawbridge, 2000; Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2003) but more could be done to explore the potential of relationships outside the remit of traditional psychotherapy. A broader perspective could help create a legitimate space in which facilitative relationships from other systems of growth can be evaluated. A curious and open-minded stance might promote fruitful interdisciplinary dialogue and exchange, for instance with coaching, educational, sports and wellbeing psychology, and body-oriented psychotherapy. Counselling psychology as a discipline seems positioned at the centre of such an endeavour as its philosophical cornerstones prescribe a commitment to the two key areas highlighted in this study: the therapeutic relationship as a major factor in psychological change and the promotion of wellbeing over responding to pathology (Woolfe, 1990).

Concluding Reflections

My own engagement in martial arts shaped this research on many levels: it influenced my understanding of the topic area, my expectations of what I would find and the way in which I made sense of the data. This degree of subjectivity can be both facilitative and limiting. Throughout the research process I regarded my own martial arts practice as a positive feature, in line with Columbus and Rice's (1991) assertion that within martial arts research the researcher's familiarity and experiential engagement with the subject area are important to successful investigation. At the same time I had to acknowledge that this position might have limited the degree of openness with which I approached my participants' accounts by making me more receptive to accounts that corresponded with my personal experience (like those highlighting the psychological benefits of training or the personal significance of having an instructor).

Smith (2007) conceptualised the researcher-participant dynamic in IPA as forming a *'hermeneutic circle'*. The researcher starts with her personal expectations and preconceptions (which she attempts to 'bracket' or at least acknowledge). During the research encounter she moves from her own perspective to the other side of the circle where the participant's experience is the focus. After the conversation she continues the journey around the circle back to her starting position, but with a changed understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Following the interviewing stage the researcher engages in an analytic process of travelling around 'virtual mini-circles' while mentally conversing with the participant and trying to make sense of his or her story.

According to Smith, the researcher's preconceptions are always fluid and subject to change through the interpretative process; they are also not necessarily evident to the researcher from the beginning. Smith (2007; p.6) stated that "rather than putting ones preconceptions upfront before doing interpretation one may only get to know what the preconceptions (or at least some of them) are once the interpretation is underway". This fits with my experience of conducting this study. Certain expectations and viewpoints I held only became apparent to me over time. For instance, I considered my decision to develop a diagrammatic model to contextualise my results and wondered if this reflected a general preference for definitive explanations over ambiguity and open-endedness. This might correspond with my critical realist epistemological stance, which most likely is being reinforced in my clinical practice where the scientist-practitioner model prevails. This consideration led to a more general reflection on my identity as a counselling psychologist

and the dilemmas of negotiating the tension of simultaneously subscribing to reflective practitioner and scientist-practitioner roles.

The research process also changed my understanding of the topic area, for example with respect to the impact of power dynamics in martial arts settings. I had been peripherally aware of this issue prior to the research but have become much more conscious of it since. It also made me reflect more on power differentials in my relationships with clients. Another illuminating and unexpected insight was the apparent importance of experiential, 'embodied' learning. While similar ideas had being expressed in my master's research I was only able to clearly articulate my thoughts on this phenomenon in this study.

Owing to external circumstances this research developed into a much lengthier piece of work than originally anticipated. Despite its frustrations and difficulties, the longer time span also provided an extended opportunity for reflection. For instance, I was able to observe how the insights gained here featured in my own martial arts practice. With increasing seniority my own relationship with my instructor took on a more central role in my personal development, and I found myself reflecting more deeply on this unique relationship, individually and in exchange with fellow practitioners. Beyond my martial arts practice this research enabled me to gain a deeper insight into the importance of personal development and the impact of other significant relationships in my life. My engagement in this research has been an exciting, enriching and transformative journey.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Further Reflections on the Interview Process & Beyond

As already mentioned elsewhere the interpretative nature of IPA and its double hermeneutic require researchers to critically reflect upon their impact on all stages of the research process. One stage of the research where reflection is crucial is the process of interviewing.[50] Smith (2003, p.176) described the meeting of researcher and participant as a process of "dialogical reflexivity" as both parties reflect on themselves and their experiences. I will offer some reflections here on aspects of the interview process and analysis that struck me as noteworthy.

One obvious feature of my participant group was that it comprised entirely of men. While this was not something I had planned for it also did not surprise me, as I was aware of the gender bias in martial arts participation. Throughout the interviews I did not feel that the fact that I was a female researcher impacted significantly on the interview process, and I certainly did not perceive it as a hindrance. However, I think this might have been quite different had I not disclosed my status as a martial arts practitioner. I felt that participants focused on this commonality rather than my gender, and that in many instances this facilitated rapport. On the whole, it seemed to me that other factors like personality and participants' expectations of the interview determined the quality of rapport I felt we established. Some interviews seemed to flow better than others, and I would hypothesise that this was largely due to the degree to which participants felt comfortable engaging with open-ended questions.

Coming away from the interviews I was struck by how intensely some participants had engaged with the topic, and the depth of emotion I felt was expressed in their accounts. Many participants had provided rich and evocative descriptions of aspects of their relationship with the instructor. I felt excited about exploring these and pleased that participants had trusted me enough to share their experiences with me. A particularly memorable interview was with Alexis, who had initially expressed some reluctance to participate. Over the course of the interview it emerged that this was due to reservations about discussing his martial arts experience with outsiders. However, as the interview progressed he seemed able to let go of his reluctance and provided a very intimate account of his experiences. He later reflected that the interview had been a positive experience for him.

My emotional reactions to some of the participants' comments made me aware of my own investment in this research in terms of the beliefs and attitudes I held about the topic and the hopes I had for the study. For instance, informal remarks by Sean, Luca and Alexis at the end

[50] I include in this subsequent interactions with participants, for instance those pertaining to the 'second analytic stage' in the current study.

of the interview suggested that they felt strongly about the value of proliferating martial arts in their wider environment, and in some cases wanted to change the public image of martial arts. These remarks resonated with me, as these causes are also very close to my own heart, in my capacities as a martial arts practitioner and researcher.

Power issues are omnipresent in qualitative research. One of the ways in which I sought to minimise the power differential between the participants and myself was through participant involvement. One incident where power dynamics surfaced in the research process was when upon reading of their interview transcripts two of my participants asked for small sections of their transcripts to be omitted from the analysis as they felt they had misrepresented their view of the instructor in their account. To me this illustrated an interesting parallel process where power dynamics in the martial arts setting highlighted power dynamics in the research setting. I think that by virtue of my martial arts experience I was attuned to some of the conflicts with regard to one's sense of commitment and loyalty that might arise from being bound up in a hierarchical structure that implies a (self elected) power differential. Although I deemed the sections of text in question innocuous and not central to the narratives, I sensed that the participants might have felt that their discourse could in some way be perceived as a breaching proper etiquette or showing a lack of respect for the instructor. Given the potential of in-depth interviews in informal settings to invite unanticipated levels of disclosure (see section 2.4.3.3) it seemed possible that the participants had been more inclusive initially than what they felt comfortable with on reflection. I deemed it important to respect their requests.

A related reflection concerns the issues of informed consent and data confidentiality: BPS guidelines on ethical research (2010) require researchers to develop protocols for managing risks pertaining to participant disclosures of criminal activity or risk of serious harm. This may apply to research involving sensitive topics or vulnerable groups (minors, those lacking capacity or in dependent or unequal relationships). The present study's topic was not considered particularly sensitive or distressing, and participants in this study were drawn from a general population sample, and not a vulnerable group. I considered that while the hierarchical nature of martial art clubs implied power differentials in the martial arts setting, all participants were adults who engaged in aikido and their club membership voluntarily. The risk of participants making concerning disclosures relating to themselves, the instructor or a third party was considered minimal, and therefore no such contingency plan was used for the present study. In hindsight, given that BPS guidelines suggest that information obtained from participants is treated as confidential unless otherwise agreed in advance, it might have been

good research practice to include a disclaimer on the participant information sheet, nonetheless. This could have informed participants of the limits of confidentiality in the event of concerning disclosures that might raise serious concern about the safety of others, including children and vulnerable adults, and the potential need for sharing information with other agencies (e.g., police, social services). Another useful precautionary measure might have been to prepare a list of support organisations for signposting, in case of significant participant distress or disclosure of suicidal ideation.

Other aspects of participant involvement used in the present study proved less effective in hindsight. For instance, my efforts to enlist participants as co-researchers through a second analytic stage produced a fairly limited response. It is possible that a more structured and personalised approach to eliciting feedback on the preliminary analysis, for example via a second round of interviews, would have generated richer information. However, the fact that only two participants contacted me with feedback might suggest that there was limited interest on the participants' behalf to further pursue the discussion, perhaps because they felt they had exhausted the topic to the full.

One issue that created a dilemma for me was a participant's request for me to disseminate the study findings within the context of the aikido club. I felt unable to oblige due to confidentiality considerations but at the same time regretted not being able to repay my participants' efforts by sharing my findings. I was also dealing with considerable time constraints due to my ongoing research involvement. Retrospectively, it seems feasible that in future key findings could be disseminated without compromising confidentiality through publication in club-internal media such as websites or members' newsletters if communicated to participants from the outset.

Appendix B: Glossary

Aikikai: the official juridical body for aikido established by the Ueshiba family

Dan/ Kyu ranking system: the most prevalent ranking system in Oriental martial arts, incorporating *kyu* (junior ranks, sometimes signified by coloured belts) and *dan* (advanced ranks, signified by black belts) (Cunningham, 2010; Ohlenkamp, 2009); In Japanese martial arts kyu ranks arts usually progress from 10 to 1 in descending order, with 1st kyu being the most senior kyu rank before 1st degree dan. Dan ranks are measured in degrees and progress in ascending order from 1st to 10th.

Dojo: literally *'place of the way'*, the Japanese term used for a martial arts training hall (Schmidt, 1986)

Hapkido: a traditional Korean martial art of self-defence; The elements Hap-Ki-Do translate into *'striving for coordination of mind and body through disciplined life'*. Hapkido is a comprehensive art involving throws, kicks, punches, joint and pressure point manipulations, free fighting, weapons training and meditation.

Kata: the Japanese term for a choreographed sequence of movements practised as a formal exercise in traditional martial arts; Kata also finds application in non-martial Japanese arts such as tea ceremony and *kabuki,* Japanese theatre (De Mente, 2003). The Oxford English dictionary (Simpson & Weiner, 1989) describes kata as a generic term for 'forms' or 'patterns' in Oriental martial arts.

Ki: a complex concept emerging from Eastern philosophy and medicine; While used in various contexts, at its most basic level ki refers to life force or energy and encompasses both physical and mental dimensions. For further reading see Oschman (2000), and Eisenberg and Wright (1995).

Taoism: a collection of ancient Eastern philosophical, religious and moral traditions; For a more comprehensive introduction to Taoism see Robinet (1997).

Zen: a school of Buddhism focused on the attainment of enlightenment and the creation of wisdom, probably in part originating from Taoism

Appendix C: Brief Description of the Literature Search

The literature search for the present study was conducted in the following way:

Literature on some domains (e.g., psychotherapy; counselling psychology; therapeutic relationship; personal development; psychological benefits of physical exercise) was identified and accessed through London Metropolitan University and University of London library catalogues and via Athens, using electronic databases like PsycInfo, ScienceDirect and EBSCOhost. Literature on martial arts (cultural and historical perspectives; psychological and psychotherapeutic aspects) was identified via Athens as above (using key words like "martial arts"; "aikido"; "martial arts + psychological benefits"; "martial arts + therapeutic relationship"; etc) and through web searches (Google; Google Scholar). Additional key sources were unpublished U.S. and Canadian doctoral and PhD theses. These were located via ProQuest and secondary references and obtained through self-funding and university grants.

Appendix D: Provisional Interview Schedule - Version 1

First of all, I would like to ask you about the personal development aspect of doing aikido on a regular basis. This can be an important part of training for many students.

1. Can you tell me what role aikido plays for you in your life?
What does training do for you, as a person, in your life?

2. When you are thinking about your instructor, can you describe to me what he/ she is like?
As a person? qualities, characteristics? Experiences you had?

3. What is like for you to train with your instructor?

How does it make you feel? How would you describe your relationship inside/ outside training? Etiquette/ discipline/ structure?

4. How important do you find the role your instructor plays for you personally, in your experience of growth and development?

For training/ everyday life?

5. Has your instructor helped you to develop/ challenged your view of things?
In what ways?

6. Has your instructor said or done things that you found difficult to accept/ unhelpful/ disagreed with?

Can you give me an example?

7. We are coming to the end of the interview now. What was it like for you to do this interview?

Did you find it easy/ difficult? Is this something you have thought about before?

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Appendix E: Provisional Interview Schedule - Version 2

I would like to start off by asking you about your experience of doing aikido on a regular basis. I am particularly interested in the mental or spiritual side of training, which I understand is generally seen as an important part of aikido training.

1. Can you tell me what role aikido plays for you in your life?
What does training do for you, as a person, in your life?
Can you give me an example?

2. What aspects of training would you say have been important/ played an important role in this development?
How do you think this change has come about?

3. a) You mentioned the importance of your instructor. Can you tell me more about this?
What role your instructor plays for you?

For training/ everyday life/ personal development?

3. b) I noticed that you did not mention your instructor as an important aspect/ influence. Can you tell me how you see the role your instructor plays in training, and for you personally?

For training/ everyday life/ personal development?

4. When you are thinking about your instructor now, can you describe to me how you experience him?
As a person? Qualities, characteristics? Experiences you had in training/ outside of training? Things you like or don't like about him?
Can you give me an example?
Can you think of a particular situation?

5. In what ways, if any, has your instructor helped you to develop/ challenged your view of things?

Can you think of a situation when you felt this way?

6. Can you think of situations when your instructor said or did things that you found difficult to accept, unhelpful, or disagreed with?

Can you give me an example?

7.We are coming to the end of the interview now. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

8. What was it like for you to do this interview?

Is this something you have thought about before?

Did you find it easy/ difficult?

Appendix F: Interview Schedule - Version 3 (Used for Interviews 1 & 2)

I would like to start off by asking you about your experience of doing aikido on a regular basis. (As you know from the information sheet, I am particularly interested in your development as a person, and what kinds of things have influenced that.)

1. Can you tell me what role aikido plays for you in your life?
What does training do for you, as a person, in your life? Can you give me an example?
Do you think you have developed as a person due to taking up aikido?

2. What aspects of training would you say have been important/ played an important role in this development?
How do you think this change has come about?

3. a) You mentioned your instructor. Can you tell me more about this?
What role your instructor plays for you?

For training/ everyday life/ personal development?
In what ways has your instructor helped you to develop?

3. b) I noticed that you did not mention your instructor as an important aspect/ influence. I wonder if you see your instructor playing a role in your development as a person?

In training/ everyday life? In what ways, if any, has your instructor helped you to develop?

4. Reflecting on your training, can you think of a situation (or episode) in which your instructor has had a particular impact on you?
Does a specific situation come to mind?

5. a) You have talked about your instructor in a very positive way. I wonder if there has ever been a time when you experienced him as not so helpful?
Struggled to accept something/ disagreed with him? Personal qualities/ Anything he has done or said? How do you view this issue now?

5. b) Coming back to what you said earlier, it sounds as if you experienced this as less than helpful. Can you tell me more about this?

6. We are coming to the end of the interview now. Is there anything else that you would like to add that might be relevant to this study?

7. What was it like for you to do this interview?
Is this something you have thought about before?
Did you find it easy/ difficult?

Appendix G: Interview Schedule – Final Version

FINAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I would like to start off by asking you about your experience of doing aikido on a regular basis. As you know from the information sheet, I am particularly interested in your development as a person, and what kinds of things have influenced that.

1. Can I first of all ask you what made you take up aikido?

    How did you come to join this club?

    What were your initial expectations/ reasons for joining?

2. Can you tell me what role aikido plays for you in your life?

    What does training do for you, as a person, in your life?

    Can you give me an example?

    Do you think you have developed as a person due to taking up aikido?

3. What aspects of training would you say have been important/ played an important role in this development?

    How do you think this change has come about?

4(a) You mentioned your instructor. Can you tell me more about this?

    What role your instructor plays for you?

    For training/ everyday life/ personal development?

    In what ways has your instructor helped you to develop?

4(b) I noticed that you did not mention your instructor as an important aspect/ influence. I wonder if you see your instructor playing a role in your development as a person?

    In training/ everyday life?

    In what ways, if any, has your instructor helped you to develop?

5. Reflecting on your training, can you think of a situation (or episode) in which your instructor has had a particular impact on you?

    Does a specific situation come to mind?

6(a) You have talked about your instructor in a very positive way. I wonder if there has ever been a time when you experienced him as not so helpful?

    Struggled to accept something/ disagreed with him?

    Personal qualities/ Anything he has done or said?

    How do you view this issue now?

6(b) Coming back to what you said earlier, it sounds as if you experienced this as less than helpful. Can you tell me more about this?

7. We are coming to the end of the interview now. Is there anything else that you would like to add that might be relevant to this study?

8. What was it like for you to do this interview?

    Is this something you have thought about before?

    Did you find it easy/ difficult?

Appendix H: Participant Brief - Version 1 (Used for Interviews 1 to 4)

Research Project: Aikido Practitioners' Evaluations of the Role and Significance of their Instructors

Dear Volunteer,

You are being invited to participate in a study exploring the experiences of martial artists at xxx Dojo on their journey towards personal growth. I am particularly interested in your experiences of training with your instructor. I would like to explore how you see your instructor and the kind of role/s he may play for you personally.

I am a student at London Metropolitan University, currently studying towards a Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology. I am hoping to do this piece of research as my doctoral thesis.

For this study I am looking for students who:

- Have been training in the club for a minimum of 2 years
- Ideally, are not formal instructors themselves (assistant instructor is ok)

To participate you would be required to attend an in-depth interview about different aspects of your experience of practicing aikido. The interview will last for approximately one hour.

If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. You are free to withdraw this consent at any time and without giving a reason. Also, you may find that talking in depth about an aspect of relationships can be a very personal, and potentially emotional experience. If you find any of the interview questions difficult or intrusive you do not have to answer them, and there will be no pressure put upon you.

A digital recording will be made of your interview to allow your responses to be reviewed in detail after the interview. The recording will be securely stored in at the researcher's premises. All information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Your name or any identifying information will be removed from the data, and will not be quoted in the study. The consent forms will be kept separately from the data, and will only serve to verify that proper consent has been obtained. The name of this school will not be mentioned in the study. (Please note that confidentiality might not apply in certain rare circumstances, e.g., if criminal activity is disclosed.)

Whether you chose to take part in the study or not is entirely up to you. Please be reassured that whether you do or don't participate will have no bearing on your status as a xxx Dojo member/ student in any way.

Please note that my director of studies or the external examiner may request access to the raw data for verification purposes. Also, I am intending to submit the completed study for publication with a renowned journal. Successful publication would require me to retain all data for a certain length of time. This could be around five years, depending on the journal.

All interviewees are invited to request a copy of the final study after completion of the project. This will be available in September 2008.

This study has been approved by the University Ethics Committee at London Metropolitan University and will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines provided by the British Psychological Society. If you have any questions, comments or complaints about this study please get in touch with me, either in person, via phone or email. Alternatively, you can contact my director of studies, Dr Mark Donati on 020 7320 1110 or email at m.donati@londonmet.ac.uk.

Thank you very much for your time and interest, it is much appreciated. If you are interested in taking part in this study, please contact me either in person, via phone or email. My details are below.

Kind regards,

Michaela Lutz

Email: m_lutz23@yahoo.co.uk

Phone 07966759304

Appendix I: Participant Brief - Version 2 (Used for Interviews 5 to 8)

Research Project: Aikido Practitioners' Experiences of Training and Personal Development

Dear Volunteer,

You are being invited to participate in a study exploring the experiences of martial artists at xxx Dojo on their journey towards personal growth. I am particularly interested in your experiences of doing aikido on a regular basis, and any training-related factors that you have found influential for your personal development.

I am a student at London Metropolitan University, currently studying towards a Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology. I am hoping to do this piece of research as my doctoral thesis.

For this study I am looking for students who:

- Have been training in the club for a minimum of 2 years
- Ideally, are not formal instructors themselves

To participate you would be required to attend an in-depth interview about different aspects of your experience of practicing aikido. The interview will last for approximately one hour.

If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. You are free to withdraw this consent at any time and without giving a reason. Also, you may find that talking in depth about an aspect of relationships can be a very personal, and potentially emotional experience. If you find any of the interview questions difficult or intrusive you do not have to answer them, and there will be no pressure put upon you.

A digital recording will be made of your interview to allow your responses to be reviewed in detail after the interview. The recording will be securely stored in at the researcher's premises. All information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Your name or any identifying information will be removed from the data, and will not be quoted in the study. The consent forms will be kept separately from the data, and will only serve to verify that proper consent has been obtained. The name of this school will not be mentioned in the study. (Please note that confidentiality might not apply in certain rare circumstances, e.g., if criminal activity is disclosed.)

Whether you chose to take part in the study or not is entirely up to you. Please be reassured that whether you do or don't participate will have no bearing on your status as a xxx Dojo member/ student in any way.

Please note that my director of studies or the external examiner may request access to the raw data for verification purposes. Also, I am intending to submit the completed study for publication with a renowned journal. Successful publication would require me to retain all data for a certain length of time. This could be around five years, depending on the journal.

All interviewees are invited to request a copy of the final study after completion of the project. This will be available in September 2008.

This study has been approved by the University Ethics Committee at London Metropolitan University and will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines provided by the British Psychological Society. If you have any questions, comments or complaints about this study please get in touch with me, either in person, via phone or email. Alternatively, you can contact my director of studies, Dr Mark Donati on 020 7320 1110 or email at m.donati@londonmet.ac.uk.

Thank you very much for your time and interest, it is much appreciated.

If you are interested in taking part in this study, please contact me either in person, via phone or email. My details are below.

Kind regards,

Michaela Lutz

Email: m_lutz23@yahoo.co.uk

Phone 07966759304

Appendix J: Participant Consent Form - Version 1 (Used for Interviews 1 to 4)

Consent Form

Topic of Study: Aikido Practitioners' Evaluations of the Role and Significance of their Instructor

Researcher: Michaela Lutz

1. I confirm that I have read and fully understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

   Please initial box. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason, and without my status as an aikido student being affected in any way.

   Please initial box. ☐

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

   Please initial box. ☐

....	....	....
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
....	....	....
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix K: Participant Consent Form - Version 2 (Used for Interviews 5 to 8)

Consent Form

Topic of Study: Aikido Practitioners' Experiences of Training and Personal Development

Researcher: Michaela Lutz

4. I confirm that I have read and fully understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

   Please initial box. ☐

5. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason, and without my status as an aikido student being affected in any way.

   Please initial box. ☐

6. I agree to take part in the above study.

   Please initial box. ☐

....	....	....
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
....	....	....
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix L: Participant Debrief

Dear Participant,

Thank you very much for taking part in this study. Your time and effort are greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns following the completion of the study, please contact:

Michaela Lutz
E mail: m_lutz23@yahoo.co.uk
Phone: 07966759304

Or my director of studies:

Dr Mark Donati
E mail: m.donati@londonmet.ac.uk
Phone: 020 7320 1110

As mentioned before, you can request a copy of the completed study. This will be available in September 2008. Please indicate your interest at the time of the interview or email me on the above address.

Thanks again,

Michaela Lutz

Appendix M: Participant Summary of Findings

Aikido Study

Dear xxx,

Thank you once again for taking part in this study. I much appreciate your contribution.

You may recall from our interview that I talked to you about sending you some feedback of my preliminary analysis.
I have finally collated a general summary of my findings. The summary is based on a diagram that I developed from the collected interview data.

I would be interested in receiving any feedback from you regarding your reaction to these findings, and how they fit with your personal experience. If you want to comment on the findings, please get back to me within the next three weeks so that I can include your views in my write-up.
In any case I hope that you find the attached summary interesting.

Also, I would be grateful if you could send me a quick confirmation email if you still wish to receive a summary of the finished study. This should be available around October 2008.

Best wishes,

Michaela

Preliminary Analysis

In my attempt to give you an overview of my analysis please bear in mind that the findings are my interpretation of the interview material, not an objective observation. As such this is not so much a model of 'what happens' but rather my impression of how the people I have interviewed construe their experience of training. Also please note that the focus of my interest is the relationship between student and instructor within the context of personal development, and that this focus is reflected in the analysis.

The diagram on the next page will act as a guide to my findings. For the purpose of explaining the diagram I have used different colour schemes. I will stick with the colour organisation in the diagram and cross-reference it with the main themes I found.

Before discussing the themes individually I will give you a brief overview of my ideas behind the diagram:

The diagram describes the TRAINING EXPERIENCE **of participants, consisting of the** STUDENT-INSTRUCTOR RELATIONSHIP **and the** DOJO SPACE AND GROUP DYNAMIC. **The student-instructor relationship is characterised by** GUIDANCE, ROLE MODELLING **and** PROVOCATIVE CONTAINMENT, **and the dojo space and group dynamic by** ENCULTURATION AND GROUP SUPPORT **and** EMOTIONAL EMERGENCE.

The training experience is influenced by input from THE INSTRUCTOR **and** THE STUDENT.

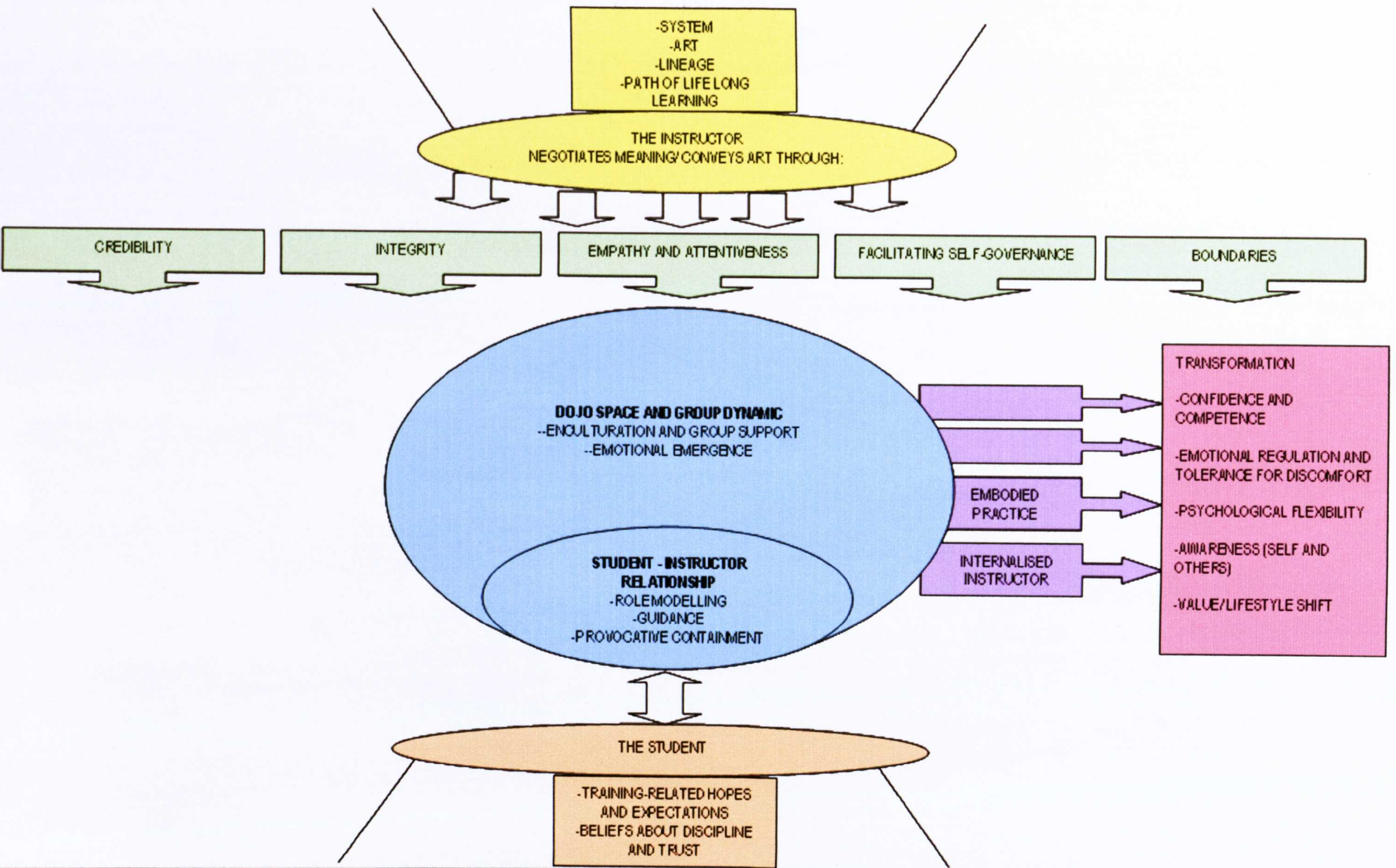
THE INSTRUCTOR **conveys the art of Aikido in accordance with the club's lineage and philosophy and creates a specific atmosphere in the dojo. The avenues through which the instructor conveys the art and establishes or maintains leadership are conceptualised as behaviours or qualities. I have named them** CREDIBILITY, INTEGRITY, EMPATHY AND ATTENTIVENESS, FACILITATING SELF-GOVERNANCE **and** BOUNDARIES.

THE STUDENT **brings his or her perspective and experience to the training experience. I have conceptualised these as** HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS **regarding the training and** BELIEFS ABOUT TRUST AND AUTHORITY. **The student's perspective is continuously revised and updated through the experience of training. This reciprocal relationship is symbolised by the double arrow.**

The purple arrows symbolise the PROCESS OF CHANGE that students undergo as a result of their training experience. In line with participants' accounts I have identified two pathways in which students consolidated and utilised the training experience for their everyday lives. I called them **INTERNALISING THE INSTRUCTOR** and **EMBODIED PRACTICE**. Whereas the first appears to emerge from the student-instructor relationship, the latter is more related to the training experience in general. I have included further arrows to indicate that there may be other pathways that are either unclear or beyond the scope of this analysis.

The box on the right contains a description of the OUTCOMES OF CHANGE. I clustered these into **CONFIDENCE AND COMPETENCE**, **EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND TOLERANCE FOR DISCOMFORT**, **PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY**, **AWARENESS (SELF AND OTHER)** and **VALUE AND LIFESTYLE SHIFT**.

On page 4 I will introduce and discuss each of the themes that emerged alongside this model. These largely correspond with the diagram headings, but wherever they do not, I will explain how they relate to the model. In order to illustrate the content of the themes I have paraphrased the main statements made by participants and supplemented these with actual quotations.


-SYSTEM
-ART
-LINEAGE
-PATH OF LIFE LONG LEARNING
THE INSTRUCTOR
NEGOTIATES MEANING/CONVEYS ART THROUGH:
CREDIBILITY
INTEGRITY
EMPATHY AND ATTENTIVENESS
FACILITATING SELF-GOVERNANCE
BOUNDARIES
DOJO SPACE AND GROUP DYNAMIC
--ENCULTURATION AND GROUP SUPPORT
--EMOTIONAL EMERGENCE
STUDENT - INSTRUCTOR RELATIONSHIP
-ROLEMODELLING
-GUIDANCE
-PROVOCATIVE CONTAINMENT
EMBODIED PRACTICE
INTERNALISED INSTRUCTOR
TRANSFORMATION
-CONFIDENCE AND COMPETENCE
-EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND TOLERANCE FOR DISCOMFORT
-PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY
-AWARENESS (SELF AND OTHERS)
-VALUE/LIFESTYLE SHIFT
THE STUDENT
-TRAINING-RELATED HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS
-BELIEFS ABOUT DISCIPLINE AND TRUST

Theme 1: THE INSTRUCTOR AS GATEKEEPER OF THE ART (corresponds with yellow part of the diagram)

Several students expressed the opinion that the instructor played a significant role in shaping the training experience by creating a particular atmosphere in the dojo. It was said that the instructor's personal approach to Aikido defined the dojo ethos and philosophy. Some students also mentioned the influence of the grandmaster, who was seen as part of the club's lineage.

Theme 2: AVENUES OF CONVEYING THE ART AND ESTABLISHING LEADERSHIP (corresponds with green part of the diagram)

2.1. CREDIBILITY

When students commented on their experience of the quality of teaching they received, they emphasised the practical usefulness of the training and the instructor's competence in the art. Several students described the training as having '*purpose*' or making '*sense*'. Others commented on the instructor's succinct yet accurate manner of giving instructions, saying, for instance that they were convinced he would be able to explain or demonstrate to them aspects of the training they did not understand or were unsure about.

2.2. INTEGRITY

Students talked about their impression of the instructor's integrity as a person. This included his dedication to the art, his sincerity, humility, openness and concern for people. Some students experienced these qualities and values as corresponding very closely with their own values and concerns. This was something that resonated with them and attracted them to training. Some students also commented that the instructor did not seem to be motivated by material gains and did not make them feel like '*a punter*' in the dojo.

2.3. EMPATHY AND ATTENTIVENESS

Students commented favourably on the instructor's capacity to listen to them, pay attention to their particular difficulties, for instance with respect to injuries, and his general interest in maintaining a relationship with them. Some people valued receiving advice on particular issues while others appreciated that he did not '*turn a blind eye*' to their efforts and often asked them for their feedback. Students commented that this made them feel '*worthy*' and maintained their interest in the training.

2.4. FACILITATING SELF-GOVERNANCE

There was a consensus among students that the instructor gave them a lot of leeway with regard to the training, enabling them to '*own*' the practice for themselves. Students commented that it was important for them not to give up their own sense of responsibility and to be able to make their own decisions. There was a view that the instructor presented or suggested ideas in a non-coercive manner.

2.5. BOUNDARIES

Students commented on different ways in which the instructor maintained boundaries within the training. One aspect of this concerned the clarity and direction in his teaching and his '*determination*' to stick to his regime. Other students commented on the instructor's maintenance of formal boundaries by '*keeping his distance*' from students.

Theme 3: THE STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE (corresponds with beige part of the diagram)

3.1. HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS REGARDING TRAINING

Many of the students talked about their motivations to start training, including self-defence, fitness, stress relief and personal development. Students' expectations of training were shaped by their histories and current life situations, including previous experience with martial arts, martial sports or body-oriented practices. Some students stated that the practice had been a '*deliberate*' activity from

the outset, whereas for others it appeared to have become more significant over time. Some students commented on an element of challenge that motivated their training, for instance with regard to physical skills or self-discipline.

3.2. ATTITUDES TOWARDS TRUST AND AUTHORITY

This theme was related to students' views on issues around authority and etiquette in the dojo, and the importance of trusting the instructor and fellow students. Attitudes towards etiquette varied with some students aspiring to a slightly more casual interactional style, and others to a stricter, more traditional style. Some students described a process of integrating a questioning approach towards authority with accepting the dojo structure. Others stated that they were happy to *'fall in line with the structure'* but only after they had convinced themselves of the instructor's and fellow students' trustworthiness. As above, students' views seemed to reflect their current life situations as well as prior experiences with martial arts.

Theme 4: THE TRAINING EXPERIENCE (corresponds with blue part of the diagram)

4.1. DOJO SPACE AND GROUP DYNAMIC

4.1.a. ENCULTURATION AND GROUP SUPPORT

Students talked about the importance of the dojo culture for their training. One important aspect of the culture was defined as the diversity of the students with regard to age, gender, cultural background and ability. Several students commented that they appreciated the atmosphere created by this *'dynamic pool of people'*, however there was also the view that the atmosphere had perhaps become somewhat less inclusive over time. Another important aspect was the seriousness of training that permeated the dojo, and stood in contrast to other social situations. This was described as *'traditional'*, *'austere'*, *'intense'* and *'purposeful'*. Students also emphasised that this culture created a safe environment marked by trust and respect that enabled them to engage in this potentially very dangerous practice. Some students stated that they appreciated the *'helpfulness'* and non-competitiveness of the group. Some mentioned that the social support received from the group had become an important source of strength in their lives.

4.1.b. EMOTIONAL EMERGENCE

This theme relates to the physical space and the atmosphere of the dojo as factors impacting on some students' emotional experience. The dojo space was described as *'calm'*, *'peaceful'* and *'special'*. For some students this space became a place of refuge from the bustle of everyday life. Others described the dojo as a place where *'lots of things come up'*. Some students noted that being in this space made them aware of different feelings they had. There was a view that being in this very sombre, structured environment brought one's emotions and inner dialogues into view. Some students stated that this increased sense of self-awareness was related to the way in which the dojo environment did not allow for evasion and non-disclosure with regard to one's technical ability and understanding of the art.

4.2. INSTRUCTOR - STUDENT RELATIONSHIP

4.2.a. GUIDANCE

Many students commented on the role their instructor played in providing a level of guidance within and beyond the training experience. This ranged from the use of metaphors during training to providing direction with regard to fundamental principles of conduct that students found helpful in negotiating everyday social situations. However, there was also a contrasting view that the instructor should not go beyond their area of expertise and give advice on students' personal lives. Some students alluded to the idea of the instructor possessing a more comprehensive awareness and understanding of processes occurring in the dojo. For instance, students thought that the instructor was able to recognise students' attitudes by way of looking at their postures and that he provided subtle support without the students' knowledge. Some students appeared to experience this containing and providing a degree of *'reassurance'*.

4.2.b. ROLE MODELLING

Many students stated that they saw the instructor as a role model. Most found it difficult to pinpoint particular things the instructor had said or done as far as their learning was concerned. Rather, there was a consensus that the instructor's '*general way of being*' was important. Students commented that they learnt from observing the instructor, regardless of whether he gave verbal instruction or not. Some students described the instructor as signifying a benchmark in terms of their own development, which led them to continuously strive to become more like him.

4.2.c. PROVOCATIVE CONTAINMENT
Many students seemed to perceive the instructor as the most central feature of training, providing a degree of constancy and stability in their lives. The instructor was compared with coal, providing a slow-burning fire (as opposed to fireworks). The constant invitation for training offered by the instructor was experienced as containing and even precious to many students, for instance by helping them to maintain other life commitments. At the same time, the relationship was also experienced as provocative on some levels. One aspect of this was seen as the ongoing challenge of attempting to emulate a teacher who himself continuously developed his abilities and understanding further. This was described as a '*push-pull relationship*', which to some extent seemed to challenge the students' view of themselves as competent. Nevertheless, this challenge seemed to be an important element of training to those students by providing scope for ongoing learning.

Theme 5: THE PROCESS OF CHANGE (corresponds with purple part of the diagram)

5.1. THE PROCESS IS ELUSIVE AND DIFFICULT TO PINPOINT
For most students it was difficult to verbalise how they thought they had developed as a person through the practice of Aikido. Several reasons for this difficulty were cited. One was the lack of comparison with an alternative. Several students noted that they had been training for a long time and did not know how their lives might be different if they had not engaged in the practice in the first place. Some students were engaged in parallel practices including other martial arts and body focused practices. As a result they were unsure to what extent the changes they experienced could be attributed to Aikido. Other students talked about the very slow and gradual nature of change. Observing the changes was compared to watching ice melting. Another aspect of students' difficulty to verbalise their understanding of these changes seemed to stem from their limited experience of having a verbal exchange with others on this topic. Some students mentioned negative experiences when attempting to talk to non-martial artists about their training. Others commented that they did not usually have discussions on this topic with their peers. There was the idea that in order to understand this process of change one would have to acquire extensive theoretical and philosophical knowledge and relate this to one's experience, and that this provided a vocabulary in which this process could be described.

In my model, this theme corresponds closely with '**embodied practice**'. I have attempted to explain some of the difficulties students had in verbalising this process through the notion of 'learning something through the body'. This idea seems to correspond with the impression of change as an implicit process as described by some of the students. I think it is also in line with the visceral quality of students' accounts that emerged from the interview data. Some students mentioned the importance of repetition as an important aspect of the training. I have construed this as the repeated practice of a physical way of being. The importance of 'lived experience' in my opinion also features in the statement of another student who talked about his philosophical orientation. He stated that the felt experience of this practice was qualitatively different from a more intellectual pre-existing understanding of what this philosophy was about.
(You may have noticed that much more of my own interpretation comes into this association and as such it is one step further removed from the actual analysis. I thought I would share this with you nonetheless.)

I have acknowledged the relative lack of clarity on the nature of the process of change in the model by including a number of blank arrows. These are meant to symbolise gaps in students' explicit understanding of the nature of these processes, allowing for the possibility that other, not yet verbalised pathways exist.

5.2. INTERNALISING THE INSTRUCTOR

A number of students talked about having developed a sense of self-discipline through training. This related to their commitment to training but often also applied outside the training context, for instance at work. Students stated that they felt able to apply Aikido principles to unrelated aspects of their lives through the quality of teaching they had received. Some students talked about visualising the instructor and reminding themselves of his teachings throughout their day. There was the idea of internalising the instructor's teachings as a way of utilising them outside the training context. The transition from having a teacher to '*being your own teacher*' was also made explicit by some students.

Theme 6: OUTCOMES OF TRAINING (corresponds with pink part of the diagram)

6.1. CONFIDENCE AND COMPETENCE

Students stated that they felt more confident through training. This included '*mental and physical*' confidence. Some students felt more prepared for physical confrontations and more able to defend themselves and loved ones. Others felt more comfortable and assertive in social situations and in dealing with challenges. Some students felt more confident in handling their own emotions in difficult situations or described a sense of being in possession of '*tools*' that better enabled them to manage their lives.

6.2. EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND TOLERANCE FOR DISCOMFORT

Most students talked about a change in their temperament as a result of training, particularly with regard to anger and frustration. Many described feeling more balanced, calmer and more patient. There was the idea that Aikido techniques and visualisations could be used outside training in order to deal with stress or anger. Other students stated that they were able to gain a new perspective on their emotional experience through '*hard practice*' and develop a greater capacity for accepting difficulties. The physical discomfort of this practice was mentioned frequently. Many students acknowledged that they found this very challenging, yet also that it provided the opportunity to not identify so strongly with one's '*experience of discomfort*'.

6.3. PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY

This theme relates to students' expressions of a greater ability to consciously decide on their actions rather than just reacting. For instance, students stated that they felt more able to assess a situation, felt more '*in control*' and made '*more sensible*' decisions. There also seemed to be an awareness of choice, expressed through the idea that in Aikido there is always a multitude of possible responses. Some students also seemed more at ease with a degree of uncertainty in their lives. This was expressed through a more relaxed approach towards the here-and-now. For instance students stated that as opposed to striving towards a particular goal they now enjoyed the journey, or focused on what was happening rather than what they thought should happen.

6.4. AWARENESS

6.4.a. INTERPERSONAL AWARENESS

Some students commented on an increased awareness for others through training. Students reported a greater appreciation of the importance of teamwork, an increased capacity to listen, and more compassion and tolerance if others made mistakes or transgressions. There was the idea that the physical practice of Aikido required an attunement to each other's energetic condition, which fostered a degree of empathetic awareness.

6.4.b. SELF-AWARENESS

Some students also reported a greater capacity for observing their own experiences in a slightly more detached manner. In particular, students mentioned being able to acknowledge their weaknesses or perceived shortcomings. Some students alluded to a greater willingness to expose themselves to their own "mistakes" and to observe their internal dialogues.

6.5. VALUE AND LIFESTYLE SHIFT

Some students stated that training had changed their outlook on life. For some this was connected with a healthier lifestyle or a newly found appreciation of their body, nature, and the simple things in life. Other students did not think that training had brought about radical changes to their life or way of thinking, but nevertheless hypothesized that it may have strengthened their existing philosophical orientation.

Appendix N: Copy of Post-Interview Notes

Interview 1

Interview brief 1
Respondent: XXX, male, 28 years old, 6 years experience, 2nd degree black belt (nidan)
Date: 14th Aug
Location: library, big space, interview/ teaching style, not very intimate/ comfortable

Difficulty coming up with concrete examples/ situations, struggled with putting ideas into words, somewhat self-conscious? I felt that the fact we did not know each other made it more difficult since I sensed a reluctance to talk about personal experiences/ personal difficulties, open up to a greater extent. Student had read a lot about the student-instructor relationship, this knowledge was influencing his statements; I felt a bit leading at times when I attempted to paraphrase things he had said or was trying to say. I think there was an urgency to represent the club in a respectful way, but this seems to be a reflection of the existing relationship where the student feels a great responsibility to show respect. This might have prevented him from telling me negative experiences, but I still got the impression that his comments on this question were sincere/ heartfelt. Emphasis on doubt: difficulty evaluating personal growth/ did not talk much about benefits, only mentioned in the beginning. Came back to the need for meaning and consistency towards the end however, did not really relate this to the instructor. Did talk about potential negative effects of responsibility of senior student (stress, work load, tense relationship). Seemed somewhat guarded to talk about his life outside Aikido. Stressed need for boundaries.

Interview 2

Interview brief 1
Respondent: XXX, male, 44 years old, 10 years of experience, 7 of these at XXX dojo, 2nd degree black belt (nidan)
Date: 20th August
Location: café, very noisy but intimate and comfortable, over extended to one hour twenty minutes, probably due to my being distracted, not had a big visible clock handy, but respondent also had lots to say!

Very easy-going respondent, very mature, needed little prompting to find his way to what he wanted to say. Gave some examples but also abstract ideas mainly informed by philosophical framework (Buddhism, Shinto, mindfulness). Has been involved with Zen Buddhism and yoga practice for about twenty years and very interested/ aware of PD issues. Very friendly, made interview very easy. Location brought a lot of distractions with it, I noticed in myself whereas respondent seemed unaffected. Talked about values embedded in Buddhism, instructor as role model, training as on-going system of PD, loyalty, trust in teacher and how this gradually developed. Philosophy of non-violence and non-confrontation and how this manifests in his life, the challenge he experiences when facing his own weakness, and how training gives him a focus that gives him going, makes him continuously challenge himself. Also stressed importance of communicating with others, importance of group, as opposed to solitary systems like Zen and yoga! Said he is involved in the business side of running dojo, and also does a masters in leadership skills/ organisational management.

Interview 3

Interview brief 2
Respondent: XXX, male, 27 years old, 2 years 8 months experience of training, second kyu (brown belt)
Location: park, very relaxed and quiet, interview only lasted 48 minutes, respondent did not seem to have more to say/ elaborate, but then again was talking quite fast;

Friendly respondent, important to give good impression of instructor, made explicit, maybe somewhat less mature and reflective than previous respondents, works as a bouncer and initially sought out ma for self defence. Important that Aikido as a discipline is internal, sees this as having counterbalanced his impulsiveness. Control, temper (emotional). Took up Tai Chi a year ago to help with his Aikido. Emphasis on boundaries. Use of the centre. Seems to perceive instructor as a teacher and a role model, himself as an apprentice. (failed to ask why he thought it was important to have a role model!). Importance of internalised discipline/ taking on board teaching as aware of fact that teacher might be lost at some point. (similar to becoming own therapist in CBT?). Importance of others, group atmosphere. Adamant that there was no single key situation but rather ongoing. Strongly committed to training, mentioned that not enough people do MA. Off record: good to talk to a fellow MA practitioner as he often talks about his instructor to others and they sometimes don't understand, which frustrates him.

Interview 4

Interview brief 1 (although could not remember)
Respondent: XXX, male, 53 years old, 3 years of training, first dan black belt
Location: pub garden, very quiet and relaxed, interview lasted 1 hour 17minutes, respondent was very casual with me, was chatting and sometimes came off topic slightly, also at the end started to question me which was tricky as the recorder was still on but I wanted to be as honest and transparent as possible, clearly he considered the interview to be finished.

A musician who described himself as a bit of a drifter prior to Aikido although he always aspired to a spiritual component in his life, that prior he described as underdeveloped, not non-existent. (disclosed previous drug use). Some difficulty finding concrete examples/ key situations again. Question about aspects of training is not very well understood by most respondents including him. Talked a lot about training with others, did not come out with instructor spontaneously, although stated that he would rather open his own school than change instructors, said instructor will always be his instructor. Emphasis on the style and emphasis of teaching (getting fundamentals right like attitude, centre rather than learning lots of technique), need for austerity of practice, did not want to study something that was easy. Emphasis on studying, since never studied in his life, feels he is doing something purposeful (identity?). also acknowledged that process becomes more important rather than goal orientation/ ambition, compared Aikido to religion, at the same time did not think that all changes in him were due to Aikido; seems to aspire to a more friendly, tactile relationship with teacher outside of training context, but says he is only gradually starting to feel more relaxed around him, lots of speculation about teacher characteristics and motivations to start training. I wonder if he felt the need to demean him in someway as he talked about his shyness, lack of organisation skills, slight physique etc...? whether he maybe finds him threatening? It did seem to me that the teacher's technical superiority was a source of tension/ and inspiration? for him. He did not agree. When asked about disagreements he cited physical pain of sitting and thinking 'this is not right', but did not seem able to reflect on this more. I found it a bit difficult at times as he tended to stray off the topic and at one point seemed to become a bit irritable when I asked him about his feelings in connection to brain injury and teacher keeping in touch (maybe the question wasn't very good); He kept talking without pausing to summarise or reflect, although at times he was surprised to be expressing something he had never thought about in these terms.

Interview 5

Interview brief 2
Respondent: XXX, male, 18 years old, 6 years of training, 2 kyu (blue belt level)
Location: small library back room; interview lasted 1h 24 min altogether.

I was at first a bit worried about respondent's age but since he was 18 this was no issue in terms of consent, but it probably remained on my mind. I took precautions to ensure privacy and comfort. But were interrupted right at beginning ca 5 minutes into the interview by person barging into room despite sign, there was a double booking. We had to interrupt and sort out, took ca 15 minutes, I was

annoyed and very tense, felt quite anxious which probably had a knock-on effect on the remaining interview. Respondent remained calm and seemed completely fine, to the point were I was feeling stupid, and I thought afterwards to myself that I have a lot to learn from these students, I felt quite humbled that an 18 year old was a lot more composed than me and I was supposed to be the facilitator. So that was a bit difficult and I think it was on my mind while doing the interview. It took me a while to get back into it after we had started again (we moved rooms to the office) and when after ca 20 min he asked whether he could think about a question I somehow understood that he needed a break (toilet or something?) and stopped the tape, then restarted a few moments later after we had both had a drink of water. (I also changed the batteries in the dictaphone) I think I need to take time and not do things too hastily, and rather work on checking out if my respondent is ok and being quite transparent. After this initial hiccup the interview settled and I felt that we were beginning to build a rapport, and also that respondent was emotionally involved. He ended up saying quite a lot towards the end, some of the most interesting remarks, talking about a sense of confusion and different teaching styles, he mentioned the benefit of being listened to, and could think of some situations that were key, that included the use of instruction/ learning through symbols/ imagery. Tree, tool, etc. He was very articulate and thoughtful and also said towards the end that it was important to get a message across about what was important and what wasn't. I was conscious not to patronise him but what he said was genuinely interesting and offered a new perspective, so I don't think I did. I think there was a good balance of talking about his PD and relationship with instructor. I thought he was very open and generous with me. This interview was a bit of a breath of fresh air and a good counterpoint to more mature people's accounts, it was less abstract and somehow quite alive and tangible.

Interview 6

Interview brief 1
Respondent: XXX, male, 27 years old, trained for 4 years, second dan (second degree black belt)
Location: park, private but a little damp, maybe not all that comfortable, interviewee seemed a bit uncomfortable; interview lasted 55min

Highly educated respondent (PhD) who studied Feldenkrais method. Found respondent very difficult and a little unpleasant. Communication was somewhat difficult, respondent kept answers quite short and did not seem very reflective or prepared to talk about his personal experiences. He commented on my questions not being to the point (I think), I wondered whether he had expected more concrete questions but when I asked him this I could not establish if this was the case or not, respondent seemed to have difficulty to articulate his sentiments. I was not quite sure what he meant. He had not much to say about the T-S relationship, I think he was trying to make the point that it was difficult to pin down changes to particular events/ causes, may have been concerned about bias/ being misinterpreted. He said he was not different as a person in Aikido than outside of Aikido. Talked about body awareness and empathic awareness for others. This I did not feel, I found it really hard to establish some kind of rapport with the respondent, found him quite haughty and arrogant. He did not really give many examples, talking instead in a very scholarly, intellectualised tone. He did talk a lot about the social aspect of Aikido but it all remained quite vague and cryptic and intangible. I did realise that some of my questions indeed were a little bit ambiguous or leftfield but I think this is because he did not give me much to go by and I tried to pursue some of the leads he gave me to no avail, further alienating him from me. He seemed either bored or irritated by my questions and I was not sure how I could check out the interpersonal aspect of the interview without getting into therapeutic terrain. It started off ok and seemed to deteriorate. When I asked for comments on the interview he commented on my questions not being specific enough, and I said I would take this on board for future interviews.

Interview 7

Interview brief 2
Respondent: XXX, male, 33years old, trained for 3 years, first dan
Location: Therapy treatment room; very cosy and comfortable, nice small room, interviewee seemed comfortable; Lasted ca 60 min, interviewee asked for toilet break

Very friendly and easy-going participant, very talkative and helpful, seemed genuine and quite open (talked about difficult personal experiences), felt there was a good rapport from the start. Mentioned the instructor as a key factor without prompting right at the beginning. Themes were trust in the instructor, the structure and hierarchy of the dojo as a facilitator for learning, instructor giving space for own decision-making, and an awareness of complex issues around authority, obedience etc informed also from previous experiences in MA (Kempo). Participant seemed quite down to earth, some concrete examples, talked about class atmosphere, individual differences, impact of Aikido on other areas of life, e.g. work (more able to make sensible decisions, see the bigger picture, accept situations), how training turns of inner dialogue, how it seems to have made him more aware of his emotions by confronting him with these, need for owning progress rather than having it pushed onto him. Repetition of technique as a key learning experience but not an isolated event.

Interview 8
Interview brief 2
Respondent: XXX, male, 28years old, trained for 3 and a half years, first dan (black belt)
Location; dojo office after class, interview lasted approx 60 min.

Somewhat reluctant participant-disclosed at end of interview that he only participated since nobody else volunteered. Appeared quite shy. English is second language and he seemed to be struggling a bit to understand my questions and to verbalise himself. Motivation to do interview to help me out, help himself and talk about dojo/ instructor. Spoke in very heart-felt manner, belonging to group, changes through training, but could not articulate exactly how changes had come about. Not very psychological-minded. Importance of instructor(s), did not mention the grandmaster. Talked about how he was wary discussing his practice of Aikido and Yoga with non-ma, possibly reason for reluctance to take part in interview. Hazarded guess that I might understand better as I am doing MA myself.

Appendix O: Excerpt from Annotated Transcript (John)

John

1 **MA interview**
2
3 **So um when you're kind of thinking about um you know when you started Aikido in the**
4 **beginning um, can you tell me um, maybe just tell me a little bit about why you…how**
5 **you got into Aikido, what made you um start Aikido?**
6 Ok. Err, for most of my err life I was a musician, and so… I kinda nipped the mitt a little
7 bit… *(laughs)*
8 **Yeah.**
9 and had a bit of a… a rocky life. In certain areas.
10 **Right.**
11 I had err… I'd always kind of known…this kind of spiritual…stuff, I suppose.
12 **M-hmm.**
13 And always err, you know, always been aware of err some kind of budo. Some kind of
14 path, somewhere.
15 **Yeah. Yeah.**
16 But obviously not lived it, you know, just taken the easy route for too long, and all. And
17 then, I just got to a stage you know, I stopped playing music and all that…for a few years,
18 and I just got to a stage where I thought, well, I've kind of lived the first half of my life in
19 a...in a haze of err stimulants *(laughs)* and alcohol and just…you know, no responsibility
20 and all that, that kind of a life style.
21 **M-hmm. M-hmm.**
22 And so it's time to get serious and err…So it was just part of my, my kind of spiritual
23 budo and all, it was just starting…um…part of my kind of pathway. And I just decided
24 you know to kind of …to round everything of besides the writing and getting into some
25 meditation, and so on and so forth. And you know, just to round the whole thing off I
26 thought I'd look into martial arts. And I…coincidentally I have a neighbour, // who lives
27 a couple of floors above me and he…um is a Buddhist. And it…we've been neighbours
28 for a few years but only when I got onto this…this err kind of budo…
29 **Yeah.**
30 And we kinda somehow just organically started to communicate. You know. Beyond that
31 we'd only ever said good morning.
32 **Yeah. *(chuckles)***
33 And then strangely enough um…it was a neighbour that introduced us. And strangely
34 enough as well, it was in a kind of a…not very budo situation, it was a bit o a party
35 situation, kinda quite weirdly.
36 **Ok. So another neighbour introduced you?**
37 Well, yeah. Another neighbour introduced me to // and blah blah blah, and just got
38 talking. And um I just said, ah, I wouldn't mind to try a martial art and he took me to //.
39 Because I'd stay, you know, I kinda said to him as well that I'm really not interested in
40 you know, putting my fist through bits of wood or you know, I don't wanna get my foot
41 behind my ear…or something, I just wanna…you know.
42 **Yeah.**
43 I'm really interested in the kinda spiritual side really, in the principles and so on so forth.
44 And…and that was it. I just came along and watched a lesson. And I think the thing that
45 err, I found really err…attractive about // in particular, or // and *[the instructor]* who's
46 taught is that it's…very um…, and I found out since as well, that we are very,

1

1 err…traditional. And very disciplined in the sense that our Aikido is actually …a modern,
2 quite a derivative one cos it's influenced a lot by um Kashima Shinryu. And that the
3 actual, you know, the, the…as far as…you know, …we sitting there, you know we sit in
4 Seiza on our feet, the meditation position, you know, most…most dojos would do that
5 you know, as a few…few minutes' agony. You know. *(chuckles)* And even when you've
6 been doing it a while it's agony. And it is kind of, you know, we all…we just sit there for
7 like half an hour sometimes.
8 **Oh.**
9 And, you know, *[the instructor]*'s speaking or you know if we're…you know, you've
10 seen the Futame we do, the shaking of the hands, sitting the …which is the meditation,
11 the shaking of the hands. Sitting in Seiza, shaking the hands, eyes closed in meditation,
12 and we do that sometimes for like twenty minutes, half an hour. And also, I don't know if
13 you noticed in *[]* or…in the dojo but even when we're getting changed before and after
14 the lesson is, there's a kind of quietness and stillness and a respect and err, people would
15 just go and sit quietly in Seiza on the mat and wait for the lesson to begin.
16 **Yeah.**
17 Yeah, and there's…there's a…healthy…distance I think and err…you know. In
18 the…people, you know…and a healthy respect for each other. Err, within the dojo. And
19 those are the kind of things that really attracted me in particular.
20 **And what is it about that that you find so attractive? I mean, in what ways do you think**
21 **that is a good thing?**
22 Because it's just so…alien to err, to err my kind of former life, you know. In asfar as I've
23 never…I've never studied anything. Ever in my life. You know, I kinda left school at
24 fifteen and never st…I mean, I've played the guitar but I've never actually sat down and
25 studied the guitar.
26 **Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.**
27 I just always had a guitar somewhere and that was it. That's why…you know I became a
28 guitar player. But I never um studied it. I never really studied anything. And so…err, that
29 was really attractive to me, the… err, the…you know, the prospect of studying
30 something. Because it was completely alien and …disciplined.
31 **M-hmm.**
32 And….and tradition and not, I just found it something…err…probably something quite
33 noble. Something to err attach myself to.
34 **M-hmm.**
35 So that is the answer. What was the question?
36 ***(Mutual laugh)***
37 **I'd say, yeah, that is why…that's why I was attracted to…**
38 **Yeah.**
39 because it's…it's err…what I was looking for, you know, some kind of…. (…) It's a bit
40 difficult to s…s…not sound like, you know…a …a…err, I found religion, or something.
41 You know what I mean.
42 **Yeah. Yeah.**
43 I'd s... in a way…it's kind of quite similar to people that do do that, you know.
44 **Yeah.**
45 Just some kinda guidance. Do you know what I mean? So, it's…a bit of attaching myself
46 to some sort of guidance. Just…

1 **What does that do for you…in your everyday life?**
2 Err…it certainly influences it, and…hmm…Specifics? *(sigh)* (…) Ok. How does it…how
3 does it manifest itself, really? It's probably I'm much more patient…and…I'm
4 much…mo….I've always been a bit of a hothead, I've, naturally I'm a hothead. You
5 know, I'm a fire sign…and all that, and…err, you know I had Latin…blood, you know
6 from my da…from my grandparents. Both of my grandparents were kind of full on
7 Portuguese.
8 **Yeah. Ok.**
9 Err, on my dad's side.
10 **Yeah.**
11 Err, so after I had this quite…hot-blooded…err…you know, temperament, quite
12 passionate, quite you know, quick to fly off the handle…that has definitely…tempered
13 that down. Err, which I'm really grateful for. And you know, I'm more apt to kind
14 of…err…consider now before acting in a…in a lot of ways. And…and then the opposite
15 of that is…um…my kind of, *(chuckles)* the opposite of that is my reflex…my reaction,
16 you know, my immediate kind of reaction to the things…are…are kind of…err, are a lot
17 more sensible, I think.
18 **Oh right.**
19 Ok, so if there is an immediate err, I don't know, if someone's shouting in the road or
20 something like that or an immediate conflict or whatever, you know, I just react instead
21 of, you know, I don't…react…in the way that I used to. Do you know what I mean? Like
22 I, I sort of…I don't know, something in me has kind of started to realise that
23 err…it's…it's…much…better to err…just to smile, really, just to, you know, apologise
24 or whatever. And not to…not to get caught up in the excitement…and react…
25 **Hmm. So something happens between…you know the, whatever it is, the incident and**
26 **your reaction…somehow?**
27 Yeah. Yeah. I mean, it would be like, I don't know, I'm thinking about driving things,
28 because I'm just thinking that they're the most…
29 **Yeah.**
30 they're the most err…common…complex, I suppose, you know, that I…encounter in my
31 life anyway but… You know, somebody kinda…you know, if I did something wrong, if I
32 cut somebody up or whatever, I might bang on the horn and this that and the other you
33 know. Before.
34 **Yeah. M-hmm.**
35 I would have probably just went, bollocks. You know, whatever. Been defensive.
36 **M-hmm.**
37 Knowing I was in the wrong. You know. Now I'm much more…*(unintelligible)* I just
38 say, I'm sorry. Put my hand up. You know.
39 **Hmm.**
40 And also, you know, if somebody kinda cuts me up now, this is…this is not totally down
41 to the Aikido...but down to other stuff, other reading and stuff as well, and…you know,
42 I'm much more apt to just realise that people make mistakes.
43 **M-hmm.**
44 D'you know what I mean? It's, it's not per….somebody's personal vendetta or they don't
45 set out to upset me at the end of the day. You know.
46 **M-hmm. M-hmm. So you don't take…things so personal anymore?**

3

1 Yeah! I suppose, yeah. Yeah. Which I never realised but…yeah. Actually. Yeah.
2 **That's interesting.**
3 That's a good point. I don't think I do take things so personally.
4 **Hmm. And…I mean you kind of said that obviously lots of other things are happening in**
5 **your life as well, it's not all you know, down to Aikido. But when you're kind of thinking**
6 **you know after those three years that you've been training, at the point where you're are**
7 **at the moment…**
8 Yeah.
9 **what role would you say um has Aikido had in your life?**
10 What…?
11 **What role does it have? What does it mean for you?**
12 What role? …(…) I think it's all part of my rounding out process. Err. Obviously, err
13 physically it's, it's one thing and you know, it's very… this really is a mind-body
14 experience.
15 **Yeah.**
16 Err…experience. (…) And so, physically and err, which it all affects, you know, I'm
17 much looser now, err I can sit…even just, coming back to the driving again, I can sit in
18 the car for hours, I don't get…I don't get the normal things that I've always had in years.
19 You know, tension in the shoulders, I don't get any of that. I probably would but it'd take
20 a long time for that to come now because I'm just naturally…if I'm just naturally …if I
21 feel tension in my shoulders or my *(unintelligible)* I just naturally know, I'm conscious of
22 it. And I relax and all that and just centre myself.
23 **Yeah.**
24 And I'm very conscious physically of my centre. Now as well. Quite often just walking
25 down the road and I'd be conscious of my centre and just holding my centre and just
26 relaxing my…you know.
27 **Yeah.**
28 And I'm much more kind of supple and all that, kind of…*Although I'm not very supple!*
29 Err…I'm much more supple in my movement and my body.
30 **Yeah.**
31 And…I think I s…that kind of physical err…way of being affects you mentally.
32 **Hmm.**
33 I think it keeps you more centred mentally. You know.
34 **Sounds like it.**
35 That's not…you know, I'm making it sound very ideal, like I've suddenly moved into
36 being a Buddha but it's…
37 ***(laugh)***
38 You know. I still have moments. I still you know…I lose my temper, whatever, and you
39 know, shout at my kids and all that stuff, of course.
40 **Yeah. Yeah.**
41 You know, and…and…it…you know, of course that happens. But it…it's, it's
42 n….generally speaking, overall, you know, I would say the balance is much more on the
43 other side and…
44 **M-hmm.**
45 Much more where I wanna be.
46 **M-hmm.**

4

1 You know. I was gonna say that it's much more where I want to get to but I…I'm just
2 I…I kinda stopped thinking like that. This is what I wanna be. This is what I wanna get
3 to. This is… Somebody said that to me about Aikido, you know. What would
4 you…what's your ambition within Aikido? And I, well, what do you mean? What would
5 you wanna get, to third dan, you know, forth dan? And I said, I don't know.
6 **M-hmm.**
7 I don't really… When I first started, you know, I wanna become a black belt, you know,
8 wanna work towards the black belt. And it's kind of like, the closer you get to it…that or
9 such…the less you think about it and the more you think about what you're doing, which
10 is training and learning, and the technique and …
11 **Yeah.**
12 The more you think about that, the less you think about that prize over there.
13 **Yeah.**
14 And then suddenly you look up one day and it's right in front of your eyes and you didn't
15 notice it, you have this little test.
16 **Yeah.**
17 Do you know what I mean, it's almost like that, and then, ok, great. And you think as
18 well, even when you get that …as well, when you get that, you know, you're gonna put
19 your certificate on the wall, you know, and all this nonsense…*(chuckles)* And people are
20 going, err, mine is just in a box somewhere, and I just said, uh, you blasé bugger! You
21 know what I mean. I bet it's not. But it…it's true. (…) It's kind of like…so that's all part
22 of the process of…you know. (…). A bit of a Buddhist thing as well I suppose, but you
23 know, making attachments to the things that don't mean anything. Once you've got it
24 you've got it. It doesn't mean anything. You know what I mean?
25 **You mean the certificate and all that…stuff?**
26 Yeah. Yeah. So yeah. Exactly. And I…I think it's because, well I think it because I've
27 always known that in principle but to actually…feel it, live it is…different.
28 **Hmm.**
29 To a process. So I don't have that thing now as well, you know, searching for
30 enlightenment, searching the mind. I just do what I do.
31 **The search is over?**
32 Yeah, the search is over. I'm here. This is where I am. Wherever I will get to I get to, and
33 all that shit. You know what I mean.
34 **Hmm.**
35 I'm just enjoying the journey.
36 **Hmm.**
37 And…and… you know, being attracted to what I'm attracted to.
38 **Hmm. It sounds like um maybe that looking ahead isn't…isn't so much…you now, part**
39 **of what you're doing?**
40 No, it's not. It's, it's, it's not. Err. Um. Outside little plans, I'm gonna start teaching at my
41 son and daughter's school.
42 **Oh right.**
43 I'm gonna take an Aikido class there.(…) And err…you know, it's, there's…quite a
44 strong possibility that the next few years we *will* probably err leave London. I would say.
45 And…err…if…you know, it's not beyond the realms of the…if I couldn't find a dojo
46 somewhere that err… and I don't think I would. *[The instructor]* will always be my

5

Appendix P: Extract from Initial List of Emergent Themes (Across Cases)

Environment/ Support
Safe environment helpful (exertion- control), different from everyday situations 6 KB
Does not dictate/ presume others experience, provides reflective/ expressive space 24 KB
Caring, retain role responsibility (holding?)12 MA
Instructor remains in role after discontinuation of training (anticipated)-> reluctance to find new club, prefers teaching himself 6 MA
Integrating discipline as something that was lacking 1 MA
Dojo atmosphere: respect, stillness 2 MA
Instructor shapes dojo atmosphere 4 CE
Hierarchic transmission of ideas and values (teaching) 4 CE
Dojo space and atmosphere 1 CE
Collaborative nature of practice1 CE
Group support: seniors setting example and support juniors 5 CE
Instructor essential for shaping values/ attitudes of dojo 1, 2 ST
Dojo as container for maintaining general life commitments 6 ST
idea of instructor role as initially reassuring/ containing confusion and gradually more challenging 13 ST
instructor monitors and guides unconscious process 17 ST
Mutual support 12 ST
Sense of invisible boundaries 15 SL
Secret/ invisible support 14 SL
Constancy of training as containing 23 SL
Nice atmosphere, supportive environment 1 RS
Discipline (respect, structure) 11 RS
Containment (emotional, inter-personal) 2 OJ
structure 7 OJ
Judging teacher by students 4, 20 OJ
Teacher facilitating reflection/ observer stance towards processes 14 OJ
Instructor monitoring process and able to deal with challenges to structure or escalations, poss without students' knowledge 14 OJ
Safety 14 OJ
Instructor creates/ safeguards dojo atmosphere 20, 21 OJ
Supportive environment (students) 6 OJ
Mutual support, non-competitive, care 2 CK
As a new experience 2 CK
Compassion from strangers 2 CK
Led to changes in perception of life, profound 2 CK

Combat
preparedness for potential future assaults 7 KB
Not martial aspect 15 KB
Not martial (utility in real life) 9 CE
Dealing with physical assault 2 SL
Self-defence (work) 1 RS
Not martial? 16 OJ
Fear of physical assault, ongoing sense of threat11, 12 CK

Respondent identifiers and page numbers are used to mark original sources.

Appendix Q: Colour-Coded List of Emergent Themes (John's Transcript)

Training	The instructor	Other
Effects: Considered action, less reactive, more appropriate response 3 listening Responsibility for own mistakes 3 Acceptance of others mistakes 3 Physical flexibility 4 'rounding out process' 4 Mind-body experience, physical way of being affects mental state 4 Attitude shift: concerned more with process than outcome (black belt) 5 End to spiritual quest: focus on present 5 Links to making attachments/ Buddhist philosophy 5 Experiential understanding of values 5 Confidence (physical skills, self-defence and protection, assertiveness, capability 10 Focus while uncomfortable 21 **Motivators/Attractions:** Interest in spiritual path (budo) 1, 9 Integrating discipline as something that was lacking 1 Instructor (unprompted) Prospect of learning 2, 23 Noble practice 2 Guidance (religion) 2 Dojo atmosphere: respect, stillness 2 Sense of natural process (fate?) 7, 26 Different from other social situations: austerity commands respect, admiration 7, 8 Challenge of process 8 Reassurance through knowledge of own lack of skill (constancy of learning, process) 23 Punishment, humility (discipline?) 23 **Challenges:** (challenge and attraction) doubts about health (skills) 20 Pain 20 →internal conflict 20	**Strong points:** Intelligent 10 Precision and accuracy of instruction 10 Commands respect 10, 19 Caring, retain role responsibility (holding?)12 Training focus on purpose 12, 27 Leaves space for own decision-making 14 Cannot recall specific situation, emphasis on general way of being 16 Charming, funny, witty18 Right level of challenge 26 **Improvement:** Weaknesses: disorganised (complex character)16, clumsy 18 Relationship: harmonic 11 distance and respect due to roles compared with other relationships 11, 19 (would like more tactile?) 11 personal, not business 12 strong influence 16 appreciates mateyness 18 sense of familiarity	Effects partly down to other things apart from aikido (reading, budo) 3 Instructor remains in role after discontinuation of training (anticipated) -> reluctance to find new club, prefers teaching himself 6 core principle v multitude of techniques 6 sense of being hooked (process within 1st year), comparison injection, being barbed 13 aikido occupies central, sacred space 15 not instant gratification 21 experience of being in the zone (grading) 22 values: helping others 23 seriousness of training (martial) 24, 26 **Interview:** Stimulating reflection 28 Involved experience (blimey!) 29

Numbers signify page numbers. Colour-coding is used as an initial way of ordering emerging theme clusters within and across transcripts.

Appendix R: Preliminary Theme Table - Version 1

I. THE INSTRUCTOR AS GATEKEEPER OF THE ART
II. AVENUES OF CONVEYING THE ART AND ESTABLISHING LEADERSHIP
II. 1. CREDIBILITY **II. 2. INTEGRITY** **II. 3. EMPATHYAND ATTENTIVENESS** **II. 4. FACILITATING SELF-GOVERNANCE** **II. 5. BOUNDARIES**
III. THE STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE
III. 1. HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS REGARDING THE TRAINING **III. 2. ATTITUDES TOWARDS TRUST AND AUTHORITY**
IV. THE TRAINING EXPERIENCE
IV. 1. DOJO SPACE AND CULTURE
IV. 1. a. Enculturation and Group Support IV. 1. b. Emotional Emergence
IV. 2. STUDENT-INSTRUCTOR RELATIONSHIP
IV. 2. a. Role Modelling IV. 2. b. Guidance IV. 2. c. Provocative Containment
V. THE PROCESS OF CHANGE
V.1. THE PROCESS IS ELUSIVE AND DIFFICULT TO PINPOINT **V. 2. INTERNALISING THE INSTRUCTOR**
VI. OUTCOMES OF CHANGE
VI. 1. CONFIDENCE AND COMPETENCE **VI. 2. EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND TOLERANCE FOR DISCOMFORT** **VI. 3. PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY** **VI. 4. AWARENESS**
VI. 4. a. Interpersonal Awareness VI. 4. b. Self-Awareness
VI. 5. VALUE AND LIFESTYLE SHIFT

Appendix S: Preliminary Theme Table - Version 2

TOPIC AREA I: THE INSTRUCTOR
I. THE INSTRUCTOR AS GATEKEEPER -NEGOTIATES MEANING/ CONVEYS ART THROUGH
1. a. Credibility 1. b. Integrity 1. c. Empathy and Attentiveness 1. d. Facilitating Self-Governance 1. e. Boundaries
TOPIC AREA II: THE STUDENT
I. HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR TRAINING
2. BELIEFS ABOUT AUTHORITY AND TRUST
TOPIC AREA III: THE TRAINING EXPERIENCE
1. DOJO SPACE AND GROUP DYNAMIC
1. a. Enculturation and Group Support 1. b. Emotional Emergence
2. STUDENT-INSTRUCTOR RELATIONSHIP
2. a. Role Modelling 2. b. Guidance 2. c. Provocative Containment
TOPIC AREA IV: MECHANISMS OF CHANGE
1. EMBODIED PRACTICE
2. THE INTERNALISED INSTRUCTOR
TOPIC AREA V: OUTCOMES OF CHANGE
1. CONFIDENCE AND COMPETENCE
2. EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND TOLERANCE FOR DISCOMFORT
3. PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY
4. AWARENESS
4. a. Interpersonal Awareness 4. b. Self-Awareness
5. VALUE AND LIFESTYLE SHIFT

Appendix T: Theme Table with Identifiers

Topic Area	Superordinate theme	Subordinate theme	Alexis	Frank	Jeff	John	Luca	Michael	Phil	Sean
1. The instructor	1.1 The instructor as gatekeeper of the art		13,13	4,9-11; 12,15-20; 12,32				29,27; 32,7-11	21,4-13	2,3-6; 6,29 7,30-44; 21,1-4
	(conveys the art through:)	1.1.1 Credibility	13, 2-11; 14,6-9; 14,16-17	13, 23-34		10,26-30; 10,36; 12,26-27; 11,29-30; 12,19; 12, 26-27; 27; 40	6,21-22; 9,9-11; 9,13-14; 10,36; 18,38-40	9,30-35; 10, 20-23; 10,42-11,6; 11,21-22; 11,38-42; 11,44-12, 6; 17,45-18,5 20,11-16	17,30-36; 20,15-19; 22,20-31; 25,40-44; 29,18-28; 29,33-34	7,28-29; 9, 10-12; 9,21-25; 13,40-43; 20,32-44
		1.1.2 Empathy and attentiveness	5,12-30; 5,40-45; 12,27-30		8,10; 15,25	11,44-12,4; 12,14-15;	9,29-31; 9,40-41	9,39-45; 10,33-38; 23,26-45; 24,14-43	20,1-5; 2,35-3,4	1,37-44; 7,1-7
		1.1.3 Facilitating self-governance			8,7-8; 9,19-27; 9,34-43; 14,43-44; 16,18	14,9-13		2,16-17	3, 6-7; 5,25-31; 21,30-35; 21,27-28; 23,20-33	15,43-16,2
		1.1.4 Boundaries			10,15-16; 14,34-35;	10,40-41; 19,19-20; 19,36-46	11,22-37		20,1-5; 20,7-10; 20, 29; 26,30-39; 29, 33	20,19-28

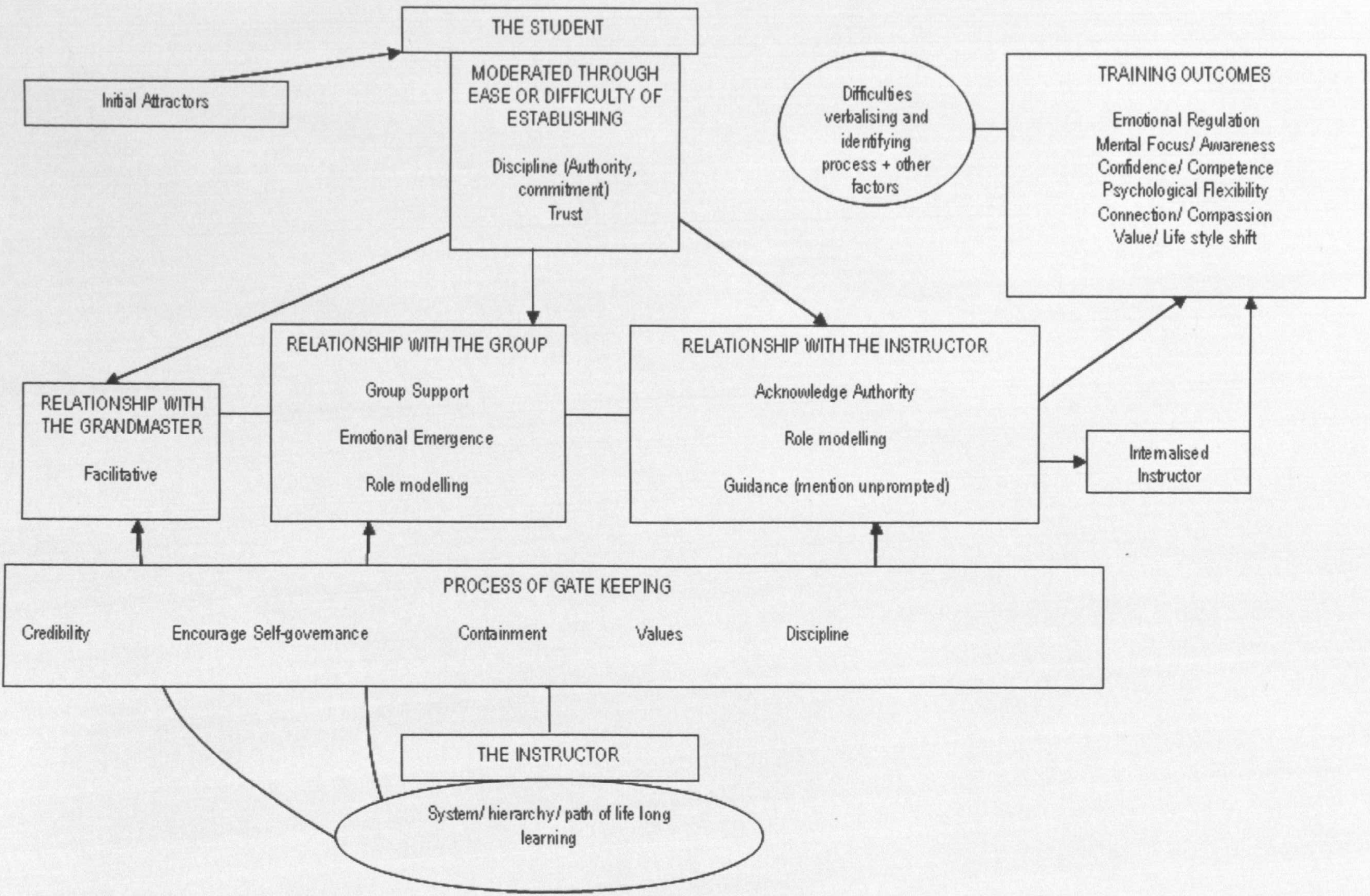
Topic Area	Superordinate theme	Subordinate theme	Alexis	Frank	Jeff	John	Luca	Michael	Phil	Sean
2. The student	2.1 Hopes and expectations for training		11,44-12,2; 12,7-8	9,45-10,3; 11,20-25	22,35-23,7	1,11-23; 1,39-43; 2,28-33; 4, 12-14; 6,7-8; 8,15-19; 8,27-38; 9,13-14; 9,20-22	3,38-42; 5,27-28; 5,30; 8,23-25; 8,33-37; 10,13-14	14,8-9; 31,9	1,17-20; 1,24-27; 3, 35-45; 10,8-9	1,12-22; 1,26-31; 2,15-19; 3,3; 3,7; 3,9-11; 6, 36-42; 11,12-20
	2.2 Beliefs about authority and trust			15,33-34	11,44-45; 10,20-28; 10,40-46; 11,16-19; 13,14-17; 14,11-18; 17,27-28; 18,30-39; 19,30-33; 21, 2-10	11,6-7; 11,13-14; 18,37-38	11,4-6; 11,14-17; 14,2		2,4-11; 3,26-29; 4,1-11; 4,17-21; 4,25-29; 22,14-15; 14,33-37; 15,1-5; 15,5-13; 17,21-24; 26,14-18	14,8-21; 19,3-15

Topic Area	Superordinate theme	Subordinate theme	Alexis	Frank	Jeff	John	Luca	Michael	Phil	Sean
3. The training experience	3.1 Dojo space and group dynamic	3.1.1 Enculturation and group support	2,5-16; 3,4-7; 4,24-33; 8,22; 8,29-36	4,41-43; 5,13-14; 5,30-35; 5,39-43; 5,45-6,4; 6,14-15; 7,5-7; 7,18-20	16,39-43; 17,11-12	2,12-23; 7,33-8,2; 8,13; 25,43-45; 26,15; 26,20-22; 26,40	1,40-42; 7,2-11; 8,13-16; 8,23-24; 10,2-6; 10,8-9; 16,20-25	7,27-30; 29,4-6; 6,36-44; 28,16-19; 29, 5; 34,30-34	3,12-19; 6,4-7; 8,4-5; 13,5-8; 14,18; 16, 14-21; 18, 1-39; 18,46-19,3	1,16-19; 1,31-35; 2.19-27; 10,38-40; 12,4-7; 14,42-15,3
		3.1.1 Emotional emergence	2,3-4			26, 40	6,36-43	7,24-25; 12,31-33	2,4-15; 13,15-41; 14,2-7; 14,23-33; 20, 34-41	10,20-24; 10,27-31
	3.2 Student-instructor relationship	3.2.1 Role modelling	6,8-25; 12,27-42	12,40-42; 13,17-21	6,31-39; 8,18-19; 11,2-4; 16,31-34; 22, 6-15	16,20-21; 16,23-28	5,35; 13,25; 14,10-11; 19,20-23; 19,29-36	2,9-10		8, 15-21; 9,39-10,1; 13,45-46 19,34-45; 20,11-13; 20,17;
		3.2.2 Guidance		16,2-4	14, 3-6	2,39-46; 23,14-24	6,18-19; 12, 21-24; 13,38-46	19,22-35; 20,19-30	14,16-21; 27,39-43	4,32-41; 7,6-10; 7,11-14; 9,15-17; 16, 44-17, 2
		3.2.3 Provocative containment	13,20-39		23,17-25; 23,27	5,46-6,1; 13,7-16; 15,42-16,3; 16,7-11; 23, 14; 23, 16-18	12,21-24	17,20-22	2,17-23; 19,27-30; 24, 11	6,30-36; 9,29-36; 9, 39-10, 1 10,12-17; 10,45-11,8; 13,18-25; 13,27-35; 15,27-41; 16,44-17,2; 19, 34-41

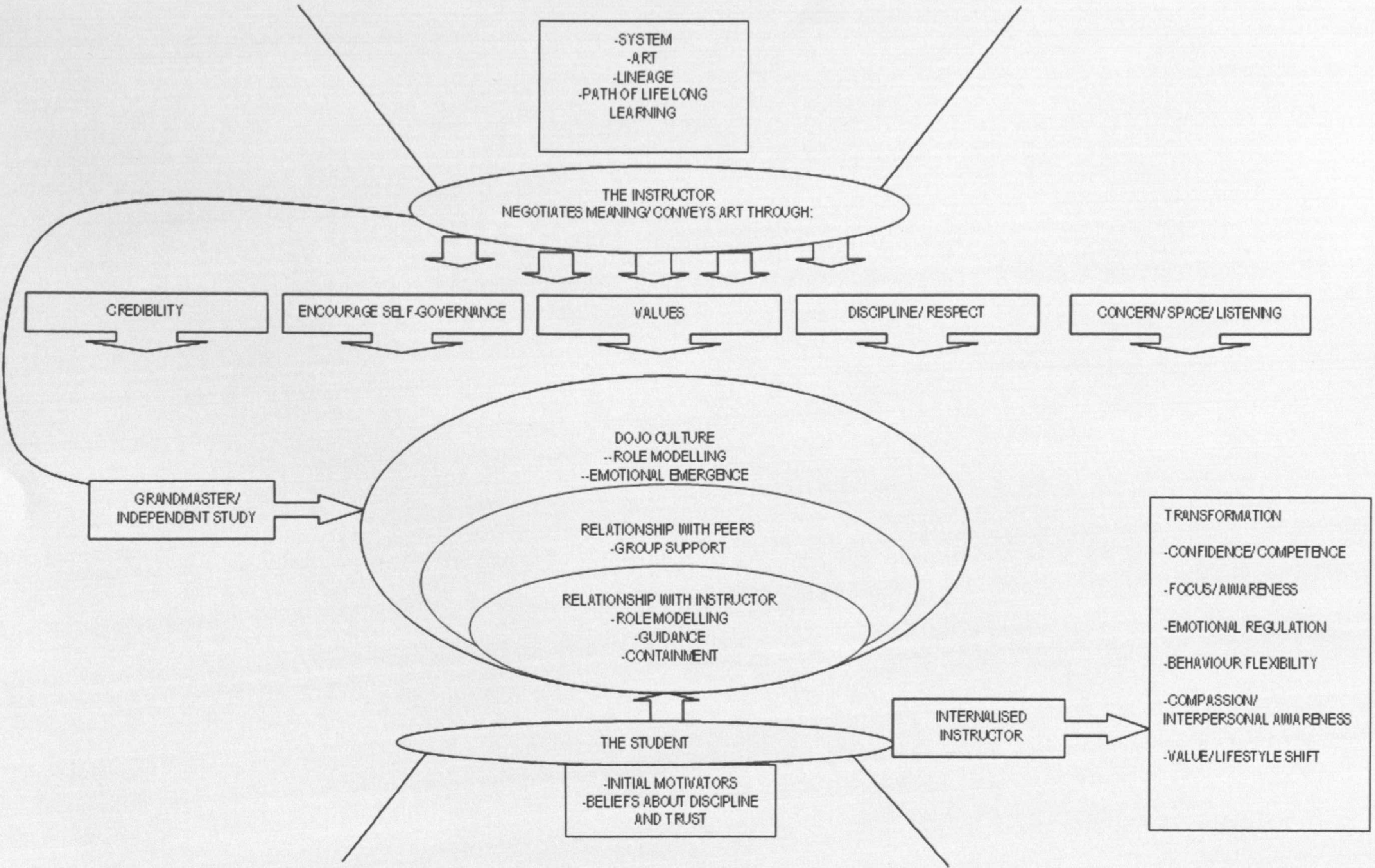
Topic Area	Superordinate theme	Subordinate theme	Alexis	Frank	Jeff	John	Luca	Michael	Phil	Sean
4. The process of change	4.1 Embodied practice		2,45-3,2; 4,11-12; 8,38-45; 11, 25-27; 15:28-30	9, 20-23; 17,4-6;	2,20; 2,36-38; 6,13-18; 6,19-24	4, 13-14; 5, 26-27; 13,28-29; 25, 26-27	3,28-29; 16,11-14	3,26-27; 14,8-9; 14,17-19	7,24-30; 12,24-31; 24,14-18	2,42-3,2; 11,29-30; 12,16-30; 12,45-13,5; 17,9-21; 18,31-3
	4.2 The internalised instructor		3,23-25; 6,28-38; 10,41-43; 11,4-6; 16,7-11	16,25-26	3,7-11; 3,37-4,6; 13,21-25; 13,36-40; 21,28-31		6,2-7; 6,9-14; 12,43-45; 17,15-23; 17,27-30; 17,34-44; 18,7-12	2,34-35; 15,12-13; 22,35-37; 25,2-5; 30,43-44; 31,4-7; 31,12-15; 33,38-45; 34,15-24	6,10-11; 6,14-21; 6,27-32; 7,4-6; 7,8-15; 7,32-33;	16,13-16; 16,28-38; 19,23-32

Topic Area	Superordinate theme	Subordinate theme	Alexis	Frank	Jeff	John	Luca	Michael	Phil	Sean
5. Outcomes of change	5.1 Confidence and competence			9,20-32; 9,31-32	1,14-15; 2,4-10	9,36; 9,41-10,6; 10,8-11	2,19	4,5-6; 4,11-17; 5,36-40; 7,1-7; 8,5-7; 21,1-25	11,12-18; 12,7-11	4,12-21
	5.2 Managing emotions and physical discomfort		15,28-30; 15,40-45; 15,6; 16:7-11	4,22-25	1,10; 1,37; 5,17-22; 5,45-6,2; 6,45-46	3,3; 3,11-13; 3,19-24; 4,31-33; 4,38-45; 20,16-21; 20,43-46; 21,3-10; 21,31-36; 26,1-5	2,2-7; 2,9-13; 2,24-28; 4,7-8; 4,10-14; 14,13-20; 14,38; 15,21-27	2,37; 3,11-14; 4,8-9; 4,31-35; 4,44-45; 5,15-17; 12,18-22; 12,39-43; 14,25-28; 16,15-17; 22,4-11	1,37-40; 8,10-13; 8,16-21; 8,39-45; 9, 13-16; 11,38-41	6,10-17; 11,12-20; 21,9-11
	5.3 Psychological flexibility		2,37-45			3,14-17; 5,32-35	16,41-42	8,9-15; 8,18-23; 27,36-46	8,25-37; 9,13-16; 11,22-28	3,20-25; 3,38-43; 4,1-3; 5,5-9; 5,24-26; 6,17-21; 17,4-7
	5.4 Self and other-awareness		2,25-26; 16,13-21; 16,24-25 16,27-28	2,42-3,1; 3,14-18; 3,27-30; 4,27-28; 10,12-22; 11,31-36 11,41-12,3		3,40-45		2,13	10, 19-45; 13,10-13; 14, 2-7	2,29-36; 4,23-28; 5,31-45; 6,17-21 11,34-43; 20,1-7; 21,18-20; 21,31-37

Appendix U: Preliminary Model - Version 1



Appendix V: Preliminary Model - Version 2



Appendix W: Preliminary Model - Version 3