Sally Cartwright, January 2008
MA Unit on Educational Enquiry, University of Bath.

The reasons for the enquiry

The Christian concept of agape love (Lewis, 1960) has both driven and haunted me throughout my teaching career. There is a part of me that instinctively wants to give. Cho (2005) explores the concept of love within the context of a pedagogy and describes how it can include the aim to incite the student's desire to learn and pursue knowledge, not for knowledge's sake, but because that knowledge will be transformative for the student, in terms of how the student thinks about the world. In the giving, we often receive as teachers. However this positive aspect of love also has a counter side because in giving and making ourselves vulnerable we can have part of ourselves removed. What can be removed is our dignity, our authority, or even our freedom to be who we are.

In the educational climate within which we work, time and energy are in short supply and therefore to give what cannot be measured is to lay oneself open to criticism. There is not always the human capacity within the teacher to deliver the measurable and immeasurable. The difficulty arises when the conscience and instincts of the teacher say that the immeasurable has more value and yet the need for affirmation and praise as the giving empties the teacher, means they are forced back to deliver the measurable and accountable. The result can be that the original spark of love driven by the desire to enable the student to learn and pursue knowledge for its transformative qualities fades.

In his article *Teachers, responsibility and action research,* Allan (June 2007) explores the ways in which teachers are held to be responsible and describes the accountability movement in the USA where a teacher's work is evaluated through their pupils' performance on high stakes examinations. His description articulated the experience I have of teaching and also sparked off the memory of listening to a reading of the children's novel called the Wind Singer with my own children. The Wind Singer by William Nicholson describes the thoughts and feelings of a brother about his two-year-old sister in the following way:

"Today was Pinpin's first test day. She was only two and from now on to the day she died she would have a rating. That was what made him sad. From today Pinpin would begin to fear the future, for in Aramanth life was measured in tests. Every test brought with it the possibility of failure and lead to the next with its renewed possibility of failure. Just thinking about it made his heart almost burst with love for his little sister."

While this is fiction it does leave the hanging question of how much further do the accountable systems in the USA described by Allan (June 2007) and UK have to go before staff and students feel they have reached the shores of the Wind Singer.

After 25 years of teaching I now feel I am driven by a system that fears failure and I have to fight daily that fear that I am a failure because like Pinpin my work and the work of my students is measured in tests as is also the case of my own children. I have a child whose experience of the Year 2 SATs was an emotional roller coaster for

the whole family and the aim was for him to keep his self-esteem and to make him understand that it was a government tool to gather information, not a measurement of whom he was and that he was bigger than the tests. As a consequence as a teacher and a parent I feel a constant tension that this accountable approach has brought.

The laboratory study 1961 – 1962 by Stanley Milgram at Yale University (Milgram, 1963) investigated what level obedience a person, if given instructions by an authoritative figure would show. In this particular laboratory experiment the participants who were men from the New Haven area of America took on the role of teacher.

The 'teacher' in this case was told that the learner had to learn word pairs. If the learners got the answers wrong the teacher was instructed to give the learners an electric shot. Each time the teacher gave the electric shock it was higher than the previous one. Stood beside the 'teacher' was the experimenter who represented the authority figure and wore a white laboratory coat. Each time the 'teacher' was reluctant to give an electric shock the experimenter had one of four prods to put the 'teacher' under pressure to carry on with the experiment. All 40 participants gave shocks of up to 300 volts. However during the experiment many participants became very anxious sweated trembled and stuttered. Some bit their lips, groaned and dug their fingernails into their hands.

To draw an analogy between the teacher, learner and authority figure in this experiment and the relation ship between the teacher, the state and the pupil may be too dramatic. However, Milgram in his explanation of the participants' behaviour provided me with the language with which to understand my own anger and frustration of the educational system within which I work.

Milgram explained the results in part by saying that the participants were caught between two states of consciousness – the autonomous and the agentic state. In other words they were caught between acting on their own values, applying their own sense of right and wrong and acting as an agent for someone else and therefore suppressing their own values and their sense of responsibility.

As a teacher there are times when the profession is so tightly regulated that it feels as if one is in the agentic state. The government requirement and often school requirements to test young people in the English educational system so regularly, inhibits freedom for both the teacher and the student. Surely the education system would have greater integrity if is was driven less by grade or percentage targets but more by a sense of intellectual curiosity and questioning. The cost of a target driven culture is to implicitly build in failure for both teachers and students alike and therefore, demotivation.

The imposition of law, or rules is not only about protecting rights but it can also be about managing and limiting freedom. It seems to me that part of the tension I feel as a teacher is that a battle has been created between instinctively wanting to be who I am and live out my values and at the same time knowing that the affirmation of what I am doing and even who I am is most likely to come from the agentic state. To be thinking and working outside the agentic box is regarded as a weakness because it

potentially means you fail to deliver and therefore no longer access that encouragement and praise that accompanies affirmation.

Joseph Fletcher (Fletcher, 1966) in his exposition of Situation Ethics, based on the principle of agape love argues that loving decisions are made according to the particular circumstances that surround the situation. Each decision is different. In order to love one needs freedom and yet it is precisely that requirement that seems to have been removed from within the English education system. The removal of that freedom implies either the individual cannot cope with freedom or the state cannot cope with the products of that freedom. The removal from the individual to influence what and how they learn is to remove their dignity, self worth and independence. Yet the irony seems to be that those in power and those who are establishing their power derive their own affirmations and sense of worth from those actions. It also seems that the education system is run on one of fear rather than excitement and exploration of learning. The fear is the fear of not being a good enough agent, in case the measurable is not delivered.

A system driven by fear and the establishment of power is one that can only devalue teachers and students alike and ultimately undermine itself because it actually does not allow for the recognition and affirmation of a wide range of skills abilities and talents. It is not surprising that a system driven by fear and demands for dependence is now complaining that young people seem to lack that intellectual independence of thought as identified in a section of the Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training and Lightfoot's (9/02/06) summary in the Daily Telegraph:

 "the constant testing of what they have learned prevented them (students) from developing a deeper understanding of the subjects".

The concerns in the media have continued and Bloom (10/08/07) writing in the Times Educational Supplement summarises the key elements of a research project involving the Universities of Cambridge, Reading, The Open University and King's College, London. The research project is beyond the scope of this essay however the summary below gave substance to my own intuitive feelings:

 'The target culture in schools is making it difficult for teachers to provide pupils with learning skills say academics who observed primary and secondary teachers at 40 schools in five local authorities"

"The report: the current performance-orientated climate in schools in England seems to make it difficult for teachers to practise what they value. However, effective change is only likely to be achieved if individuals and organisations go beyond the implementation of surface procedures and engage with deeper principles."

To live out your values as a teacher can be hard and at times it seems that they are reduced to dying embers which can be de - motivating and subsequently impact on the quality of teaching and learning that can take place in the classroom. However I am still being driven on by the hope that a small spark will catch and provide the momentum, however faltering to continue.

A descriptive account of the systematic nature of the educational enquiry

The possibility to empower students and to show them the skills to become excited and curious about their own learning is what drew me to the TASC process (Wallace, 1983 & Wallace, 2003). It is a process that is not government driven, not content driven and is open - ended and gives students the freedom to explore and develop their skills of independence and interdependence. It seems to allow for a sense of emotional engagement with the work at what ever level and because it allows for self reflection, the students can progress at their own level without a sense of fear or failure and yet what they learn is powerful and enriching.

Wallace in her construction of the eight step problem solving process entitled: Thinking Actively in a Social Context provided the classroom teacher with the opportunity to construct an educational situation in which students were given the freedom to be independent in their thinking and working relationship with their peers. Surely it is when students are given this independence in a constructive context that they are given the opportunity to deal with the world around them. Feldman (2007) argues: 'an awareness of their existential freedom allows teachers to act responsibly to construct educational situations that help pupils to become aware of the way that they exist in the world. For this to happen teachers and their pupils must recognise that each is an individual human being who is situated, whose self emerges through experience and who has freedom to choose."

My story of how my concern for the lack of independent and interdependent learning led me through the challenges of writing a report for the Farmington Institute (Cartwright 2006) to working with staff at my school to deliver a pilot project on one strategy which we believed could be a factor in helping students to learn how to be more independent and interdependent learners. The narrative here is concerned with this stage.

Wallace in her training day for teachers in Bath and North East Somerset (February 2006) outlining the TASC process described teachers as the senior learner in the classroom. Both students and staff can use the TASC process alike. With hindsight we as staff innately used a TASC like structure to plan and organise our pilot project.

It could be argued that the TASC process is not an ideal vehicle to deliver Feldman's aspirations, as TASC process is not a perfect alignment. The students worked in groups or teams that required the skill to compromise leading to collective choices and decisions rather than individual decisions. Nevertheless students were asked to review their participation in the project that produced some very individualistic responses.

Jean McNiff (2007) most effectively articulates the approach to my narrative in:

'This chapter aims to show the links between narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and action research, a form of research that enables practitioner researchers to tell their stories of how they have taken action to improve their situations by improving their learning. They explain how reflecting on their action can

lead to new learning, which can inform future learning and action. Their stories comprise their descriptions and explanations of practice, which constitute their own living educational theories of practice (Whitehead, 1989).'

While the concerns that McNiff refers to in her article are to do with what is conventionally accepted as valid research, her recognition of the regular reliance of statistical analysis of results and the denial of social justice and democratic forms of life in some areas of action research resonated with me. To some extent what resonated is an aside to this particular educational enquiry but what I have learnt from both Jack Whitehead at his Bath University Tuesday seminars and Mcniff is that there is an educational forum that recognizes learning is creative and not tidy and what follows is untidy learning. The background to the TASC process can be found in Cartwright 2006 and Appendix 1 of this essay.

The Pilot Project in using TASC benefited from two attempts by myself and a colleague to use the process on two different   Key Stage 3 units of work in the previous year and having shared our hindsights of the previous year's experience I did not meet with the issues raised in the Appendix 1 in this project.

Voluntary TASC Group
From the experiences in the classroom as outlined in Appendix 1 and conversations with colleagues in other curriculum teams it was decided to set up a voluntary TASC group within the school. The voluntary group was made up of representative staff from English, History, ICT and Business Studies, Philosophy and Belief and Psychology and a decision was made to pilot a TASC project entitled 'Differences' with Year 7 in the autumn, in their first term at the school. In Year 7 the students in these subjects were taught in tutor groups and so were in the same groupings for each 'TASC' subject. Again this whole process was exploratory and evolutionary. What brought us together was an interest in this process of learning although each subject area was also aware of the body of content and skills its own subject needed to deliver. The discussions gave us the opportunity to share what each department taught and also to find common links that students could draw on. Subsequent to this decision the article by Bloom A (2007) supported this approach of combining learning strategies and the delivery of subject matter.

Sixth Form Involvement
Of particular interest in this project was the involvement of the Sixth Form Psychology students who in the preceding summer term trialled the basic outline of the eight TASC lessons as they made the transition from AS to A2 Level. The benefit to the Sixth Form students was that they were being given a problem solving method that could be applied to their A2 Psychology coursework and at the same time they would also had to demonstrate skills of a mature learner such as reliability, presentation skills and effective communication.

Some of the A level students were then invited to model their experience of using the TASC framework to the Year 7 students when they arrived in the new academic year as part of the first two lessons in the TASC process.

<u>Why the title 'Differences'</u>
The title of 'Differences' for the Pilot Project was chosen to allow two factors to operate. One was to enable students to draw on their prior knowledge, not only from outside of school but also from the topics that were part of the existing Year 7 curriculum studied in English, History and Philosophy and Belief during the first 6 weeks of Term 1. Within English, Year 7 students had been studying 'How does childhood make you who you are?' within Philosophy and Belief 'Who am I?' and in History, the use of primary and secondary sources, the story of Romulus and Remus and the founding of Rome. The final piece of work was to be presented as a power point presentation building on the skills developed in ICT. The second factor was that the title was also very open ended so that students were given the opportunity to develop this in as wide a way as possible.

The practical arrangements required to deliver the project are recorded in Appendix 2

The 8 lessons were as follows:

Lesson 1. Introduction
Two Sixth Form students worked with each teacher to introduce TASC. Year 7 students put themselves into groups and had a task to make one paper hat per group. While making a paper hat seems a simple idea, the purpose was to have a practical activity which could engage all students from all levels and was one that would provide the basis for discussing how groups in this case could go about problem solving.

The Sixth Formers who had done the same activity in their lessons the previous term showed Year 7 their hats prior to a brief parade of Year 7 hats. This exercise provided the basis for a discussion designed to relate the sections of the TASC framework to the hat making activity. Students were given their own coloured copy of the TASC wheel that was then stuck onto the front cover of their booklet.

Sixth Formers share their experience of following the TASC framework with Year 7 students and model the hats they made as an introduction to learning about the process.

Year 7 students are given the same challenge as the Sixth Form which was to work as a group to make one paper hat. This then provided the basis for a discussion and explanation of the TASC framework.

'I enjoyed most making the hats'

Lesson 2 .Gather, Organise and Identify

Sixth form students showed Year 7 classes their power point or video projects on the topic of 'Differences' made during the previous term. Year 7 were asked to produce a mind map in their booklet showing what they had covered in English, History and Philosophy and Belief so far and their project was then identified and outlined. Students were encouraged to discuss what would make the project successful and what further questions would they need to ask.

Year 13 students lead a Year 7 lesson on the Identify stage of the process using their experience following the TASC framework.

It was stressed to each group about the importance of all team members generating ideas. Their ideas were recorded in their TASC booklet. Each group then had to sort out which were the best ideas and this could be done by writing out the ideas onto pieces of paper, which were then arranged in order of priority. Finally a record was made of which were the best ideas.

Lesson 3. Generating Ideas and Deciding

It was stressed to each group about the importance of all team members generating ideas. Their ideas were recorded in their TASC booklet. Each group then had to sort out which were the best ideas and this could be done by writing out the ideas onto pieces of paper, which was then arranged in order of priority. Finally a record was made of which were the best ideas. Below are some of the comments made on this stage by Year 7 students:

'My idea is what older people can do and what they can't do and how age affected them'

'Jades's idea was how older people treat younger people'

'Let everyone be included and hear everyone's ideas.'

'We did not generate very well because we had lots of arguments of what's fair and what's not fair.' 'I have learnt to make sure we put all our ideas together so it would be fair'

Lesson 4, 5 and 6 Implementing Ideas
At this stage students took on different roles within their group such as leader/scribe/designer and monitor and began as a group to plan their ten power point slides on the topic of 'Differences'. Below are some further Year 7 comments:

'I enjoyed being the leader and making the choices and all of the decisions along with the designers'

'That working as a team is more affective than alone'

'Make sure I don't leave any one out'

Lesson 7 Evaluation and Communication

Prior to their communication of their power points, students were asked to evaluate how each one of them had worked in the following areas: had they listened to each other, been open to ideas, prepared well, contributed to the group and taken on a leading role? They also had to evaluate how the group as a whole worked, whether they had effectively followed the TASC process e.g. generating ideas and making good decisions?

As each group gave their presentations the remaining students were asked to assess each group for their originality of ideas, quality of the final work, their level of effort and to record how they allocated marks.

'I enjoyed seeing everyone's presentations most because you got to see what everybody else had been doing'

Lesson 8 Communication and Learning from Experience

The presentations continued into this lesson and were followed by the final segment of the wheel, which was a reflection on what had students learnt from the experience. This reflection was structured using the following questions:
What do I know that I did not know before? What new skills have I learned? How else can I use these skills? How can I improve my way of working? How can I improve how I work with others?

Below are some further comments by Year 7 students when they were asked what they had learnt from the experience of TASC

 'That you have to make sure that everyone in your group is doing their job otherwise you have to do it for them.'
'Let everyone be included and hear everyone's ideas.'

'I have learned to work in a group and I've got more confidence'
'I think I have learned how to work well in a group with none of my friends '
'I have learnt how to work successfully in a group'
'I now know that I like working with other people'
'I now know what some people in our group are really like'
'TASC has shown that some people need to be braver and give their ideas '

'TASC has shown that this tutor group can work together if they communicate'
'TASC has shown how I and this tutor group can work better in the future by not being so quiet and saying what their ideas are instead of keeping them to themselves.'

'I now know how to get sounds on the power point slides'

How has our positions as teachers been improved - what have staff learnt from this experience for the future?

This process has prompted much discussion and reflection amongst staff. Through focussing on the process rather than content it meant that subjects that are usually taught discretely were able to work together and share what they had in common. It has also opened up some dialogue between departments that have not worked together before.

Again by focussing on the process rather than the content it has enabled two very different year groups to be work together - Year 13 and Year 7 students. The TASC project enabled Year 13 students to be the role models for Year 7 in the classroom. It also enabled year 7 students to be working with students from a subject area that is not taught at Key Stage 3 or 4. Year 13 students also had the experience of working alongside staff and at times were taking a lead role in the first two lessons.

Some Year 7 students thrived and were excited by the process and it fired their imagination with the result that the final power point presentations were very diverse in nature and some very ambitious. Within one class I had presentations on such diverse topics as: types of music, the legal age at which children could do things from different countries, different forms of transport and how old people and teenagers are viewed differently.

It also gave some staff an opportunity to see what Year 7 students were capable of early on in their secondary school career although some staff did feel a few Year 7 students did become lost in the process.

Students and staff have both commented that they enjoyed the group work and that they liked the independent learning process as shown in Appendix 3. The process encouraged reliance amongst students for the work. The process also increased self and peer evaluation and enabled the teacher to trust students to work in groups for longer periods of time. The Year 13 students enjoyed working with the younger students in modelling the task set at the identify stage. The Sixth Form students themselves had to review their own work prior to giving presentations to Year 7. There was some great interaction between the Year 13 students and the Year 7 students in the lessons. As a result of this work by Sixth Form Psychology students the process will be used again with them and more time will be spent thinking and discussing each stage of the framework

Below I have described some of the concerns raised by staff as we went through the pilot project. Some are very obvious with hindsight and can simply be addressed and others point towards quite a different way of delivering TASC.

Some staff were concerned that there was too much emphasis on process rather than the quality of the final product in relation to their subject area. Some staff felt we needed to have given more consideration to not only the process of thinking but also the building of the subject material. To address this issue it was suggested that each of the volunteer subjects should teach each of the segments of the TASC framework within their own subject during the year and then have a day near the end of Year 7 where the timetable is collapsed and the TASC process is brought together from beginning to end in one day's activity. The benefit of this is that students would have had several opportunities during the year to understand the concepts of the process and students after a year of the Year 7 curriculum would also have a greater amount of ideas to bring to a project at the end of Year 7 rather than at the beginning. On the other hand some staff have enjoyed using TASC at the beginning of Year 7 because they have seen skills and abilities in students that they may not have otherwise seen until later on in the academic year. Having used this process at the beginning of the year I now know I can return to all or part of it during the year and can build on what we have achieved.

There were also issues that arose with the   practical logistics of managing the project during a normal busy school week such as having to deal with lessons when staff were away ill and simply having enough computers and projectors available for such large numbers of students.

As staff, our own understanding of the process is also deepening. In some cases staff needed to have made a greater distinction made between 'gather' and 'generate'. We also need to consider how the activity of 'deciding' could be done, perhaps through a practical card sorting activity. We did not address in detail how to organise what has been gathered. Concerns were also raised about where we stood on the issue of copyright? Belle has kindly helped us out on this and advised that we should add © Belle Wallace 2000 underneath the TASC Wheel or framework when we make our next set of booklets.

One further point in this practice that has caused me concern has been the ethics of the project. Nolen AL and Vander Putten. J, (2007) say this: " In a school setting the school professional (teacher, librarian principal, counsellor or the like) is acting not only as the researcher but also as the change agent (Hammack, 1997). These potentially conflicting roles can confound the individual's primary objective in the classroom or school: student learning."

" Designing action research projects raises complex ethical issues that are not present in traditional research. Nevertheless such projects are valuable when conducted by skilled practitioners with established knowledge, working relationships, access, and credibility within schools.

"But questions remain: At what point does teaching become research? Where does the accountability for this lie? How are the rights and freedoms of the research participants (the students) protected?"

Within this pilot project the ethics of gaining permission for filming and taking photographs was sort from parents however the wider ethical issues raised by Nolen and Putten were not discussed and on reflection would provide a basis of discussion for any future work.

Our delivery of the TASC framework is one of evolution within the setting of our particular school. Each time we deliver it amendments and refinements are made as we reflect on the students' responses.

We invited a member of the authorities' advisory team Peter Spain into the school to conduct a series of interviews with 25 of the Year 7 students who participated in the project. The review described how many students referred to the social context of the TASC framework. Working in groups of four rather than the standard one or two at KS2 was seen by most students as a positive experience. A significant minority did refer to time wasting and group conflicts as being a negative experience and while they did allocate distinctive roles to each group we need to reflect more on how we manage this. Most Year 7s had seen the benefit of working with the Year 13 students and had appreciated knowing some older students early on in their secondary school career and had felt reassured by this.

Many students felt there had not been enough time to finish their presentations and would have welcomed a wider choice of ways to give their presentation s other then by MS PowerPoint.

Peter Spain in his review describes how " Pupils mentioned generating ideas as one feature which had stayed with them from the TASC framework". He goes on to say "This is useful as they themselves recognised the temptation to take the first idea and not to develop it further or explore alternatives." Peter also highlighted links that could be made with the new Programme of Study for Science in the 2008 National Curriculum and the KS3 Framework with D & T. This review has been important because Peter Spain has highlighted issues and made links with other subjects that have gone beyond our own range of thinking.

Our next stage in our process is to have a formal review of the whole process with staff and students from both Year 7 and 13 together, to exchange and discuss the pilot project.

In conclusion the TASC framework has given us a process to bring together parts of the school that until now have not worked so closely together and has introduced a process   that can be used interdependently or independently by Sixth Formers and Year 7 students, to become more autonomous learners in a social context. While I believe I have clearly carried out what Mcniff J (2007) describes as an explanatory account of the reasons for the research. I believe that there was scope for there to be a more rigorous and systematic approach as described by Mcniff J (2007) in the delivery of the pilot project itself. I do think though that the validity of the pilot project that Mcniff J (2007) states as a requirement of a teacher's narrative, was encapsulated by the interviews conducted by the local authority's advisor Peter Spain and the comments from staff and students. Appendix 3 contains the comments from staff, which demonstrate this narrative has been worth telling and is worth pursuing.

I now have a better understanding of my own educational tensions and development. My understanding of my question has enabled me with colleagues to explore one factor which can contribute to the development of independent and interdependent learning in students and has also enabled me to put my current anxiety about teaching into a perspective which gives room for me to grow again as a teacher.

Bibliography

Bloom, A. The Times Educational Supplement: 'Teaching learners to be explorers' & 'Leaders should leave room for innovation.' August 10th 2007

Cartwright, S (2006). Independent Learning Skills through Religious Education. http://wwww.farmington.ac.uk/ Fellows Reports. Teaching and Training p3 TT204 Developing (accessed 13/01/08)

Cartwright, S (2007).Understanding Learners and Learning: How can I help my students understand and develop the skills of independent learning? http://people.bath.ac.uk/edsajw/ Master 's Educator's Programmes. (accessed 14/01/08)

Feldman, A (2007) Teachers, responsibility and action research. Educational Action Research Vol.15, No. 2 June 2007, pp239-252

Fletcher, J (1966). Situation Ethics: The New Morality, Philadelphia: Westminster Press http://www.learntolearn.ac.uk

Lewis, C S. (1960). The Four Loves, Ireland: Harvest Books ISBN 0156329301

Lightfoot, L. Daily Telegraph: 'Spoon-fed pupils can't cope at college'. Feb 9th 2006.

McNiff, J. (1993) - books.google.com   Teaching As Learning: An Action Research Approach (accessed 14 01/08)

McNiff, J. (2007) My Story is my Living Educational Theory, in Clandinin, J. (Ed.) (2007) (accessed 14/01/08)

Milgram, S. (1963). Behavioral study of obedience. Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 67, 371–378.

Nicholson, W. (2000) The Wind Singer: London, United Kingdom: Egmont Books Ltd http: www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk 'Focus groups' . (accessed 01/06/06)

http://www.wadsworth.com/psychology_d/templates/student_resources/0155060678_rathus/ps/ps01.html (accessed 1/01/08)

Wallace,B./ NACE (1983). National Association for Able Children in Education www.nace.co.uk TASC/ Understanding more about TASC /Mind map 7 (accessed 23/05/06)

Wallace,B (ed) (2003). Using History to Develop thinking Skills at Key Stage 2, Great Britain: David Fulton Publishers

Whitehead, J. (1989). Creating a living educational theory from questions of the kind, "How do I improve my practice?" Cambridge Journal of Education, 19(1), 137–153.

Whitehead, J. (1993). The growth of educational knowledge: Creating your own living educational theories. www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/writings/livtheory.html (accessed 13/01/08))

Appendix 1

Background to the TASC pilot project

I and the Social Studies Team within which I work was concerned about the high level of student dependency on staff for their learning and many students seemed to lack the ability to take the initiative. This seemed to be particularly the case when teaching at A level.

Through the support of the Farmington Institute I was able to begin an enquiry into how other schools in both the primary and secondary sector were addressing this issue and was introduced to the TASC framework by Marie Huxtable, the Senior Educational Psychologist for Bath & North East Somerset. The team within which I worked decided to gradually introduce the TASC framework into our teaching in the hope that this would contribute to developing the skills of learning independently and interdependently.

This thinking skill framework developed by Belle Wallace was attractive because it broke down the thinking required to solve a problem into eight stages and each stage was represented as a segment in a wheel. While all eight stages did not need to be completed consecutively there was coherence to the process that took students from the beginning to the end of a project. The TASC framework effectively provided students with the language to articulate the thinking stages of a project, however a few students did not adopt the language with ease.

Wallace, B (ed) (2003). Using History to Develop thinking Skills at Key Stage 2. Great Britain. David Fulton Publishers

<u>TASC as an evolutionary process</u>
Developing the use of TASC within the Social Studies Team (which includes Critical Thinking, Philosophy and Belief and Psychology and Sociology) has been an evolutionary process. Our understanding as teachers of the TASC framework and its implications has emerged and is still developing. We have fitted it into our normal teaching schedules with mixed ability groups at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 5, amidst a range of other changes taking place in our school. As we have seen the students use the process we have learnt from and about them and now can see further possibilities and improvements that can be made.

The TASC framework is a process and this is what gives it, it's flexibility unlike a content driven curriculum. It's a process that within the Social Studies Team has been used across the years at Key Stage 3 teaching in Philosophy and Belief and has also been used at Key Stage 5 with both Psychology and Religious Studies A Level students. It has also been used teaching Business Studies at Key Stage 4 within the ICT and Enterprise Team.

<u>Initial observations using TASC</u>
The initial experience of applying TASC for the first time raised issues for both students and teachers. TASC was applied to a religion and media module in Year 9 that was already taught as a project and it was also applied to a Year 8 module exploring the issues raised by competing claims for the land of Israel. A different teacher taught each unit but in both cases two common observations were made. Students found the concept of 'generating' a range of ideas from which the best would be selected, a difficult practice to grasp. In both cases students were impatient to simply get on with the task and were reluctant to generate as many ideas as possible. A second issue was that students were reluctant to'evaluate' their work before they submitted it at the communication stage. Both observations gave us a helpful insight into how our students were working and has since influenced how we present these two aspects of the TASC process. A third area which made me aware of the need for careful planning was the response I had from students to the 'gather and organise' section when considering the competing claims for land in Israel. For many students this topic was beyond the knowledge of many and therefore one needed to either begin with some general stimulus material or have some significant input which could then be built on in the 'gather and organis' stage.

These experiences were then fed into the second attempt to introduce the TASC process to further groups of students in the following academic year of 2007.

Appendix 2

The practical arrangements of delivering the TASC process

Overall Structure of the project

The project was structured so that each subject taught its normal scheduled schemes of work for Year 7 until the penultimate week of the term prior to the October break. A scheme of eight TASC lessons was devised which each Year 7 group followed consecutively over a period of 7 school days, whether they were in English, Philosophy and Belief, History or ICT. The result was that a total of 19 staff was involved delivering aspects of the TASC framework across 8 tutor groups. This was ambitious for us because not all staff attended the voluntary TASC meetings and therefore like all groups we were a mixed ability group of staff and some subject areas by the nature of the timetable had greater contact time with students than others.

Preparations

Each member of staff was given an information pack containing: a summary of what each subject had taught during the term, the timetable of lessons, the lesson outlines, a copy of the booklet, a summary of Belle Wallace's rationale behind TASC and some ICT guidance on how students were to submit their work on the school network.

Year 7 were introduced to the concept of the 'Differences' project through an assembly that was delivered jointly between my self and two Year 13 students who showed a video they had made as part of their TASC project in Psychology on 'Differences.'

A box was made up for each teaching group containing the materials needed for the project that were collected by each group's Year 7 council representatives from the Sixth Form Psychology rooms. Key items in the boxes were a coloured laminated TASC wheel that could be placed on a whiteboard and also a TASC booklet for each student that enabled them to record what they did at each part of the process.

A colleague designed the staff questionnaire which included the following questions and received the enclosed replies from a representative of each of the subject areas involved in the pilot project.

Review questions	1.What were the positive aspects for your students?	2. How could the TASC process have been improved for your students?	3. What if anything will you use from the TASC experience in your future classroom practice?	4. What general comments could you make about the TASC process and using the approach at Wellsway?
Teacher 1	**Nice group work Making links with other subjects Allowed use of imagination**	**All teachers fully participating. ICT issues(!) May be lessons too spread out**	I will be able to use TASC in an informal way during Year 7.	Fab! But needs all teachers on board Possibly collapse timetable and do over 1/2/ days.
Teacher 2	**Extended group work and independence – reliance on each other for work to progress. All groups produced something by the end.**	At times handovers between lessons were problematic – may be 1 or2 days rather than 2 weeks of non-stop TASC would have run more smoothly?	Increased self and peer evaluation during and after tasks and group work. Trust them more to work in groups for longer periods of time.	Good to do special " event". Good to work a bit with other curriculum areas.
Teacher 3	They enjoyed the group work task and were very excited by the prospect of doing power points.	I found the powerpoint detracted from the process of the TASC work.	I really liked the group work and independent learning aspects.	I enjoyed it and I think that it was a really valuable experience.
Teacher 4	**Special " project" was appreciated. Team work More active learning.**	Not sure. I should have known more about the whole process rather than 'my' lessons with in it.	TASC fits some things in Business Studies and ICT which I will use.	I would like to see further developments so this is not a 'one – off' and forgotten.
Teacher 5	**Working with Year 7 classes Reviewing their own TASC work from Year 12 Being**	More definition from the class teachers as to how Year 13 students would be used in lesson	Thinking (and discussing) more about each stage of the TASC framework.	Needs a TASC team to coordinate all the TASC timetabled lessons.

independently responsible for others.	2. Being able to show more of their own work.		Had some great social interaction between Sixth Form and Year 7 students.