PROBLEMS WITH ARGUMENTATION IN PHILOSOPHY:

A LONGITUDINAL CASE STUDY

AIMED AT IMPROVING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF

TEACHING AND LEARNING

OF ARGUMENTATION IN PHILOSOPHY AT A-LEVEL.

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ABSTRACT

Problems with Argumentation in Philosophy: A Longitudinal Case Study Aimed at Improving our Understanding of Teaching and Learning of Argumentation in Philosophy at A-Level.

The teaching and acquisition of argumentative writing skills continues to challenge teachers and students. This longitudinal case study examined these challenges within the context of A-Level Philosophy. A systematic literature review explored previous understandings and theory in relation to problems encountered by students, and strategies employed by teachers and students in teaching and learning argumentation skills. A small base of empirical literature aimed at cross-curricular argumentation was identified, exploring various tensions between aspects or types of arguments that students find more or less problematic. Conclusions of this review identify disparities between student performance in narrative and argumentation, and verbal and written argumentation. My case study followed the teaching, learning and progress of two teachers and four students, scrutinising teaching strategies, observations, interviews, questionnaires, students' and teachers' reflective diaries and examination scripts over the two-year course. Emergent themes and elements of argumentation were analysed against existing literature to develop understanding of each, together with challenges and successes experienced by teachers and students. The study's original contribution to knowledge is its analysis of these within an A-Level context plus insights gained into aspects of written argumentation and teaching and learning strategies that were developed and evaluated. Findings showed students experience a range of challenges moving from GCSE-Level expectations and strategies to A-Level study. Suggestions are made to help them make this transition, but the findings also raised questions around students' study habits, including development and study of approaches designed to encourage students' independence and responsibility. The study focuses on students' perspectives, affording insights into their experience, highlighting areas they found particularly problematic. These findings will have significance for teachers of philosophy at all level but will be particularly significant for teachers of philosophy at A-Level. Findings from the study are utilised in providing a general assessment of the new A-Level Philosophy specification.

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> ‘Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise.’ (Proverbs 19:20, NIV)

The road travelled from an initial idea to a completed thesis can be long and lonely, but good company on a journey makes the way seem shorter (Walton & Cotton, 2010, loc. 159). It is impossible to include the many who have, in passing, asked after progress and offered words of encouragement. These exchanges have been noted and appreciated.

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On the practical level, I must thank the senior leadership team of my Academy for allowing the research project to take place, with especial thanks going to the participants who tolerated ongoing questioning, recording and scrutiny. My colleague in philosophy did whatever was asked and contributed many useful ideas during the two years. Working through the data has improved my understanding of the pressures students experience during their A-Level studies, and so I am particularly grateful to them for their time and openness during the study. I am also grateful to the Religious Education and Philosophy Department for supporting me through the research, as well as teachers from other departments who kindly shared their resources.

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This thesis is dedicated to family and friends.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AO	Assessment Objective
AQA	Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (Examination Board)
GCE	General Certificate of Education
RE	Religious Education

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> 'Teaching philosophy and discussions about how to teach philosophy are unabashedly *not* value free enterprises: how we teach what we teach … the pedagogic methods we adopt, the notion we have of what constitutes progress and sophistication in philosophy, and our view of how best to foster and to test for these – all reflect our notion of what philosophy itself is …'
>
> (Kasachkoff, 2004, p. xvi)

1.1 Background to the Study

A characteristic feature of philosophy 'is its use of logical argument' (Warburton, 2001, p. 228). An argument is traditionally understood to comprise a point or conclusion put forward, the evidence or facts (known as premises) used to support this conclusion, and the structure or way in which these are presented (Saunders *et al*., 2007, p. 37). In other subjects, propositions may be based on the presentation and evaluation of concrete evidence or data. However, Philosophy examines 'the systems and structures which support our thinking … to test their soundness' (*ibid.*, p. 3). Types of thinking associated with philosophical argumentation include reasoning and formal and informal logic, where reasoning refers to the thought processes required to construct arguments (Walton, 1990) and logic refers to the 'sequence of steps' (Parsons, 1996, p. 169) used to reach conclusions. Although the definition for 'informal logic' remains contested, this research project uses Johnson's distinction (1999), where formal logic refers more narrowly to validity and soundness of arguments (i.e. premises are sound and lead logically to conclusions) and informal logic's wider 'task [is] to develop non-formal standards, criteria, procedures for the analysis, interpretation, evaluation, criticism and construction of argumentation in everyday discourse' (Johnson & Blair, 1987, p. 148). At A-Level, students study both forms of logic, but in their own written work, informal argumentation accommodates a wider range of good arguments for and against given propositions (Johnson, 1999, p. 271). Although argumentation is required in many A-Level subjects, philosophical argumentation demands additional levels of critical and

logical evaluation. It asks deeper questions, such as 'whether the brain is the same thing as the mind' or '*what makes* an action right or wrong' (Vaughn, 2009, p. 4).

The study of philosophy requires students to engage in shared language and ways of understanding (Davies, 2006, p. 73), drawing them into unfamiliar epistemic games (Perkins, 2006, p. 42-43). Dialogical argumentation, requiring critical comparison and assessment of justified reasons, is a complex process involving an understanding and application of several intellectual skills concepts (Ennis, 1993) employed in various degrees during normal conversation and interaction (Goldman, 1999, pp. 131-160). The skills concepts utilised in this process subtly change meaning in different contexts, so that partial understanding of them, or their interconnectivity, makes transference from one type of discussion to another problematic (Ennis, 1993; Bailin, 1999). While Booth (2006, pp. 176-177) labels the knowledge content of philosophy as counter-intuitive, the skills required to fully access this knowledge and epistemes are also new and vary between subjects, bestowing on them an alien countenance (Perkins, 1999). To access the subject matter students must meet and master new ideas and epistemes, but to improve their performance in examinations they must also develop intellectual and written skills required to produce coherent philosophical discussion under strict time conditions. Each year when preparing A-level Philosophy classes for examinations, students battle to engage with skills concepts such as 'explain', 'elaborate', 'develop', 'assess' or 'draw conclusions', or to understand their conceptual connections (how these terms relate to each other). Students become frustrated and disengaged when their progress in acquiring these skills appears slow or stagnant. While students can identify and label these skills in everyday contexts (epistemic knowledge), they often lack the epistemic understanding required to transfer them to a critical engagement with philosophical ideas (Bailin, 1999).

The AQA A-Level Philosophy specification changed in 2009 (AQA, 2005), with subsequent adjustments to the mark scheme (AQA, 2011) seeking to provide clarity and adjustment to the allocation of marks. Further adjustments in 2014 are referred to in Chapter 6, but do not affect this study's focus. My study was conducted in response to the 2009 alterations which required 'deeper critical awareness' and 'more conceptually sophisticated discussions' (AQA, 2005, p. 19). A comparison of mark schemes (AQA, 2008a; AQA, 2010a; AQA, 2011) verified this new weighting. At AS-Level the pre-

2009 scheme allocated 80% of the marks to knowledge and understanding and 20% to analysis, interpretation, assessment and evaluation. It included short answer questions, encouraging the mastery of content (Concepción, 2004, p. 356) and calling for a progressive development of skills, from describing and illustrating through to analysis and discussion. The new scheme, having abandoned several short answer questions, allocated 40% of the mark to knowledge and understanding, 40% to application and analysis, and 20% to interpretation, assessment and evaluation (AQA, 2005, p. 12). The frequent changes have been fraught with controversy, resulting in a national Facebook campaign to improve A-Level Philosophy. Due partly to pressure from this campaign, the mark scheme was adjusted to give 40% to knowledge, 40% to illustration, selection, application and analysis, and 20% to interpretation, assessment and evaluation. New A2-Level grade descriptors gave greater emphasis to sophistication and depth, expecting students to force a well-argued position (AQA, 2010b; 2010c).

The Facebook campaign drafted and posted a petition to express concerns from philosophy teachers, including the impression that teachers and students found the mark scheme unhelpful and marking inconsistent. While this study does not comment on this perception, it does aim to demonstrate that problems outlined in examiners' reports correlate with those identified in the literature on argumentation. The petition listed five main concerns and fifteen adverse outcomes identified by teachers. Those relating particularly to the teaching and learning of philosophy included the following:

- Students find the course content and requirements difficult to access;
- Students report finding the course difficult compared with other subjects. (Skelhorn & Lewis, no date)

Prior to the formal study, I conducted a short questionnaire as part of an initial informal inquiry to establish an empirical base for the research (section 1.2). The participating students were not formally involved in this study, but permissions were obtained for the inclusion of their responses in this report. All students reported finding philosophy more difficult than their other subjects, identifying with the idiosyncratic nature of its content and methods (Concepción, 2004; Cholbi, 2007; Booth, 2006), which may account for the correspondingly high dropout rate from AS-Level to A2-Level. Foster

& Myfanwyn (no date, p. 5)[1] suggest that 'philosophy, with the particular purity of its emphasis on *argument*, undeniably foregrounds and rehearses [argumentation skills] in a way that no other substantive subject-matter does'. The literature review will show that teaching written argumentation remains problematic across all subjects and all key stages. However, difficulties in A-level Philosophy have resulted in poor retention, especially at AS-Level. Accessing statistics for individual examination centres was not possible, but analysis of national statistics available on the AQA website suggested possible problems relating to student retention from AS-Level to A2-Level. Available are overall statistics for our centre, centres similar to ours and all centres nationally. Centres are schools, academies, colleges, etc. that host the examinations; centres similar to ours are those with similar funding and governance. To assess lack of retention I calculated the percentage drop in candidates from AS-Level in one year to A2-Level in the next, then calculated an average for the six years (Table 1.1). Nationally, there was a 48% drop in entries, corresponding with the drop in our centre, with similar centres showing a 37% drop in candidates entered. It is acknowledged that higher numbers of candidates at AS-Level could indicate lack of retention or be inflated due to students resitting AS-Level units while writing A2-Level units. However, it was also noted that candidates entered nationally for A2-Level dropped by 22% from 2009 to 2014.

Table 1.2 shows percentages of students achieving middle to high grades. Comparing 2005-2008 scores with 2009-2014, the average percentage of students in our academy achieving grades A-B at AS-Level dropped from 79% to 52%, while those achieving grades A-C dropped from 85% to 81%. In comparison, those achieving grades A*-B at A2-Level increased from 57% to 66%, and those achieving grades A*-C increased from 86-89%. Similar trends are noticed in centres similar to ours. I have not compared these percentages against national figures because grade boundaries are set based on the top percentage of students achieving higher grades. What is significant is the poor retention of candidates against lower percentages of students achieving higher grades at AS-level. In section 1.2 I discuss an informal survey supporting the view that students' decisions to continue subjects to A2-Level are heavily determined by their achievement at AS-Level. I discuss the effect of examination rubrics on grade boundaries further in Chapter 4, but this trend makes this research project timely and crucial.

[1] Permission to cite received.

Table 1.1: Candidates Entered for AQA Philosophy Examinations 2008 to 2014

	Our Centre				**Centres Similar to Ours**				**All Centres Nationally**			
Year	AS	A2	Drop in Candidates	% Drop in Candidates	**AS**	**A2**	**Drop in Candidates**	**% Drop in Candidates**	AS	A2	Drop in Candidates	% Drop in Candidates
2008	12	7			729	414			5710	3019		
2009 (5171/6171 series)	14	7	5	42	161	440	289	40	989	3220	2490	44
2009 (1171/2171 series)	11				804				6046			
2010	9	7	4	36	1280	669	135	17	5941	3245	2801	46
2011	29	7	2	22	1133	425	855	67	6627	3209	2732	46
2012	9	10	19	66	1335	708	425	38	5815	3191	3436	52
2013	12	4	5	56	1296	637	698	52	5156	2871	2944	51
2014	11	4	8	67	617	1215	81	6	5237	2538	2618	51
Average of % Drop in Candidates AS- to A2- Level				**48**				**37**				**48**

Table 1.2: Percentages and Averages of Candidates' Achieving Mid to High Grades

	Our Centre				**Centres Similar to Ours**				**All Centres Nationally**			
	AS	**A2**	**AS**	**A2**	**AS**	**A2**	**AS**	**A2**	**AS**	**A2**	**AS**	**A2**
	A*-B		**A*-C**		**A*-B**		**A*-C**		**A*-B**		**A*-C**	
2005	71	67	71	100	37	46	56	72	33	43	51	68
2006	100	50	100	63	39	39	59	56	34	39	53	56
2007	71	40	86	80	43	49	60	72	34	49	53	74
2008	75	71	83	100	32	48	51	73	31	49	50	74
Average Scores	**79**	**57**	**85**	**86**	**38**	**46**	**57**	**68**	**33**	**45**	**52**	**68**
2009	57	100	86	100	27	50	46	70	32	50	52	73
2010	44	43	78	71	27	50	48	69	29	53	49	76
2011	59	57	93	86	23	48	42	68	27	48	45	73
2012	67	70	100	100	27	54	48	76	29	49	50	72
2013	42	75	58	75	32	54	51	77	31	51	51	75
2014	45	50	73	100	33	53	52	74	30	51	49	77
Average Scores	**52**	**66**	**81**	**89**	**28**	**52**	**48**	**72**	**30**	**50**	**49**	**74**

1.2 Initial Informal Student Survey

The informal survey aimed to assess students' views in relation to those expressed in the national survey, and to inform the formulation of the research questions. The questionnaire was completed by 8 students, 4 from Year 12 and 4 from Year 13, based on their availability and willingness to participate. Responses are summarised below.

1. Do you find philosophy more difficult than your other subjects? Can you say why?

   Students felt they had to grasp numerous complex philosophical arguments in a short space of time. Theories and ideas encountered were new, often expressed in wordy, complex language, requiring the acquisition of new ways of thinking. The course content and skills differed substantially from those studied at GCSE-Level, calling for high levels of understanding and writing style. They needed to learn how to break down, assess, analyse and reassemble ideas in order to reach their own conclusions. They found it difficult to relate this style of writing to that in other subjects.

2. To what extent did/ will your grade in philosophy, compared with your other subjects, determine whether you did/ will continue the subject through to A2-Level?

   All students reported enjoying the subject, but only 2 stated they would continue irrespective of grade. This linked to grades required by prospective universities. Only one student identified a poor grade as indicating they had not mastered the basics of the subject, making it unwise to continue.

3. What have you found most difficult in terms of grasping the concepts and writing essays so far?

   The responses varied, including a lack of confidence in knowing what was expected and whether they were producing the required style of argumentation. Difficulty in understanding set philosophical theories made comparison and critique of these ideas and essay writing difficult. One lacked confidence in their evaluation and feared going off topic while another struggled to think of examples to support their ideas. One student found it difficult to be concise in outlining main points. In

terms of analysis, evaluation and synthesis, one A2-Level student stated that he had not experienced any 'eureka moments', but that his understanding of the skills required were built up layer by layer as he watch these being modelled by others.

4. What have you found most helpful in terms of grasping the concepts and writing essays so far?

   Here, several students identified extra reading, listening to podcasts or YouTube videos and talking through ideas with other students. They also read exemplar essays or each other's work to develop confidence on what to include and how to structure their essays. One student used essay plans to avoid going off topic, and another had created a checklist of what to include in essays. One student created summaries in order to note which parts of each theory were relevant to others.

5. In terms of the mark scheme, which of these words do you understand - i.e. do you know what the examiners are looking for? (A range of frequently occurring key-terms was provided).

   No statistical significance was attached to the responses, but 4 points were noted:

   i. A2-Level students attempted 90% of the definitions, against 67% attempted by AS-Level students.
   ii. Of the definitions attempted, 65% of the A2-Level responses were incorrect, against 30% of the AS-Level responses.
   iii. Terminology most accurately defined was: 'blurring of issues', 'relevance apparent', 'evaluation', 'evaluation displays penetration', 'counterarguments', 'relation between argument and conclusion'.
   iv. Terminology with least attempts at definition was: 'direct engagement', 'tangential arguments' and 'assertions met with counter-assertions'.

   From points (i) and (ii), A2-Level students seemed more confident at 'having a go', but their understanding of the terminology did not necessary match this confidence. From points (iii) and (iv), students appeared to understand basic skills of good argumentation, remaining vague on some higher-level skills. However, when compared with responses to previous questions, confidence in defining terminology

did not match their confidence when employing or avoiding these aspects in their written argumentation.

6. Have you found the argumentation skills learnt in philosophy helpful to any of your other subjects? If so, can you briefly explain?

   Three A2-Level students responded to this question, all stating they found philosophy very useful for essay writing in other subjects. Points identified included planning and structuring, succinct and concise style, forcing a position and precise evaluation. Only two AS-Level students responded. One felt that philosophy had not helped, while the other stated it might have helped with English or General Studies.

1.3 Context of Formal Study

From this brief survey, it was concluded that difficulties experienced in other schools matched those of our students. My research was conducted in a partially selective (11-18+) Academy. Philosophy was taught by myself and one colleague, Sarah[2], with AS-Level students studying Epistemology and an introduction to Political Philosophy and A2-Level topics covering Moral Philosophy, a more in-depth study of Political Philosophy and Plato's *Republic*. The progress and experience of students was tracked through years 12 and 13 in the 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 academic years. The initial group comprised nine students of mixed ability, with four continuing through to A2-Level; this allowed me and Sarah to establish respectful, on-going relationships with participants (Heyl, 2001, p. 379).

Before 2009 our annual uptake was as many as 20 students, but with students struggling to match grades in philosophy with those achieved in other subjects, numbers dropped to approximately 6-10 students per year. Following an initial drop in average grades after the first January 2010 AS-Level module examination, I began explicitly teaching argumentation and essay writing skills, as endorsed by Michael Lacewing (2011a; 2011b). Although some improvement in grades was achieved, the general perception persisted amongst students that philosophy was a difficult subject. Attempts to improve

[2] Names of students, colleagues and the school have been anonymised to protect confidentiality.

argumentation at A-Level necessarily included concerns with examination results, where assessment focused on written argumentation; however, studying students' written work alone would have limited value as progress involves the acquisition of several cognitive, verbal and written skills. This research, therefore, aimed to examine students' progress from grasping content studied in the syllabus, through to developing their own independent, written assessment and argumentation in line with the examination board's requirements and expectations.

Much previous research into argumentation involves testing intervention strategies and measuring students' progress from teachers' perspectives, emphasising teacher's roles in bringing about improvement.. This can be illustrated by Cassidy's description of Socrates' teaching style in the *Meno* (Plato, 2005, p. 115)*:*

> 'Socrates merely asks the slave boy questions. In the course of their conversation Socrates brings the slave boy to the state of *aporia* [puzzlement], where the boy realizes his initial errors in determining the area of a square, but is unable to solve the problem correctly.' (Cassidy, 2007, p. 294)

My study aimed to build on this work utilising an intrinsic, longitudinal and interventionist case study strategy (Stake, 2006; Yin 2014) to pursue deeper understandings of teaching and learning strategies, as well as personal experiences, frustrations and successes involved in teaching and learning argumentation in A-Level Philosophy from both teachers' and students' perspectives (Greenwood & Levin, 1998). The development of pedagogy and students' progress was traced across five phases:

- Phase 1: September 2012 – February 2013
- Phase 2: March 2013 – July 2013
- Phase 3: September 2013 – November 2013
- Phase 4: December 2013 – January 2014
- Phase 5: February 2014 – May 2014

Each phase comprised collection and analysis of an evolving dataset, providing an emergent understanding of students' and teachers' perceptions of learning and teaching experiences recorded in interviews, questionnaires and reflection diaries. Students are referred to as 'participants' to acknowledge their contributing role towards the research

design and development. Each phase aimed to trial a range of teaching and learning strategies and assess students' progress in written argumentation. Due to the complex nature of the study, the data collection process over the five phases is presented in more detail in the methods chapter.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions emerged from an initial literature review, the Facebook petition, the informal student questionnaires and discussions between students and teachers.

1. How do students and teachers define doing philosophy, with a focus on written argumentation?
2. What aspects of written argumentation do students and teachers find problematic and unproblematic?
3. What range of strategies do more and less successful students employ around developing written argumentation?
4. What range of strategies do teachers consider more and less successful for supporting students around developing written argumentation?

The literature review showed that philosophical argumentation requires the acquisition and simultaneous application of a complex range of skills, many of which are new to A-Level students. The phased nature of the study, with continuing data collection, recursive data analysis and reformulation of the research questions allowed the progressive and sometimes frustrating nature of this development to emerge. The phases also allowed adjustment and trialling of new teaching strategies in response to students' feedback, progress and concerns. The longitudinal nature of the study therefore facilitated ongoing refinement of the initial research questions (Thomas, 2016, loc. 837), explained in detail in the methods chapter, and outlined below (Table 1.3).

Analysis of data against existing literature revealed some insights into teachers' and students' experiences and perceptions over the two-year course. An unexpected finding was the effect of students' preconceptions around teaching and learning that were

strongly influenced by their experiences in other subjects. These affected students' willingness to engage with the interventions trialled and raised the importance of explicitly addressing their preconceptions, either before implementing interventions designed to develop cognitive skills, or at the very least alongside these strategies. Some of the questions raised were answered, but several raised further questions. In some instances questions had to be repeatedly revisited in an attempt to explore puzzles that arose and find out what was really happening. Some ideas emerged late in the study, with the result that further developments and iterations of teaching and learning strategies could not be explored. The overall conclusion reached was that A-Level students may lack the learning strategies or cognitive development required to make the leap from GCSE level work to argumentation whose highest levels match argumentation at university or college level. Bridging strategies are required to help students make the transition. This feeds into observations made concerning the latest iteration of the AQA Philosophy specification, reaching the conclusion that the new mark scheme compares more favourably with other A-Level subjects. This is important if philosophy is to remain a viable subject at A-Level.

Table 1.3: Development of Research Questions

OVER-ARCHING RESEARCH QUESTIONS	**FIRST DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**	**SECOND DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**	**THIRD DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**	**FOURTH DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**	**FIFTH DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**
How do students and teachers define doing philosophy, with a focus on written argumentation?	1.1 What level of written argumentation does the examination rubric require? 1.2 Did marks for written argumentation change? 1.3 If so, what changed? 1.4 How do the expectations change at A2-Level?	2.1 What progress have students made in producing written argumentation in examination essays?	3.1 What progress have students made in structuring written argumentation?	4.1 How do students perceive independent reading and research?	5.1 What do students understand by precision and sophistication in written argumentation? 5.2 What progress have students made in producing precision and sophistication in written argumentation?

What aspects of written argumentation do students and teachers find problematic and unproblematic?	1.5 What have students found more or less problematic in producing written argumentation?	2.2 What do students find more or less problematic in using language to improve flow and connectivity of ideas in written argumentation?	3.2 What do students find more or less problematic in structuring written argumentation? 3.3 What do students find more or less problematic in reviewing and redrafting written argumentation?	4.2 What do students find more or less problematic in engaging with written argumentation in their independent study?	5.3 What do students find more or less problematic in producing precision and sophistication in written argumentation? 5.4 What do students find more or less problematic in preparing for formal examinations?
What range of strategies do more and less successful students employ around developing written argumentation?	1.6 What strategies have students found more or less useful in producing written argumentation?	2.3 What strategies do students find more or less useful in developing quality of language utilised to improve flow and connectivity of ideas	3.4 What classroom strategies do students find more or less useful in learning to structure written argumentation? 3.5 What strategies do students find more or	4.3 How much independent study do students do? 4.4 What strategies do students find more or less useful in engaging with	5.5 What strategies do students find more or less useful in developing precision and sophistication in written argumentation? 5.6 What strategies do students find more

		in written argumentation?	less useful in reviewing and redrafting written argumentation?	independent reading and research?	or less useful in preparing for formal examinations?
What range of strategies do teachers consider more and less successful for supporting students around developing written argumentation?	1.7 What have teachers found more or less useful in teaching written argumentation?	2.4 What strategies do teachers find more or less useful in developing quality of language utilised to improve flow and connectivity of ideas in written argumentation?	3.6 What classroom strategies do teachers find more or less useful in teaching students to structure written argumentation? 3.7 What strategies do teachers find more or less useful in teaching students to review and redraft written argumentation?	4.5 What strategies do teachers find more or less useful in encouraging independent reading and research?	5.7 What strategies do teachers find more or less useful in helping students develop precision and sophistication in written argumentation? 5.8 What strategies do teachers find more or less useful in helping students prepare for formal examinations?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

> ‘Our progress in genuine knowledge always consists *in part in the discovery of something not understood in what had previously been taken for granted as plain, obvious, matter-of-course, and in part in the use of meanings that are directly grasped without question, as instruments for getting hold of obscure, doubtful, and perplexing meanings.’*
>
> (Dewey, 2016, loc. 1540)

2.1 Introduction

An initial survey of the literature showed that argumentation in philosophy comprises several levels of challenge requiring the development of many higher order cognitive skills (Horn, 2000; Crome & Garfield, 2004; Meyer & Land, 2006; Harrell, 2008) which must each be mastered and used in concert to produce new and coherent arguments (Sellars, 2002; Concepción, 2004; Harrell, 2005; Macagno *et al.*, 2006). Initial problems identified included grasping abstract ideas, identifying with unfamiliar views and concepts (Perkins, 1999) and limited background knowledge (Sellars, 2003; Saunders *et al.*, 2007). Most difficult for argumentation, which requires application of objective logic, is ‘student relativism’ defined as the view that ‘whatever we believe is the truth’ (Erion, 2005, p. 2). This initial survey, however, suggested a gap in terms of empirically informed pedagogy of teaching logical reasoning (Campbell, 2002; Sellars, 2002; Crome & Garfield, 2004; Cholbi, 2007). An in-depth review therefore sought to examine empirically based research specifically devoted to argumentation in philosophy. However, as very little empirical research was found, especially in terms of teaching argumentation in philosophy at A-Level, use was made of practitioner based and/or anecdotal journal articles. These provided information on strategies used by other philosophy teachers and helped inform intervention strategies developed during the research project.

2.2 Methodology

An initial database search of the Educational Resources Information Centre, British Educational Index and Australian Educational Index, using the keywords 'philosophy in schools', 'teaching philosophy', 'teaching argumentation', 'assessing philosophy learning', 'learning philosophy' and 'philosophising', produced a list of 534 results. The abstracts of these where read to eliminate articles that did not fit the set criteria. Many articles on Philosophy for Children were discarded as they dealt mostly with justifications for including philosophical thinking across the curriculum. Initially articles focusing on teaching methods were also excluded, as most reported anecdotal, practitioner perceptions, but a list was kept for later scrutiny. As few articles were based on empirical research, the search was extended by examining the table of contents from the two main journals dedicated to philosophy teaching, the UK *Discourse Journal* (formerly PRS-LTSN Journal) and the American *Teaching Philosophy Journal* (both peer-reviewed). All articles showing some reference to the initial research questions were scrutinised for references to additional articles, as well as handbooks on teaching or doing philosophy.

Due to the small amount of relevant literature discovered, I consulted specialists in the field of philosophy in schools and received further possible sources to consult. This led to a set of three studies (together with supporting literature) aimed at improving argumentation in schools in the North Lincolnshire and South Humberside regions, ranging from primary schools to higher education (Andrews, 1992; Andrews & Costello, 1992; Andrews, Costello & Clarke, 1993; Mitchell, 1994). Sources that appear to have influenced this work were Freedman & Pringle (1984), who conducted research in Canada, Toulmin's discussions of argument (1976; 2003), and Toulmin, Rieke & Janik (1984); these were also scrutinised. Although these studies considered teaching philosophical thinking across the curriculum rather than philosophy as a discreet subject, the focus of my review shifted to this set of literature.

The Methods Chapter explains the iterative nature of this study in detail, which included the development of the research questions, teaching interventions, data gathering and analysis, and planning towards further developments over five phases. Revisits to the literature focused on methods employed by teachers to improve argumentative writing overall, or methods concentrating on particular elements of argumentation. Much of

this research consists of anecdotal reflection from small scale practitioner research and reflects views of college or undergraduate teachers. However, they report teachers' experiences and perceptions, including small scale literature reviews, proving helpful in informing reflection on teaching and development of intervention strategies at each phase of my research project.

2.3 Developing Theoretical Understanding

2.3.1 What is Difficult about Argumentation?

A synthesis of the studies (above) identified a range of difficulties contributing to students' problems:

- Problems with structuring arguments;
- Limited knowledge about topics;
- Limited opinion about topics;
- Lack of examples of arguments in books;
- Lack of 'given' structure;
- Difficulties moving from spoken to written argument;
- Lack of a range of argument models;
- Argumentation not read in schools.

The problems helped identify forms of writing which limits students to lower grades:

- Imprecision or vagueness in understanding or reporting of existing theories;
- Tangential analysis and evaluation of existing theories;
- Imprecision or vagueness in reporting analysis and evaluation of existing theories;
- Juxtaposed reporting of analysis and evaluation of existing theories;
- Tangential inferences from discussions and synthesis towards new theories;
- Juxtaposed inferences from discussions and synthesis towards new theories.

This second list suggested a need for further analysis of existing literature on critical and logical thinking, which is addressed below in, 'Elements and Structure of Argumentation'.

Narrative and Argumentative Structure

Freedman & Pringle (1989) sought possible reasons why students appeared more accomplished at writing narrative than argumentation. Teachers marking narrative and argument scripts typically reported that students seemed unable to organise their ideas into a form or structure. While demonstrating surprising sophistication in handling narrative tools, only 12.5% realised 'the minimal criteria specified for argumentation' (p. 76), with those not meeting the criteria falling into 2 main patterns:

- Students producing and relating individual points back to central themes, but with no logical relation apparent between points (focal writing);
- Those producing a string of statements, each related to the previous one, but not back to the central argument (associational writing).

This raised the question of whether philosophy students find reporting concepts and theories easier than structuring and developing critical arguments, as the examination mark scheme awards separate credit for these skills. Andrews (1992, p. 10) identifies differences between narrative and argumentative writing:

- Narrative links events chronologically; argumentation links propositions in a logical or quasi logical sequence;
- Narrative is mostly written in the past; argumentation mostly in the present and future;
- Narrative is monologic; argumentation is generally dialogic.

Students tend to write in an additive style, comparing similarities and differences, strengths and weaknesses, but without explaining clear links to a centralised theme; 'causal connectives are left implicit, to be inferred from juxtapositions of sentences' (White, 1987, cited in Andrews, 1995, p. 27). Mitchell (1994, p. 18) identified a conflict between reproduction or reporting of data rather than changing the material. Crowhurst (1990, p. 354), from a review of several international studies, identified three key problems. Essays contained too little content, especially in terms of justifying opinions, were poorly structured and utilised inappropriate or immature language. In light of Freedman and Pringle's findings (1984), lack of content appears surprising, as content, being examples and elaboration, is in effect narrative. Although Andrews (1995) and Mitchell (1994) thoroughly explore difficulties in terms of producing

argumentative discourse, students also struggle to identify components of an argument, or structure that affords coherence (Finocchiaro, 1980), resulting in vague or blurred accounts. These problems are identified within examination feedback (AQA, 2013a), with many comments referring to tangential or juxtaposed thinking and writing, which became a focus in Phase 2 of this study.

Tangential argumentation can occur where students engage with matters relating to the central issue, but do not engage with the central issue itself (Kuhn & Udell, 2003, p. 1248-1249). Students might engage with one premise, whether stated or implied, but lose sight of whether premises are true or whether they lead to proposed conclusions. Looking at each part of the argument, assessing illustrative materials, or extrapolating and assessing inferences is part of philosophical thinking, but tangential argumentation occurs when results from this assessment are not brought back into the discussion of the target argument. Errors or tangential argumentation can occur if one of the premises is overlooked or incorrectly restated or if new premises are inserted, which change the thinker's original meaning. Juxtaposition occurs where two views or concepts are discussed in parallel, but where students fail to demonstrate or explain their understanding of the interconnection between the two lines of thought (Andrews, 2010, p. 51). Lack of relevance could result from tangential thought where students become distracted by part of the argument, or could be due to students failing to make relevance clear.

However, students' ability to initially grasp philosophical concepts needs further consideration, as problems of precision and detail in descriptive and illustrative writing remain problematic. Lack of penetration or sophistication in argumentation occurs when students grasp some of the internal or inferential significance of premises and conclusions, but fail to look more deeply into the interconnection between these, or fail to communicate the full extent of their thinking and understanding

Problems with Structure and Abstraction

Argumentative writing creates difficulties for students because it requires the conversion of dialogic discussion to monologue presentation (Gleason, 1999, p. 81). Toulmin (2003) suggests problems with accessing levels of abstraction within

argumentation. These are claims as assertions, grounds as foundations for claims, warrants indicating justifications, links between claims and grounds, and backing which refers to the general body of information behind warrants. Clarification of types of abstraction and conceptualisation required is outlined below (Freedman & Pringle, 1984, Vygotsky, 1986).

In order to:

- perceive objective bonds that bind similar objects,
- analyse similarities to determine common elements (which are abstract),
- verbalise concepts,
- apply concepts to other experiential configurations, and
- interrelate concepts with other abstract formulations,

students need to:

- generate separate points related to a topic,
- perceive their similarities and group them,
- analyse similarities to discover abstract bonds,
- verbalise commonalities, and
- interrelate the different formulations.

A greater number of individual points and groupings within a piece of work make this task more complex and difficult.

Four books (Wason & Johnson-Laird, 1972; Donaldson, 1978; White, 2002; Dewey, 2016) helped provide possible reasons for difficulties leading students to tangential or juxtaposed argumentation. The first three draw conclusions from empirical studies, while Dewey writes as a philosopher, exploring requirements for reflective thought from a philosopher's perspective. Below is a synthesis of their discussions:

- A good understanding of language is vital (White, 2002; Dewey, 2016). The internal structure of premises can be missed if language is misunderstood, either because words are misinterpreted or changes to connecting inferences are missed. Inferences can change depending on how premises are placed in relation to each other.

- Students can leap to correct conclusions without fully understanding the logic involved in arguments (Wason & Johnson-Laird, 1972; Dewey, 2016). As logical thinking develops, it becomes possible to think over steps in logical processes, either because the subconscious works faster than conscious thought, or because the full understanding of the logic is not required. This proves problematic where higher grades require clear explanations of thought processes within discussions.
- Negation in premises proves more problematic than adding a third premise to arguments (Wason & Johnson-Laird, 1972; White, 2002). Students tend to manage negation by interpreting negatively stated premises into positive premises or by using strategies such as *reductio ad absurdum* (reducing to absurdity). These strategies require additional mental operations, needing more short-term memory to hold premises and implications in the mind while working through and connecting each inference. Extra steps increase possibilities of mistakes in the thinking process.
- Content of an argument can prove paradoxical (White, 2002). More abstract arguments appear to encourage students to focus on the structure of arguments, but where structure is counter-intuitive a context can help them work through that structure. However, context can prove distracting, leading to tangential discussions based on prior experience or emotional or instinctual responses to that content.
- Brains learn which premises invariably produce particular inferences. It is possible to recognise a sense of compatibility, possibility and necessity between ideas without reflective thinking required for philosophy which involves 'dwelling on paradoxes [and] making interconnections with related issues' (White, 2002, p. 34). Being able to identify fallacies within the structure of simple arguments does not guarantee students can employ this same skill in different contexts. Linguistic limitations can affect students' abilities to grasp or express the full significance of premises or arguments as subtleties of language and meaning can be missed or misinterpreted. Errors in reasoning and assessment can occur when students fail to grasp the internal structure of individual premises, where they fail to follow interconnecting inferences, or where they make mistakes in logical sequencing. Students find it

difficult to hold back judgement in order to assess material objectively, especially where content engages them in responses.

Here the literature on critical and logical thinking provided useful insights. Vygotsky (1986, p. 112) describes different stages in the progress of thinking, one being 'thinking in complexes'. Students recognise concrete and factual common bonds, but not logical or abstract bonds, perhaps explaining why students can analyse and assess concrete objects, but struggle when comparing philosophical ideas. Another stage, 'thinking in chains', shows no common bond relating a chain of ideas, similar to Freedman & Pringle's associational writing (1984). The conclusion is that students think in terms of complexes, lacking the ability to grasp abstract or conceptual structures or links between complexes required for written argumentation. Freedman & Pringle assume that 'once these students have reached that stage in early adolescence ... they should become able' (p. 80), but lecturers report continued difficulties with this amongst undergraduate students.

In more intellectually or morally demanding topics, similarities between concepts may be more subtle and difficult to discern, arguments may require working with more data, or may require higher degrees of abstraction, needing more complex groupings of ideas (Freedman & Pringle, 1984). A-Level Philosophy introduces students to new and complex concepts within a broad syllabus, adding to the quantity of data being grasped and manipulated, resulting in more complex groupings and higher degrees of abstraction and conceptualisation. Difficulties identified fall into two categories: the physical elements of an argument (content, structure, language, data) and conceptual elements (abstraction, groupings), a division that recurs in the discussion below.

Disparity between Verbal and Written Argumentation

Freedman & Pringle (1984, p. 78) observed that children are adept at verbal argumentation, with written argumentation requiring 'a new set of cognitive and rhetorical strategies'. Movement from verbal to written argumentation involves greater abstraction, with difficulties traced to unfamiliarity with the functions of language rather than problems of generalisation (Dixon and Stratta, 1986, cited in Andrews, 1995, p. 37-38). Speech utilises shorter phrases, different grammatical structure, and

can proceed with unfinished statements or statements completed by others (Mitchell, 1994). Verbal argumentation has different speakers articulating multiple perspectives, whereas in written dialogue, writing produced by one person must convey dialogue. Written work of younger students exhibits more speech characteristics than that of older students (White, 1987, cited in Andrews, 1995), possibly because their writing is less influenced by formal writing conventions, which are mostly narrative. For example, 'causal connectives are left implicit, to be inferred from juxtapositions of sentences rather than being given lexical realisation' (p. 14).

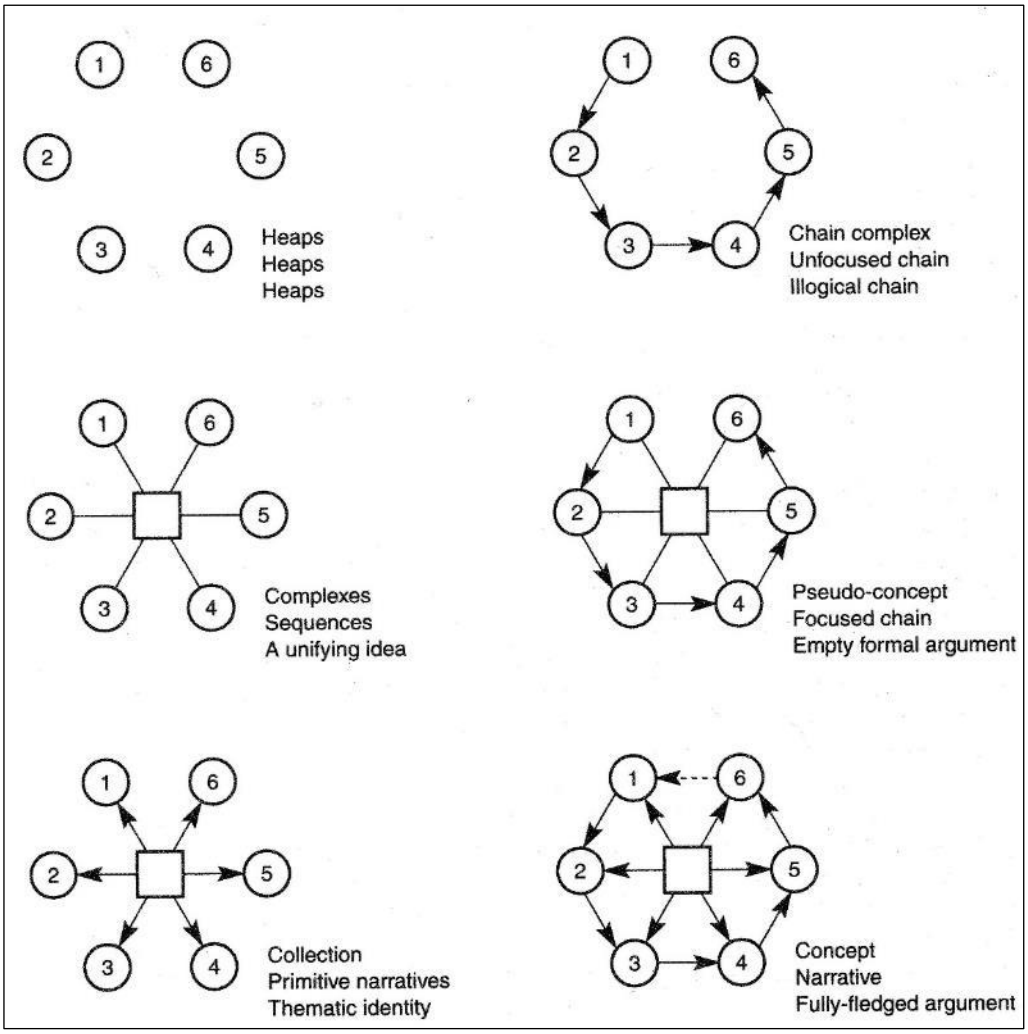
Further differences involve the pace and transient nature of verbal argumentation, where participants exchange ideas quickly, gauging recipients' understanding and providing clarification when necessary. Conversational turns in verbal argumentation are much shorter, resulting in students producing equally short conversational turns in their writing (Freedman & Pringle, 1984), indicating a learnt style rather than poor knowledge or understanding. Written argumentation requires clearly articulated steps in logic with connectives explicitly stated, resulting in a slower flow of ideas. While diagrams might help students explore concepts, they still need to learn written articulation. Andrews (1995, p. 160) suggests training students to signpost the direction of their arguments with connective words such as 'nevertheless', 'but' or 'despite the fact that', while raising the criticism that this type of training can focus attention on the formalisation of the argument, detracting from the actual issue discussed. However, students may use phrases without fully understanding their function, e.g. labelling exposition as example, or using connective terms between unconnected ideas. Furthermore, when identifying arguments within text, reasoning can be conveyed without these indicators, or indicators might have different meanings beyond reasoning (Finocchiaro, 1980, p. 4).

Models in Written Argumentation

Andrews (1995, p. 36) proposes six stages in learning to write fully fledged argumentation. These move from heaps (unconnected perceptions) through a range of sequences which become gradually more connected until forming complexes. In Image 2.1 the circles represent ideas, lines show connections between ideas and arrows

illustrate the directionality of these connections. In philosophical argumentation, 'heaps' would correspond to propositions, or propositional components of arguments, which must be interconnected, either implicitly or through reasoning indicators (Finocchiaro, 1980, p. 3). The diagrams labelled 'Complexes' and 'Chain Complex' correspond to 'focal' and 'associational' writing described by Freedman and Pringle (1989).

Image 2.1: Evolution of Concepts in Relation to Narrative and Argumentative Structures (Andrews, 1995, p. 36)



This model can be used to help students and teachers visualise what happens in juxtaposed and tangential argumentation. In the 'heaps' model, points are set side by side with no explanation of their connection. Although 'complexes' and 'collection' models demonstrate connection to the question or central theme, points are still

juxtaposed, or set side by side. The 'chain' model seems most at danger of becoming tangential, as points never connect back to the question/ theme or to each other. However, any of the models could become tangential or contain tangential aspects if points set off 'at a tangent' without being tied back to the argument. A question to consider is whether progress through the 'steps' is achieved chronologically, and whether the steps are transferrable. If they must be accessed chronologically, would students benefit from, or require, explicit instruction scaffolding their progress to higher forms of argumentation? In terms of transferability, do these steps correspond with patterns observed in verbal argumentation? If students achieve a certain level of argumentative structure orally, does it follow that they are able to produce this same level in written form?

Also of interest are correlations between verbal argumentation and argument planning scrutinised by Andrews (1995, p. 106-108). He observed differences between children's and adults' methods of working when moving from notes to text. Whereas children tend to plan linearly, adults often plan in a multi-level, non-linear way, requiring total transformation from plan to text. Further research might determine the extent to which the planning of A-Level students corresponds to verbal or dialogical argumentation, as well as the quality of argumentation evident within either linear or non-linear planning as compared with their final essays.

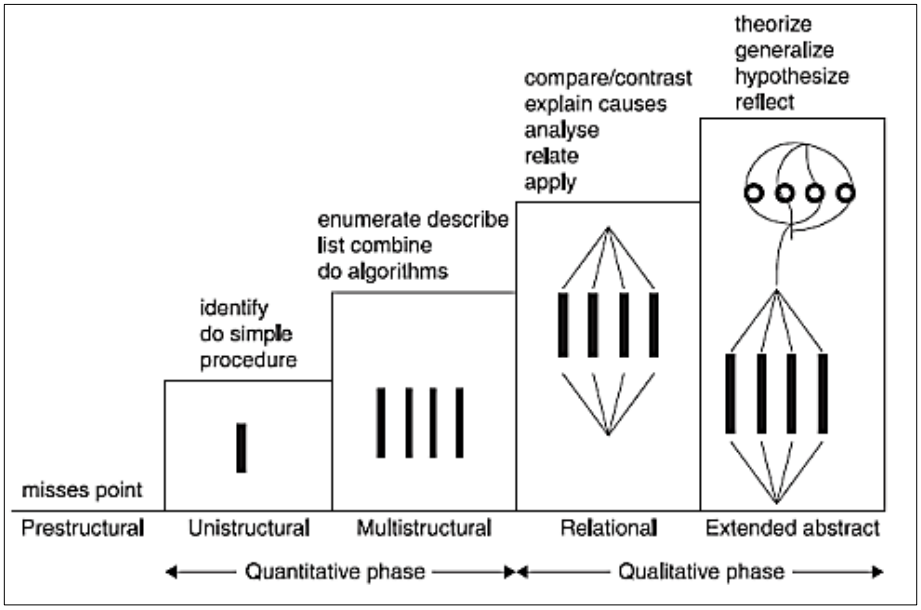
Taxonomies and Thinking Frameworks.

A range of articles on the use of rubrics to teach and assess argumentation were analysed (Farmer, 2003; Hafner & Hafner, 2003; Andrade, 2005; Harrell, 2005). These rubrics all contained elements of argumentation similar to those included in students' A-Level textbooks (Burns & Law, 2004; Lacewing, 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Butler *et al.*, 2008, 2009; Hayward, Jones & Cardinal, 2014) and general textbooks aimed at fostering good argumentative writing (Martinich, 2005; Vaughn, 2006; Baron & Poxon, 2012). These were analysed against a range of taxonomies (Ennis, 1987; Andrews, 1995; Krathwohl, 2002; Biggs, 2011) to gain clearer understanding of elements and structure required for good argumentation.

Ennis (1987, p. 10) defines critical thinking as ‘reasonable reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do’. The performance of tasks such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation differs across subjects, with the validity of arguments tending to be subject based, ‘judged by standards appropriate within that field’ (Toulmin, 1958, p. 255). Philosophy differs from other subjects in terms of content, method and critical spirit (Ortiz, 2007, p. 8-9), but there is substantial overlap in terms of concepts and skills used (Quellmalz, 1987, p. 87).

Thinking frameworks aid reflection on the kinds of skills needed for critical thinking (Fischer, 2001; Daud, 2012) but it is important to consider what they claim to describe. Do they describe development of students’ cognitive abilities, necessitating their acquisition in a particular, hierarchical order, or do they describe thinking skills in terms of complexity, meaning it is easier to grasp facts about something, but more difficult to analyse or evaluate those facts? Alternately, could they refer to specific orders in which critical thinking tasks should be performed, so that describing and illustrating must come before analysing and assessing? Mitchell (1994, p. 19-20) uses Bloom’s taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 213) to discuss ‘educational objectives in the cognitive domain’, pointing out that ‘synthesis and evaluation are likely to make use of those found lower in the list’. This is similar to Biggs’ model (2011, p. 91), which demonstrates utilising lower level outcomes to build towards higher level outcomes in argumentation (Image 2.2).

Image 2.2: Hierarchy of Intended Outcomes in Argumentation (Biggs, 2011, p. 91)



Apart from placing synthesis before evaluation, Bloom's six levels of cognition (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 213) are easily identified in A-Level Philosophy mark schemes, but the mark schemes also expect coherence between levels so that the 'relation between argument and conclusion' are made clear (AQA, 2012c, p. 6). Krathwohl's two dimensional development of the taxonomy helps clarify distinctions between types of knowledge and tasks that can be performed in relation to that knowledge. Some of his descriptions help clarify elements, e.g., analysis is explained as '[b]reaking material into its constituent parts and detecting how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure of purpose' (2002, p. 215). Others provide limited clarity, e.g. evaluation involves '[m]aking judgements based on criteria and standards', including both checking and critiquing. He has lost Bloom's distinction between internal and external standards, which are explained in terms of 'consistency, logical accuracy ... the absence of internal flaws' etc. (*ibid*., p. 186).

In the AQA mark scheme (2012c) confusion between 'analysis' and 'assessment' or 'evaluation' results from broad descriptions in mark schemes, but some clarification can be found by studying lower assessment levels. For example, evaluation that is sophisticated, direct, penetrating over a range of material or issues for higher levels improves on evaluation that is underdeveloped, tangential, sporadic or narrowly confined, or replaced by assertion or counter-assertion described in lower levels. While Bloom's taxonomy places synthesis before evaluation, philosophy students must analyse and evaluate existing arguments before synthesizing their discussion into their own theses. Perhaps evaluation should come before and after synthesis; firstly, in assessing arguments studied, and secondly, aimed at self-assessment.

Kathwohl's two-dimensional taxonomy (2002, p. 217) further distinguishes between types of knowledge and processes or skills applied to that knowledge. For example:

- grasping and utilising skills and terminology required to:
    - analyse and evaluate existing arguments;
    - synthesise ideas and conclusions into new arguments;
- applying these skills introspectively to analyse and evaluate students' own subsequent arguments.

Ennis' taxonomy (1987, p. 12-15) provides a list of tasks to help students move their writing and self-evaluation towards more mature argumentation. These can be used to develop short exercises aimed at developing parts of the essay writing process. They are not hierarchical or cumulative, but work together to produce developed and effective critical thinking (Image 2.3).

This corresponds in part to the developmental web (Image 2.4) devised by Fischer, Yan & Stewart (2005, p. 5). The developmental web allows for variations in different individuals' development, as well as the complex development of thinking skills in individuals, perhaps explaining the inconsistent way in which these skills are sometimes demonstrated in students' written work. A progressive development of skills (Concepción, 2004), where students are given opportunities to grasp and hone lower order skills before moving on to higher order skills, may be useful as students have less to manage in terms of content while learning and practising argumentative skills around content. However, the models also suggest students can make concurrent progress across different skills required to formulate fully fledged argumentation.

Image 2.3: Constituents of Critical Thinking (Ennis, 1987, p. 16)

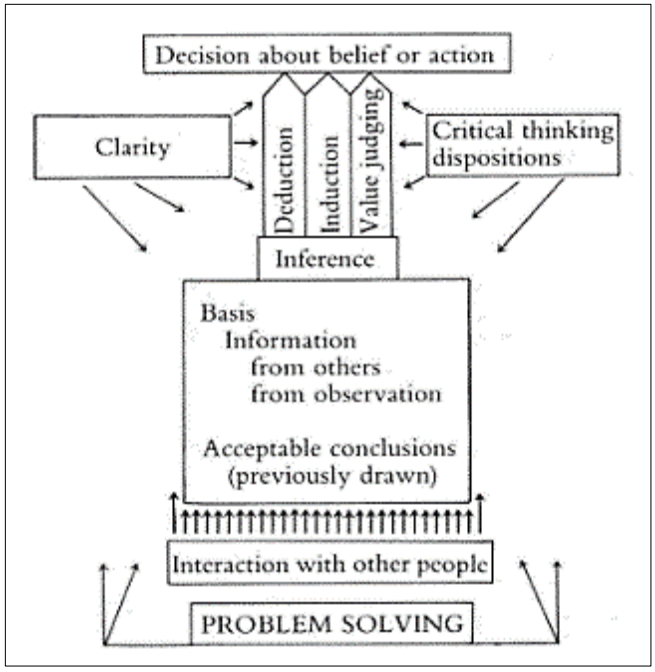
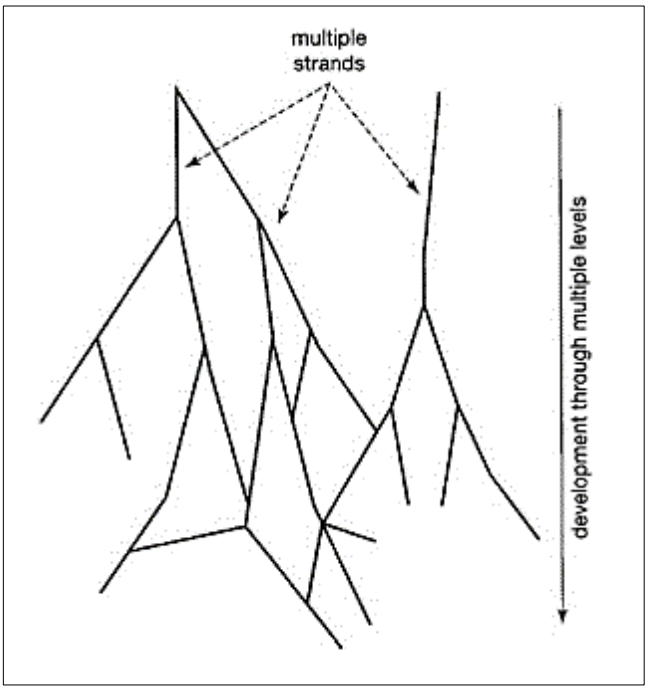


Image 2.4: Development Web (Fischer, Yan & Stewart., 2005, p. 5)



In terms of teaching students argumentation, the use of clearly defined rubrics can clarify different aspects of argumentation and highlight the importance of developing these in concert. Rubrics that detail the allocation of marks against different elements of argumentation help focus students' attention on elements that are less developed in their work, and reinforce the importance of developing the full range of argumentation skills. Hafner & Hafner (2003) utilise a rubric that allocates marks to different elements, with each element clearly explained (Appendix 1). Although some of the terminology may remain obscure to novice students, the teacher's task is to explicate these and train students in their use.

Possible Reasons for Error in Argumentation

In Phase 2, Wason & Johnson-Laird (1972), Donaldson (1978), White (2002) and Dewey (2016) were again used to develop clearer understanding of tangential or juxtaposed argumentation. These either occur in the mind, where connections between concepts and inferences are not correctly or fully made, or in writing where they are incorrectly or partially explained.

Dewey (2016, loc. 77) defines reflective thought as '[a]ctive, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends'. Arguments comprise given or implied premises and interconnecting inferences between them. Premises themselves contain a measure of internal logic and integrity, implying unstated inferences that in turn affect interactions between premises. Sharp critical thinking identifies these connections, their meanings, the premises they create and inferences they imply, as well as being able to maintain a grasp on lines of thought through various manipulations of the argument's components.

The process of analysing and assessing arguments is not linear and produces webs of thought similar to that demonstrated in the 'Concept' model (Andrews, 1995, p. 36). However, while this model demonstrates interconnectivity between premises and examples in arguments, it does not do justice to the messiness of some argumentation. Image 2.5 outlines the possible web of discussion around the question, 'Is any account of the condition of mankind in the state of nature convincing?' (AQA, 2009). However, while ideas are interlinked, the writing process needs to lay out sections of discussion in logical and linear ways, using language to link them and signpost the direction of students' theses. Lack of clarity in students' thinking or inexperience in utilising sign-posting language to help readers follow their thinking and tie parts of their thinking together can result in juxtaposed or tangential ideas.

Dewey (2016) suggests several reasons why students may fail to take arguments forward or make mistakes in reasoning. Some argumentation requires students to argue for positions that conflict with prior beliefs or opinions, which can lead to the paradoxes outlined above (White, 2002). Taking an argument forward involves going 'beyond what is surely known to something else accepted on its warrant' (*ibid.*, p. 26). Students fail to enter into the 'double movement' (p. 79) needed for reflective thought, where they move back and forth between their assessment of material and their proposed conclusion, adjusting and honing their thinking until they arrive at a coherent and substantiated argument. Andrews' models (1995, p. 36) fail to demonstrate this, as the 'Concept' model shows students' central themes or positions influencing their premises, but not the return influence which may result in students changing their final view and conclusion. To illustrate this I have adapted Andrew's model (Image 2.6).

Image 2.5: Example of Argument Web.

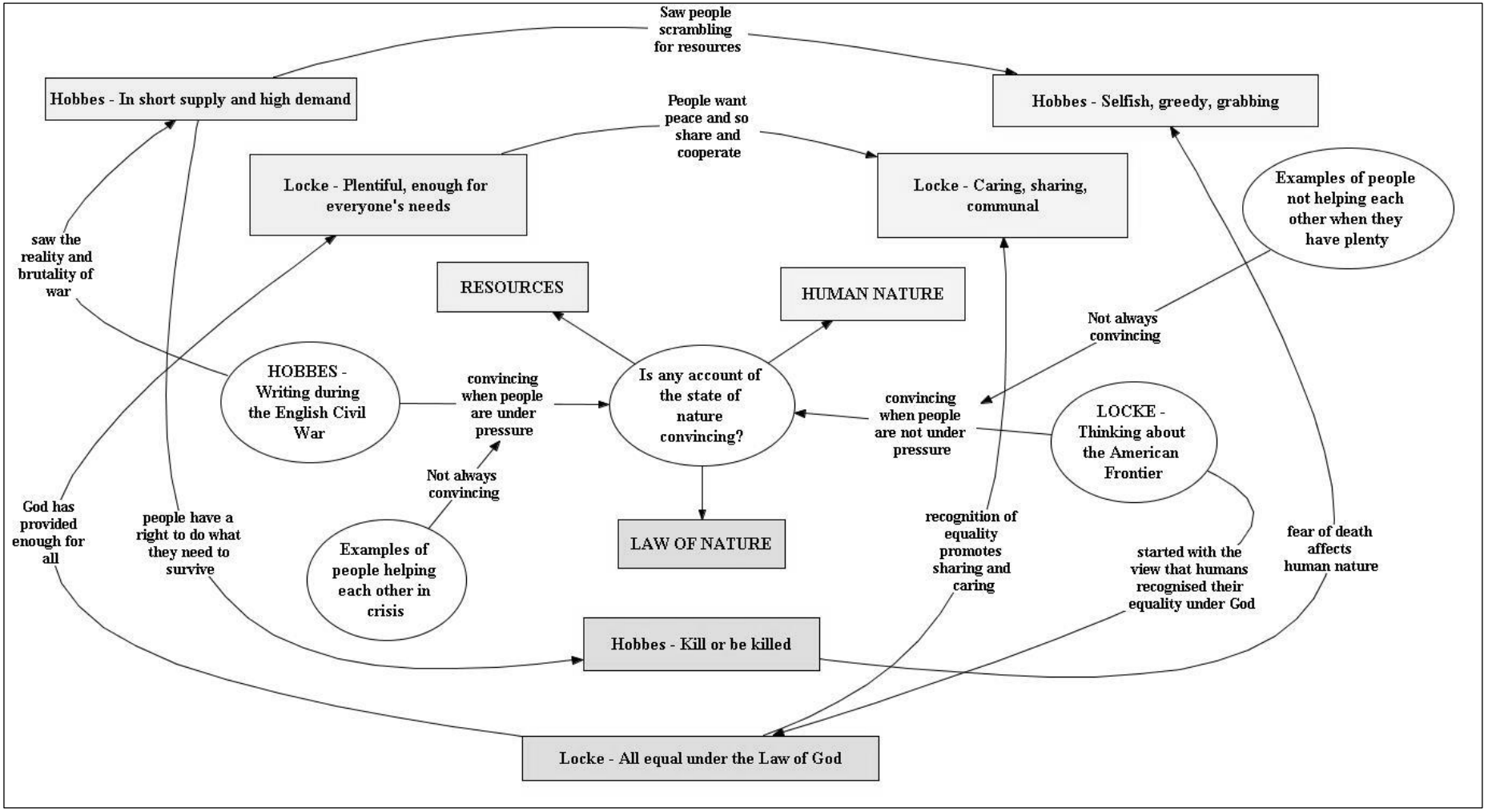
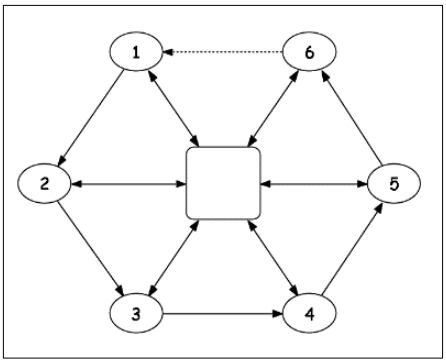


Image 2.6: Adapted Version of Concept Model.



Possible reasons for this deficiency in students' written argumentation could be lack of skill or reluctance to give sufficient time for their thinking on matters to mature, which also requires redrafting of their writing. This requires some creativity, moving between inductive discovery (building up ideas from fragmentary detail towards discovery and a connected view of the situation) and deductive proof (working from conclusions back to particulars in order to develop, connect and ultimately test them). The creative element means each person will bring unique previous experiences and abilities to the task, making it very difficult and counter-productive to fully regulate. Students need 'patience in a condition of doubt' (White, 2002, p. 84), and can only be guided and coached from the side-lines; thoughts and connections between ideas need time to formulate and will be, to some extent, unique to each person.

2.4 Strategies Employed by Teachers to Help Students Develop Written Argumentation.

Students do not need to be taught how to think, but how to think more critically, coherently, creatively and deeply (Nickerson, 1987, p. 28), both generally and within conventions particular to subject-specific knowledge (Perkins, 1987a; Mitchell, 1994). Their need for teacher input is greatest when they meet conventions or modes of inquiry that differ from those previously encountered (Gravett, 2015, p. 165). Thinking frames help students organise their thought, but students must do the thinking. Philosophy is a method, or way of thinking, meaning it must be taught as a practical subject, with tutors demonstrating skills (Hutchinson & Loughlin, 2009). Andrews (1995, p. 33) suggests immersing students in argumentation through 'demonstration, response, individual

reading, sharing/ discussion, retelling, writing independently and generating criteria'. A crucial task, before introducing students to various elements of philosophy, is to help them recognise differences between studying philosophy and engaging in the intellectual activity of philosophy (Rudisill, 2011). However, Perkins (1987a, p. 48) argues that 'soaking up' does not occur; principles of thinking must be made explicit and practised until application of these becomes automatic. In contrast to this, Mitchell's study (1994, p. 95) found that teaching argumentation was mostly approached tacitly, through modelling, essay questions or marking comments. Explicit teaching of argument remained limited to introductory lessons which laid out necessary tools for study. Teaching critical thinking skills includes building students' 'tactical intelligence', requiring students to adopt seemly counterintuitive 'patterns of thinking' (Perkins, 1987a, p. 45), which requires explicit training and instruction. Models of learning (Pellegrino, 2003, p. 50) and thinking frames will only represent simplified versions of complexities inherent in students' minds or their learning contexts. Learning through dialogue, with additional scaffolding by more experienced tutors, has been shown to help students realise they have an understanding of elements needed to construct arguments or new ideas (Mercer, 2008, p. 354), and to bridge their own skills to those of students operating at more complex levels (Knight & Sutton 2007, p. 51). Using the model of Socrates' dialectic conversations, Mitchell (1994, p. 15) extends the questioning role of teachers to developing criticality in students who learn to ask the questions and elicit responses as part of the process of analysis and evaluation.

The remainder of the chapter reports a snapshot of literature reviewed around strategies employed by philosophy tutors to help students understand and practice argumentation. The iterative nature of my study kept this review closely linked to themes developed through ongoing data analysis. Strategies presented below focus on those that informed ongoing development of teaching and learning strategies and data analysis in this study.

2.4.1 Development of Teaching and Learning Strategies

Sternberg (1987, pp. 253-254) argues that being a good thinker requires more than having the right thought processes. Good thinkers need 'workable strategies for solving problems', the ability to formulate mental and written representations of information

and discussions emanating from a solid knowledge base, and the motivation to use these skills. Teaching philosophy at A-Level includes teaching knowledge, but more specifically aims to help students develop as thinkers. Sternberg's four general goals (p. 259) involve helping students:

- become better 'all-round thinkers' as well as better thinkers in philosophy;
- capitalise on their strengths;
- remedy deficiencies in their thinking;
- realise their full potential.

However, achieving these goals requires a two-way partnership between teachers and students. Teachers cannot develop their students; they can only facilitate opportunities for development. Students must learn, requiring practise in order to improve their critical thinking skills and develop as thinkers.

Structuring Argumentative Essays

Teaching and learning strategies aimed at helping students structure argumentative essays more effectively are discussed below. This included providing students with scaffolding and writing frames and developing their use of essay plans. Although the literature lacks consistency, I will use the term 'building blocks' to refer to larger portions of essays (e.g. paragraphs presenting introduction, explication of theory, counter theories, conclusion) and 'elements' to refer to aspects of argumentation (e.g. thesis, analysis, synthesis, evaluation).

a) Scaffolding and Writing Frames

Students' increasing ability to access argumentation in reading does not automatically transfer into being able to construct coherent written arguments (White & Chern, 2004). Although arguments can be presented in various ways (Lone & Green, 2013), students still struggle with structure and coherence (Gleason, 1999; Butler & Britt, 2011). However, the wide range of approaches available when discussing a problem creates difficulties when students request structure, by which they mean outlines. Their theses should inform planning and compositions of essays (Vaugh, 2006; Butler & Britt,

2011), making it difficult to provide generic structure. Baron & Poxon (2012) outline three types of essay:

- Essays examining and evaluating an argument's premises one at a time.
- Essays discussing ethical or philosophical questions, constituting a set of premises leading to a conclusion, with each premise discussed in turn.
- Students asking questions about issues in the question, answering these in turn, leading to a conclusion.

In each case students must identify or devise parts to be discussed, working through each in separate paragraphs. To avoid 'reporting', students must employ elements of argumentation to engage with selected content (Lacewing, 2010a, 2010b) in support of their conclusions. Each paragraph must provide 'some evidence, quotation, argument or example' (Warburton, 2006, p. 42) about objections or responses, moving their discussions towards theses being put forward (Vaugh, 2006). Consecutive paragraphs must set out 'a sequence of thought where one idea follows clearly from another' (Baron & Poxon, 2012, p. 15).

When dealing with new material and skills, teachers risk overloading students' functional abilities so that something is lost, either the content or the range of tasks to be performed. This may explain why students appear to grasp individual concepts but struggle relating them to each other (Knight & Sutton, 2007, p. 50) and may justify the use of written instructions to provide elucidation of steps and a problem-solving heuristic (Perkins, 1987b, p. 66). While it might be argued that writing frames stifle the flow of ideas from students, structure that forces students to evaluate and think through responses can encourage greater depth of thought (Warburton, 2006; Earl, 2015). Colter & Ulatowski (2015) maintain that scaffolding should be temporary, with support incrementally removed as students develop their skills and independence.

Teaching and Support Strategies

- Textbooks (Burns & Law, 2004; Martinich, 2005; Vaughn, 2006; Warburton, 2006; Lacewing, 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Butler *et al.*, 2008, 2009; Hayward, Jones & Cardinal, 2014; Baron & Poxon, 2012) provide scaffolding as lists of building

blocks or elements required, e.g. ‘introduction’, ‘thesis’, ‘analysis’, ‘conclusions’. Some include samples demonstrating the nature of these building blocks.

- Some textbooks provide outlines to demonstrate ordering the elements of argumentation (Warburton, 2006; Wheeler, undated). These vary in detail, giving advice on coherent layout without prescribing what to write in each section. Students must select relevant material, based on arguments they are making. Warburton (2006, p. 42) provides a basic structure of introduction, middles, conclusion, but gives further instruction on constructing each section. For example, middles include:

  - Making a relevant point.
  - Backing it up with evidence, quotation, argument or example.
  - Writing a sentence showing the relevance of what has been said relevant to the question asked.

- Mnemonics help students remember steps they must perform at each stage of the writing process. Some include detailed explanations and examples of what these look like in essays (Baron & Poxon, 2012, pp. 63-72).

  - **STARE** — **Show** that you know what the question is asking.
  - **AT** — **Analyse –** show that you understand how the main arguments have been constructed.
  - **EVERYONE** — **Evaluate** strengths and weaknesses of different arguments.
  - **CAUSING** — **Critical** comparison.
  - **CHAOS** — **Conclusion –** bring together the elements of YOUR argument to make clear how they relate to YOUR argument.

- More advanced argumentation may require more detailed explanations (Hitchcock & Verheij, 2006). Wheeler (undated), using Toulmin’s model, provides detailed structure (Image 2.7) to help students order the elements of their arguments.

Image 2.7: Outline to Guide Argumentation (Wheeler, undated)

I. Introduction of the problem or topic.
   A. Material to get the reader's attention (a "hook")
   B. Introduce the problem or topic
   C. Introduce our **claim** or thesis, perhaps with accompanying **qualifiers** that limit the scope of the argument. (NB: This will help you cut the topic down to a manageable length.)

II. Offer **data** (reasons or evidence) to support the argument.
   A. Datum #1
   B. Datum #2
   C. (and so on)

III. Explore **warrants** that show how the data logically is connected to the data
   A. Warrant #1
   B. Warrant #2
   C. (and so on)

IV. Offer factual **backing** to show that logic used in the warrants is good in term of realism as well as theory.
   A. Backing for Warrant #1
   B. Backing for Warrant #2
   C. (and so on)

V. Discuss counter-arguments and provide **rebuttal**
   A. Counter-argument #1
   B. Rebuttal to counter-argument #1
   C. Counter-argument #2
   D. Rebuttal to counter-argument #2
   E. (and so on)

VI. Conclusion
   A. Implications of the argument, summation of points, or final evocative thought to ensure the reader remembers the argument.

- As well as a simple outline, Martinich (2005, p. 49-64) gives more detailed scaffolding for more complex essays (Appendix 2), but adds that these must be used with discretion so as not to overwhelm students or develop dependency on teacher input. Students might be given an 'exemplar of an assignment' (Gifford, 2015, p. 24) or be provided with models to guide them through sections of the material (Bradner, 2015, p. 185):

  - summarise a section of a philosopher's argument;
  - explain the role the section plays in the larger argument;
  - develop an objection to the section;
  - anticipate a response;
  - defend the objection against anticipated responses;
  - conclude with a diagnosis.

- Some teachers implicitly provide structure through rubric criteria against which students are assessed (Farmer, 2003; Andrade, 2005; Harrell, 2005; Cimitile, 2008; Hafner & Hafner, 2003; Thomas, 2011). These can help teachers and students understand and focus on elements required to build arguments and can help students understand where they are making progress or need further focus.

They can also assist self-assessment as students measure their work against the outlines or rubrics.

Discussion

Lists of building blocks have limited use as they address content without addressing actual argumentation. More instruction, such as 'back it up with' or 'show the relevance of' (Warburton, 2006, p. 42), demonstrates the importance of showing links between content used and explaining how it contributes to the argument. Baron & Poxon's mnemonics (2012) and Wheeler's detailed outline (undated) include elements of argumentation, but unless students are familiar with these, instructions for their inclusion remains limited. Exemplar samples together with detailed modelling of instructions (Gifford, 2015; Bradner, 2015) can develop students' understanding as they match portions of exemplars with required elements. However, students must be able to transfer understanding from one piece of writing to another. Unless students can identify and utilise elements of argumentation in different pieces of writing, providing frames or rubrics will have limited success as both rely on self-assessment.

b) Planning

The construction of essay plans before writing allows students to think through and link parts of their argument, ensuring premises and discussion work coherently towards their conclusion (Baron & Poxon, 2012). Students' theses should guide planning, making it important for them to recognise that changes to their theses, as well as redrafting of work at global levels, will require adjustments to their plans (Butler & Britt, 2011). Planning as part of timed tests can be challenging if students have not been 'taught to use a planning strategy' (Evmenova *et al.*, 2016, p. 170). In view of the importance of planning, I found surprisingly little literature on teaching students to plan. Some textbooks advise starting with a plan, outline or web-diagram (Burns & Law, 2004; Saunders *et al.*, 2007; Lacewing, 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Hayward, Jones & Cardinal, 2014), but assume students already have the skill.

Teaching and Support Strategies

- Butler & Britt (2011) suggest presenting students with specific instructions and steps to follow to direct their planning. They do not, however, give examples of these steps.

- Mind-mapping (Clay, 2003; Baron & Poxon, 2012) and graphic organisers (Evmenova *et al.*, 2016) can help students think through and structure elements of their essays. Students can start with assumptions made in theories, or suggested by questions, and use maps or organisers to think these through to develop target arguments. The steps or points can be organised and addressed in turn, with each discussed in separate paragraphs. Several articles explore using argument maps to help students analyse written arguments (Horn, 2000; Macagno *et al.*, 2006; Cassidy, 2007; Harrell, 2008; Hutchinson & Loughlin, 2009), but these can be adjusted to help students organise and plan out essays.

- Bosley & Jacobs (1992) advocate using interactive discussions at the planning stage to help students think through a range of positions, criticisms and counter-arguments. Students take different stances and 'argue' through questions before working collaboratively on essay plans. Further collaboration is encouraged outside of lesson, but this only works if students recognise good and poor examples of the elements required for good argumentation, and if students are willing and able to organise meetings outside of lesson.

Discussion

Whereas 'structure' means presentation of building blocks and elements in order to systematically lay out and discuss the steps in arguments, 'planning' refers to the process of selecting, applying and thinking through relevant material. The two are closely linked, but students must differentiate between thinking through and applying available material to support their theses, and utilising structure to make their arguments clear and coherent. A standard structure can guide students' writing, but their selected material and argument should dictate the order in which material is presented (Martinich 2005, p. 54). Essays will not contain the same elements, the order of elements presented may need changing to present materials more effectively, or the same material may be used in different ways to serve different purposes within the same

essay. Teachers can teach planning by modelling the process, but for students to replicate the process themselves, especially under pressures of timed examinations, they must practice and hone the skills themselves.

Response to Teachers' Feedback

Strategies explored to develop post-marking review included research into teachers' written feedback and students' use of feedback in post-marking review. Research into the identification and avoidance of common errors was conducted in response to students' feedback.

a) Teachers' Feedback

Limited literature on providing feedback in philosophy required a broader search, including insights from teachers of English as a foreign language. Despite differences in subject matter, papers found provided useful and relevant advice to develop my marking strategies. For written feedback to be effective teachers must analyse and explain students' problems and students must be able to understand and use feedback (Hyland, 2003). Hyland & Hyland (2001) distinguish three approaches to marking, advocating the last as most effective:

- dualistic responders focus on surface features, giving prescriptive feedback;
- relativistic responders focus on ideas within the writing;
- reflective responders respond to both ideas and structure while attempting to be less dictatorial.

Formative feedback seeks to illuminate anomalies in students' thinking and writing, encouraging them to evaluate beliefs and interpretations affecting meanings given to their work (Adler, 2004). With philosophy essays, where argumentation is key, assessment should begin with students' arguments (Stump, undated), with comments on surface errors kept to a minimum (Farmer, 2003). However, Arvan (2014) argues that all feedback is pointless unless students respond to it in some way.

Teaching and Support Strategies

- Figdor (2004) recommends a graduated approach to writing assignments, allowing identification of problem areas and revision of drafts before final assessment.

- Teachers writing out corrections elicits little thought and engagement from students (Hyland, 1990). Marking should provide sufficient guidance to allow students to fix errors themselves. A mix of in-text and summative comments should identify successes as well as errors, and should include reviewing advice for the current essay and do-able revision for future work.

- Hyland (1990) found conversational feedback more helpful than informal lines of instruction, while one word comments might fail to clarify what needs fixing. Examples suggested by Stump and Byrd include:

  ‘But why think it is true? There needs to be more argument supporting it.’
  ‘I’m not convinced. For consider that… <objection, counterexample>. How would you respond to this?’ (Stump, undated)
  ‘You’ve starting making a point, but you haven’t finished. What’s the upshot? Once you figure it out, signpost the upshot: “This means that …”’ (Byrd, 2017).

- Hyland & Hyland (2001) advise mitigating criticism to avoid a sense of confrontation. Tutors can pair criticism with praise, soften comments with ‘hedges’ (e.g. some, often, sometimes, a little, seems, I wonder), or use questions rather than statements. However, mitigation can lead to miscommunication if students misinterpret comments, while comments formed as questions can result in disengagement if students feel corrections are too much work (Stump, undated).

Discussion

Feedback designed to encourage improvement is more complex than pointing out errors, requiring careful thought. Prescriptive assessment can stifle students’ own styles, result in work that is more teachers’ than students’ and circumvent the thinking required by students to facilitate real progress. Students are more likely to address problems between drafts than from one essay to the next, but the quality of feedback

and review are closely interlinked. Feedback viewed as confrontational poses a challenge in philosophy because teachers are potentially assessing students' own views. However, as in-depth argumentation presupposes self-evaluation (Adler, 2004), avoidance of critique in the guise of saving students' feelings risks being counter-productive. Stump (undated) and Byrd (2017) give useful examples for engaging students in further thought and debate, with Byrd providing a useful summary of common errors (Appendix 3). Students who enjoy the back-and-forth of philosophical argument might engage with them, but lower ability students or those focused on 'getting the grade' may resist the extra work.

b) Post-Marking Redrafts

To improve writing skills students must rewrite their essays (Eflin, 2004, p. 41; Covill, 2010). Redrafting means changing text during the writing process (Butler & Britt, 2011), aimed at improving both surface level errors (spelling, grammar, etc.) and deeper structural problems (layout, linking elements of argumentation, etc.). Butler & Britt distinguish between revision, where writers make 'local modifications' and redrafting, where 'both the plan for text as well as the text itself' are modified (p. 72). More experienced writers make a larger percentage of global revisions (Covill, 2010), which affect meaning and include 'deleting, adding, moving, or changing information across larger sections of the text' (p. 73). Post-marking redrafting occurs after teachers mark and return a first draft for review and resubmission (McDonough, 2000). An advantage is that students receive feedback from experienced readers who can identify problems at argumentation level (*ibid.*). This allows students to learn from their mistakes, but still requires active response (Hyland, 1990). Feedback on draft essays tends to be more critical, aimed at promoting development and revision, while feedback on final essays is more general, summative of successes and weaknesses (Hyland & Hyland, 2001). Students must be actively trained and encouraged to apply feedback to redrafts to ensure it is understood; to check the quality of review, work should ideally be remarked (Hyland, 1998).

Teaching and Support Strategies

- Butler & Britt (2011, p. 79) recommend students are explicitly taught skills of global revision, including revision at different levels (e.g. 'paragraph to whole, sentence to paragraph, the whole including organization, focus, coherence'). They point out that global revision can be hampered by processing and memory limitations. Novice writers should be taught in bite-size chunks to help them develop the ability to keep larger portions of text cognitively available.

- Argument mapping (Horn, 2000; Macagno *et al.*, 2006; Cassidy, 2007; Harrell, 2008; Hutchinson & Loughlin, 2009) can help students maintain a mental presentation of what has been written, allowing them to compare this with the goals of their text (Covill, 2010). Students are instructed to assess 'the relationships of the smaller parts to the whole' before examining paragraphs and how sentences function within each paragraph (Butler & Britt, 2011, p. 79).

Discussion

It is assumed students know how to respond adequately to feedback comments. In philosophy, strategic redrafting that '[brings] the text closer to the goals that the author has' (Covill, 2010, p. 203) is important because both essay content and structure may need redrafting in order to strengthen their arguments. An argument's strength can only be judged 'in light of how the argument functions within the larger context it serves' (Gleason, 1999, p. 84). Lin, Liu & Yuan (2001) identified differences in post-feedback performance of high and low ability students; low ability students performed better after receiving specific feedback as opposed to holistic feedback, but high ability students outperform their lower ability counterparts after both specific and holistic feedback. This suggests differences in students' ability to respond to feedback and differences in the impact of that response. Although planning, drafting and revision can assist in developing cohesion, Horowitz (1986) points out that revision is not possible in examinations.

c) Common Errors

No literature was found referring specifically to common errors as these are usually highlighted through teacher feedback, students' self-assessment and review and students' independent working strategies. Although the omission of elements such as exegesis of theory, examples, analysis, etc. can recur as common errors, problems with argumentative writing tend to focus more around how material is used rather than what is included or excluded.

Teaching and Support Strategies

- Some textbooks provide checklists for students' use during self-review (Vaughn, 2006):

  - paragraphs dealing with more than one topic;
  - repeated material;
  - paragraphs that do not relate back to theses and questions;
  - premises that do not relate to conclusions;
  - sections that are confused or unclear;
  - common fallacies, e.g. broad, sweeping statements or assertions.

- Byrd's key (2017) to assist with grading papers (Appendix 3) can be used as a list of common errors. These lists can be formulated using language similar to that used in lessons to help students make connections between examples discussed and those identified in their own work.

- Students could be encouraged to create lists from written feedback. This requires engagement with the errors (Hyland, 1990) and can be checked by teachers.

Discussion

Common errors are implicitly highlighted through teacher feedback. The term 'implicitly highlighted' may appear contradictory, but emphasises that teachers may assume repeated feedback on an error will highlight this to students. This leaves the responsibility for identifying and flagging up errors with teachers. However, while lists of common errors might encourage self-review, this relies on students utilising them and understanding and recognising errors described. Using similar lists for reading

texts, self- and peer- review and teacher feedback may help students identify, avoid and correct these errors. Nonetheless, a distinction must again be made between identifying errors and knowing how to correct these at both local and global levels (Covill, 2010; Butler & Britt, 2011).

Students' Independent Work Strategies

As the research project developed, questions arose concerning students' independent work. The review sought strategies to encourage and develop students' independent reading and writing as well as self-review prior to teachers' written feedback. It also sought strategies to encourage and develop students' independent revision and preparation for examinations.

a) Independent Reading and Work

Philosophy textbooks are designed to be 'self-sufficient', encouraging students to help themselves develop skills needed (Burns & Law, 2004; Martinich, 2005: Vaughn, 2006; Warburton, 2006; Lacewing, 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Butler *et al.*, 2008, 2009; Baron & Poxon, 2012; Hayward, Jones & Cardinal, 2014). Time in the classroom is limited and students need to utilise advice given in order to develop greater independence in their work. Wider reading encourages them to think through ideas and develop their thinking (Cahn, 2004a; Gosnell, 2012), and problems occur if students rely too heavily on teacher input. Encouraging students to read independently is difficult if they fail to see its relevance, have insufficient time to grapple with difficult terminology or arguments (Cahn, 2004a), or if analysis and understanding of articles prove challenging (McDonough, 2000; Figdor, 2004; Morrissey & Palghat, 2014). Furthermore, reading required in philosophy differs from that encountered in other subjects, requiring specific training (Gosnell, 2012).

Philosophical reading cannot be rushed (Vaughn, 2006). Ideas and arguments are complex and nuanced, relying on a web of understanding (Hayward, Jones & Cardinal 2014; Vaughn, 2006), and students may find their usual skimming ineffective (Morrissey & Palghat, 2014). Students can be taught to recognise and utilise a range of

fixed forms (Andrews, 1995), but transferability between arguments is not guaranteed unless these are set out in formats students have grasped (Finocchiaro, 1980). An understanding of rival theories deepens their understanding but requires slow, repeated readings as well as a return to arguments studied in earlier sections, allowing them to make connections between views (Lacewing, 2010a, 2010b). A challenge for teachers is to 'arrest the students' normal pattern of reading, which is fairly smooth and rapid' (Adler, 2004, p. 38) and can result in students missing interrelationships between ideas. For example, they might 'fail to account for a previous statement' in the reading, thereby misinterpreting the meaning of subsequent statements (Gosnell, 2012, p. 20).

Wider reading can sometimes, however, undermine students' confidence in their own views or ability to judge others' views (Adler, 2004); they feel unable to produce the same standard as that encountered in readings. They may arrive without the 'logical and conceptual dexterity' needed to develop and structure thesis-defending argumentation, or lack the willingness to submit to the process of developing these skills (McGhee, 2009, p. 26). Other factors affecting progress include 'background knowledge, reasoning skills, powers of concentration, and interest in the subject' (Cahn, 2004b, p. 26), all of which take time and effort to develop.

Teaching and Support Strategies

- Substantial pre-training through a graduated approach from non-traditional writing towards harder reading (Garver 2004) can prepare students to engage with more challenging texts. This approach takes time from demands of the syllabus, but frees up time later in the course if students are encouraged to read independently.

- Morrissey & Palghat (2014) propose a three-pronged approach to encouraging students to read.

    - Tutors provide annotated samples of readings to demonstrate active reading.
    - Students generate their own annotated copies of set readings, responding to questions aimed at assessing understanding.
    - Students contribute ideas onto a shared document.

Technology allows students' contributions without them being in the same place, but is most successful when students use reading to answer set questions.

- Collaborative reading, together with 'an active, questioning peer' helps promote students' learning (Bosley & Jacobs, 1992, p. 20), but may require pre-training and commitment from more advanced students.

- Hayward, Jones & Cardinal (2014) advocated teaching students to focus on the context of the argument. Active, critical reading could identify conclusions before looking for premises (Vaughn, 2006), augmented by setting evaluative questions (Adler, 2004; Possin, 2008). Students' responses to these questions test understanding, saving time from working through entire texts with students.

- Colter and Ulatowski (2015) reference Plato's Meno (Waterfield, 2005) to explore ways to help students move from novice to competence in argumentation(Table (2.1). A similar approach can be used to induct students into more complex philosophical texts.

Table 2.1: Moving Students from Novice to Competence (Waterfield, 2005)

Insights:	**Strategies:**
Students initially require rigorous guidance/ tutoring in language and background information to access material.	Teachers provide contextual and background material.
Scaffolding should be incremental with students utilising learning to progress and assume greater responsibility and autonomy.	A graduated approach: a. Teachers do what students cannot do. b. Students do with teachers what they cannot do on their own. c. Students take over parts of tasks they can do on their own. d. Students become consciously able to complete full tasks on their own.

'Controlled failing' (Concepción, 2014) makes students more aware of their failings, making them more receptive to guidance.	Concepts and skills are set slightly above students' abilities. Students attempt tasks on their own, with teachers' feedback providing guidance for reviewed attempts.
Repetition is needed before teachers fully fade, with students achieving full competence and transferability of skills.	Repeated tasks allow graduated independence.

Discussion

The demands of the syllabus make reading in lessons difficult, but if it leads to students doing more independent reading, this will benefit both teachers and students. If students expect all reading to be repeated or gone through with the teacher, they may rely too heavily on additional support in lessons. If students find reading easier in other subjects, or if they can achieve higher grades in those subjects without reading, it is understandable they may seek ways around tasks they find difficult and time consuming. While college and university tutors can assign portions of final grades to reading exercises (Farmer, 2003), extra work completed at A-Level remains 'weightless'; students know only the final examinations 'count'. Therefore, other strategies balancing time restraints in lessons and students' time outside of lesson are needed to persuade them of the value of extra reading. While the examples above focus on improving students' ability in reading, challenges remain around time pressures and managing students' motivation for the task.

b) Self-Assessment and Pre-Marking Review

Self-review refers to students checking their work before submission while self-assessment means their ability to judge the quality of their writing. It is not always obvious, though, that these tasks should entail editing and redrafting, both of which are vital for production of quality essays and development of writing skills in general

(Vaugh, 2006; Possin, 2008). Beach (1979, p. 118) found self-reviewed work did not rate as highly as teacher reviewed work because students 'had difficulty in identifying their overall intention, strengths and weaknesses, or necessary changes'. Students must practise these to develop written argumentation (McDonough, 2000) but they do not routinely review their work 'at an optimal level' (Butler & Britt, 2011), which may entail 'clarification in argument and more research' (Thomas, 2011, p. 32). They do not know how to, they do not recognise how strong argumentation should be structured (Covill, 2010; Butler & Britt, 2011) or they fail to notice good and poor elements of argumentation within their own work (Thomas, 2011). Self-review requires application of advice received in lessons and marking feedback to the task of self-assessment, presupposing transferability of skills from one essay to another.

Teaching and Support Strategies

- Baron & Poxon's 'Essay Rescue Remedy' (2012, p. 91) makes it clear that reviewing and redrafting essays is essential to ensure quality (Appendix 4). Reviewing checks elements of argumentation (e.g. 'argument', 'objection', 'responses', 'signposting'), but includes editing processes (e.g. 'rewrite', 'improve', 'remove', 'cut out'). This provides students with tools to enable self-help, but relies on them identifying good and poor writing, and being sufficiently motivated and resilient to apply self-help.

- Vaugh (2006) suggests a minimum of first and final drafts, emphasising the need to begin writing early enough to allow downtime between drafts so that writing can be considered through fresh eyes. Peer-review of redrafts can encourage this practice and establish accountability as students must prepare initial drafts before final due dates and work and corrections become more public (Rieber, 2006). It can also provide a double-edged benefit whereby students get support from others to ensure they accurately understand corrections needed, while learning from each other's mistakes and reviews (Hyland 1990).

- Skills required for self-review can be fostered through peer review whereby students provide formative evaluations of each other's work, helping each other develop evaluative and critical thinking skills (Rieber, 2006). Students might exchange drafts and comment on each other's work under general headings

(McDonough, 2000) or read each other's papers before explaining, as clearly as possible and without any evaluation, what the person has written (Eflin, 2004). The writer hears how their paper has been understood, with leaps or inconsistencies in argument highlighted during report back.

- Possin (2008) and Harvey (2008) advocate systems that move from assessing samples of good argumentation to peer- and self- assessment. Possin requires students to hand in self-assessment tasks with their essays, while Harvey's system includes presentations of revised sections of work. Students are therefore encouraged to read with the goal of error detection, changing the task from comprehension to problem-solving, focused on detecting, fixing, and improving (Butler & Britt, 2011).

- Johns (1986) encourages students to draft and redraft essays quickly, with classes completing group editing tasks over three lessons. Actively working with students as they respond to marking feedback can help students realise benefits of reviewing their own work (Hyland, 1990). However, these strategies rely on students completing tasks at home and assume transferability of review skills between essays.

- Farmer (2003) ensures students are aware of marking criteria by giving them the grading grid prior to their first draft. She expects them to 'consult the explanations before, while and after they write their essays' (p. 127). However, if students have not developed a degree of independence and self-motivation, this careful consultation and revisiting of the criteria will not occur.

Discussion

Peer-assessment requires cognitive activity that is missing from post-marking review (Lin, Liu & Yuan, 2001). 'Peer-review' often stops at the point where students critique each other's work (Rieber, 2006; Wilson, 2006; Badger, 2010; Barnard, de Luca & Li, 2015), failing to address quality and success in students' redrafted work. Covill (2010) found a limited number of exercises in peer- and self- review had little effect on students' progress. She argues students need ongoing practise and clearly articulated instructions to embed and internalise 'relevant, general goals for writing' (p. 218). Training can take up large portions of lesson time and requires students to submit initial

drafts in time to avoid frustrations where some students complete drafts and others do not. College and university tutors can again impose accountability by awarding part of the marks for self- or peer-review, but this is again a strategy not afforded at A-Level where all marks are awarded to the final examination.

c) Revision and Preparation for Examinations

Students tend to understand revision as memorisation of factual content. However, philosophy 'has no intrinsic factual content comparable to that found in other disciplines' (Figdor, 2004, p. 49), as the factual content is drawn from other subjects. What makes philosophy uniquely difficult is the 'concept of one thing being a reason for something else' (*ibid.*, p. 49). This means students must practise philosophical argumentation (Hutchinson & Loughlin, 2009) as part of revision and preparation for examinations. Thorough revision should include learning information and practising its application in examination questions (Burns & Law, 2004; Lacewing, 2008, 2010a, 2010b, Butler *et al.*, 2008, 2009). Students need to think about how judgements on various arguments add up in order to assess and evaluate the strength of pros and cons (Vaughn, 2006).

Teaching and Support Strategies

- Advice found in textbooks (Lacewing 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Butler *et al.*, 2008, 2009) recognises both memorisation and practical aspects of revision:

  - Learn arguments thoroughly – summarise main claims of arguments and explain how they work and how/ why premises support conclusions.
  - Construct a glossary of key theories and concepts.
  - Construct examples to illustrate particular strengths or weaknesses – practise applying them to different arguments and issues.
  - Practise constructing introductions and conclusions to develop familiarity with language used.
  - Think through philosophers' defences of their positions – practise describing and evaluating theories.

- Construct notes to highlight comparisons between approaches – use structured outlines or web-diagrams to organise information and explore questions around topics or issues.
- Practise arguing for and against particular views – memorise essay outlines.

Discussion

The advice emphasises both thinking through and clarifying students' understanding of content and the need to practise skills required for argumentation, thus highlighting the practical aspect of philosophy (Hutchinson & Loughlin, 2009). Emphasis on students constructing their own notes, examples, etc. supports the view that students must understand the material and how parts work together to defend or refute different positions held. The term 'practise' suggests these skills should already be acquired, meaning they should have been taught and developed as part of the syllabus, but equally that continuing practise is required to produce proficiency under examination conditions.

2.4.2 Development of Written Argumentation

Although philosophy essays may adopt a range of structures, inexperienced writers can find the choice 'tortured or seemingly impossible' (Martinich, 2005, p. 1). Essays require 'engagement with, and understanding of, arguments and ideas' (Saunders, *et al.*, 2007, p. 108). However, they also require the defence of writers' views, showing readers that the 'view is worthy of acceptance by offering reasons that support it' (Vaughn, 2006, p. 55). It is 'not a spectator sport' but involves 'learning to philosophise' (Warburton, 2004, p. 3). This part of the literature review explores challenges faced by novice writers and strategies employed by teachers to help students develop required skills.

Introductions, Theses and Conclusions

Introductions, theses and conclusions should drive argumentative essays, signposting students' positions and material selected to develop their arguments. As this differs

from essay styles encountered at GCSE level and many other subjects, the review of literature sought to explore and develop strategies to teach the skill.

a) Introductions and Theses

Introductions might define key terms, explain their relevance to questions, set out essay plans and provide background information for theses (Vaughn, 2006). They must engage 'immediately and critically' with questions (Warburton, 2006, p. 41) and steer readers towards theses being defended (Johns, 1986; Baron & Poxon, 2012). Defending a thesis means taking a view on the question, and requires 'thinking things through' and 'understanding claims and the reasons behind them' (Vaughn, 2006, p. 55). Students struggling to engage with the confronting nature of the subject (Hutchinson & Loughlin, 2009, p. 43) often revert to writing summaries of information presented in lessons and textbooks, reporting ideas of others rather than utilising extended reading to support and defend their own views. There should be movement from learning what philosophers and peers think while defending their own views towards justifying their ideas while considering and assessing ideas of others (Mitchell, 1994, p. 7). In the first instance students keenly defend and protect their own ideas, often leading to debate lacking penetrating, rational assessment, and resulting in strong but unjustified assertions. The second position differs from the first as students feel more able to consider others' views, allowing evaluation of those views to develop their thinking, thereby 'following the argument wherever it may lead' (Plato, cited in Flew, 2007, p. 22).

Teaching and Support Strategies

- Students may have clear views on issues being discussed but struggle to articulate views on arguments around these issues. Farmer (2003, p. 128), recognising the limited understanding students have concerning elements of argumentation, provides examples, e.g. 'what is and what is not a thesis'. Metaphor can help students engage more actively and creatively with philosophical ideas by creating links between the familiar and unknown and helping students see the familiar in new ways (Vassilopoulou, 2009). Johns (1986) advocates giving less experienced students an explicit thesis to guide their work.

- Teachers may begin by explicitly appealing to students' beliefs and views (Andrews, 1995; Adler, 2004). Baron & Poxon (2012) suggest rewording questions to contain students' names to help elicit responses to their view on particular problems.

- Fishman (1989) uses free-writing to activate students' thinking on topics. Students are then encouraged to consider how philosophers might support or challenge these views, together with possible responses.

Discussion

Teaching students to write clear introductions and teaching them to defend their theses are different prospects. It creates difficulties when students expect explicit instructions on what to include, resulting in arguments 'regurgitated without thought' (Howie, 2009, p. 15). They may struggle supporting their opinions, or feel they lack views to put forward (Fishman, 1989). Difficulties also arise when trying to encourage a range of views and creativity within the discipline of good argumentation (Lone & Green, 2013).

b) Essay Conclusions

Reiteration of theses and summaries of arguments (Martinich, 2005; Vaughn, 2006) are easier to include as students can look back at their work to pick these out. Self-evaluation, calls to action or suggestions on taking arguments forward (*ibid.*) are more problematic as these require clearer understanding of arguments made. Weak conclusions might be tangential to original questions, might present answers that do not match questions (e.g. evaluating two theories instead of distinguishing between them), or fail to give clear, reasoned opinions (Baron & Poxon, 2012, p. 37). Stronger conclusions might restate the thesis with qualifications (e.g. 'however', 'similarly'), introducing elements of analysis to clarify the working of questions through the essay (Baron & Poxon, 2012). The literature revealed few strategies for teaching students to write conclusions beyond advice on what to include.

Teaching and Support Strategies

- Vaughn (2006, p. 60) provides a range of possible conclusions:

  a) reiteration of the thesis, explaining its importance (also, Martinich, 2005, p. 53);
  b) a 'call to action', outlining convincing perspectives on issues or discussing further implications;
  c) a summary of the argument, useful when arguments are complex.

- Saunders *et al.* (2007, p. 115) confirm these points, but add extra advice:

  a) conclusions should not add anything new and should summarise without repetition;

  b) they can suggest ways in which the argument could be taken forward (also, Martinich, 2005, p. 53).

Discussion

Students frequently consider conclusions only at the end of the writing process, failing to recognise their connection to the theses. There is a difference between summarising an essay's points and summarising the crux of the argument. Ensuring conclusions link to theses and arguments requires consideration at the planning stage. Reviewing and redrafting should also include ensuring conclusions match students' arguments. If students are unclear about their theses, or if their redrafting skills remain at surface level, they may struggle to apply the advice given above.

Knowledge and Understanding of Theories

Depth of analysis is built on depth of knowledge and understanding, which must be explicated to provide material for analysis and assessment. However, a balance must be maintained between adding in detail and avoiding the production of descriptive essays that merely outline the views of others. This section explored strategies aimed at helping students develop and apply sufficient detail in their descriptions.

a) Philosophers and Themes

Argumentative essays must demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of topics studied (Lacewing, 2008, 2010a, 2010b), with close reference to what philosophers have actually said (Baron & Poxon, 2012). The A-Level examiners' report (AQA, 2010c, p. 3) stated that 'there were candidates who would have benefited from a detailed reading of the text itself rather than relying on notes about the text'. A distinction is needed between students' ability to grasp concepts and arguments, to understand connections between competing ideas and positions and to produce a coherent, written discussion that explains and assesses connections and their implications (Vassilopoulou, 2009). Digiovanna (2014, p. 322) distinguishes four marks of understanding, which can only be developed as students practise using philosophers' claims and arguments in their work:

- being able to rephrase claims accurately;
- showing how claims relate to other claims;
- using claims within reasoning processes, following the implications to produce new claims;
- applying claims predictively, counterfactually, or in order to explain or make new claims.

Teaching and Support Strategies

- Cahn (2004a) suggests providing students with, and constantly reminding them of, historical contexts and links between works studied as a means of facilitating understanding of the threads of meaning between different positions.

- Diagrams or argument maps can help students understand and recall arguments (Horn, 2000; Macagno *et al.*, 2006; Harrell, 2008; Hutchinson & Loughlin, 2009). They can also help students visualise how philosophers have used premises or themes to build their positions. Drawing on a range of 'analogies, and representations of core ideas' (Cassidy, 2007, p. 300) allows diversely talented students to access and recall philosophical arguments accurately.

- Malone-France (2008, p. 65) advocates 'gradualistic writing-intensive' exercises, beginning with short responses to readings, proceeding towards more

sophisticated analytical argumentation. This supports understanding of the requirements of philosophical writing and encourages acquisition of necessary skills incrementally, rather than struggling simultaneously with large amounts of material and new skills.

Discussion

The three strategies together can improve detail in students understanding of philosophical theory and foster more detailed and accurate expositions of theories. The advice here could also be adopted below, where a graduated approach from small portions of writing to larger essays can help train students in the depth of detail required. However, students must remember that accurate recall and clear exposition of theories do not constitute argumentation. Training in utilising material to add greater depth and clarity to analysis and discussion is needed to ensure material is contributed and used critically.

b) Depth and Detail

In philosophy students need to identify and outline arguments, which may not be the same as outlining original text. They must paraphrase, summarise and work with arguments studied, ensure the meaning of the original is not changed (Vaughn, 2006), but avoid mimicking the original too closely as this can mask lack of understanding. Students must judge how much detail to include in essays, summarising or cutting down superfluous detail but elucidating points where analysis and discussion is used as support or refutation within their arguments (Vassilopoulou, 2009). Very little literature was found on teaching students to balance summary and exposition in written argumentation.

Teaching and Support Strategies

- Encouraging students to work together can help them add depth and detail to their ideas (Bosley & Jacobs, 1992). Small group assignments should be sufficiently:

  - complex to require contribution from several people;
  - structured to facilitate group contribution to final assignments;

- flexible to allow self-organisation within groups.

Where students work collaboratively through reading, planning and writing of the assignments, they often produce papers that are 'more complete, and more complex' (*ibid*., p. 25).

- Harrelson (2012, p. 132) uses in-class exercises to 'inspire reflection and discussion' around essay questions. Advantages include the development of vocabulary around topics being discussed together with a 'set of distinctions, drawn from their own experiences, with which to assess' tensions within philosophical problems discussed.

Discussion

The suggested strategies can improve understanding of theories studied and/ or development of students' views. Greater understanding facilitates the inclusion of more detail within written argumentation, but does not necessarily ensure students understand the balance of detail required. Generating students' personal links to topics studied can help them write with conviction as opposed to summarising in a purely academic fashion, trying to judge how much is 'enough'. Although collaborative work can encourage depth and precision in essays (Bosley & Jacobs, 1992), progress could result from a more complex combination of peer-tutoring, group discussions, peer-review and redrafting. Explicit tutoring across strategies can augment group work, facilitating modelling of techniques from more able students. Students must, though, be able to transfer achievements in group work into individual essays.

c) Synoptic Element

Howie (2009) argues that the introduction of modular approaches has contributed to students passively acquiring disconnected parcels of knowledge. The A2-Level specification (AQA, 2007, p. 19) makes clear expectations that students will demonstrate awareness of synoptic elements between topics. Students need to:

- 'draw on, develop and apply material from both the AS and A2 modules';

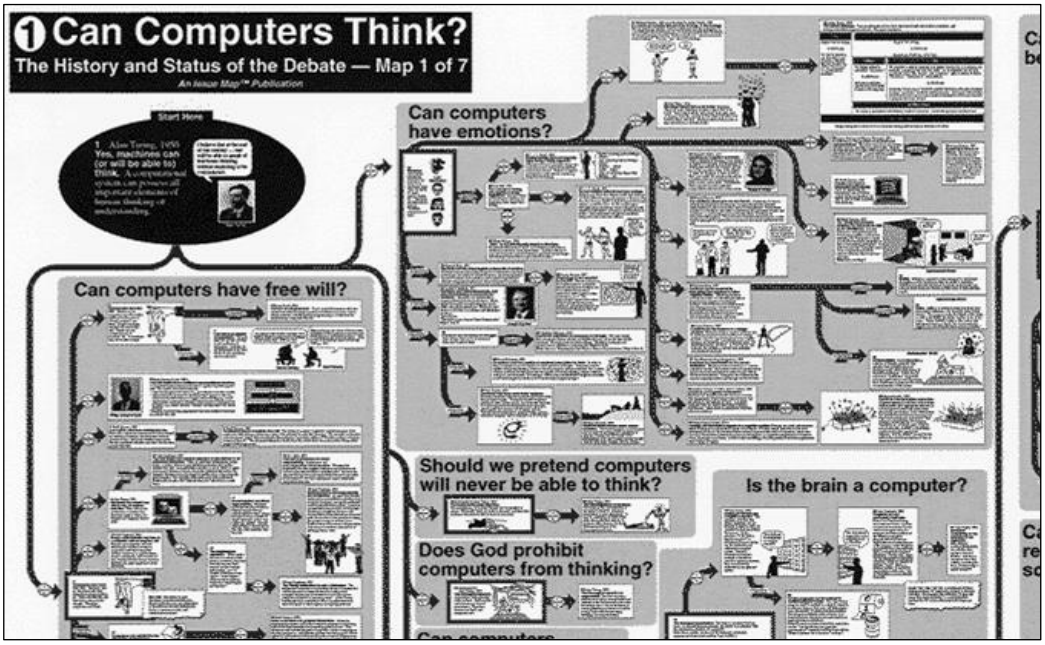
- incorporate themes introduced at AS-Level into responses, demonstrating ‘deeper critical awareness’ and ‘more conceptually sophisticated discussion’;
- ‘ensure that the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired in all units are integrated and coherent’.

Students often understand arguments in isolation but struggle to see ‘how all the arguments fit together’ (Howie, 2009). In A-Level Philosophy courses this can be exacerbated if different teachers deliver different parts of the syllabus, or where students create a mental divide between topics studied at AS-level and A2-Level. The literature review found little discussion on teaching students to include this synoptic aspect in their writing.

Teaching and Support Strategies

- Horn (2000), building on Toulmin (1958), suggests using argumentation maps to help students understand wider contexts of different arguments (Image 2.8).

Image 2.8: Sample of Debate Presented in an Argument Map (Horn, 2000)



- The A2-Level textbooks (Lacewing, 2010a, 2010b) signpost synoptic links (Image 2.9), presupposing students will incorporate these in their notes and essays.

Image 2.9: Sample of Synoptic Links in Text Book (Lacewing, 2010a)

The Republic, Book V 476f. See THE THEORY OF THE FORMS: METAPHYSICAL IMPLICATIONS, p. 58.

Realism: the referents of general terms exist

Plato and realism

Plato argued that since more than one thing can be beautiful, beauty is a property beautiful things share in common. Beauty manifests itself in all the different things, in all the different ways, we call 'beautiful'. But beauty itself is not a particular thing, and Plato argued that it must be something distinct from particular things. For instance, all particular beautiful things could also be destroyed, yet that would not destroy beauty itself. Universals, therefore, exist independently of particulars, outside space, time and the changing world of sense experience.

While many realists about universals don't accept Plato's arguments or his claim that they exist completely independently of particular things, they do accept two points:

1. 'one-over-many': universals are general, so that many particulars can exhibit the same universal;
2. 'instantiation': what the particulars have in common is the universal – what makes all the things that are whales whales is the property of 'being a whale'; what the universal explains, is, what they have in common.

Discussion

Horn's sample (2000) represents 380 authors and over 800 argument moves, much more than would be required for A-Level Philosophy. Also, this sample demonstrates debate around one question. Demonstrating synoptic links between several different modules on the course would be difficult to do in this detail, but simplified versions could help students see links more clearly. Links provided in textbooks are useful but I question whether students understand overarching links or whether they would merely match up sections of the syllabus in a haphazard way. Mind mapping has the advantage of focusing students' attention on the 'subtlety and complexity of the issues' studied (Horn, 2000, p. 4). It provides visible structure of contexts for different arguments and might help students situate their own ideas within larger debates. However, the creation of mind maps is very time-consuming, with recent rapid changes to the A-Level syllabus raising questions for the sustainability of this method.

Analysis and Evaluation

Analysis and evaluation of theories relies on clear explication, addressed in the previous section. There is, however, an overlap in terms of providing 'detail'. Students must be able to unpick and explore theories used to build their argumentation. This section

begins with review into strategies used to develop students' critical use of examples, as my analysis of students' work demonstrated particular difficulties here. It then discusses strategies employed to develop analysis, application and evaluation of material selected. The section includes discussion of strategies to help students develop their use of language and links to demonstrate the relevance of material and argumentation employed.

a) Examples

Premises or claims put forward in argumentative essays must be supported with evidence or examples. Lack of examples can result from poor background knowledge or students' 'difficulty in synthesizing disparate pieces of information' (Gleason, 1999, p. 89). Examples and evidence must not only be included, but must be kept short and used critically (Warburton, 2006; Lacewing, 2008, 2010a, 2010b). These can illustrate or explore the soundness of points made (Baron & Poxon, 2012), illustrate particular strengths or weaknesses in arguments discussed or put forward (Butler *et al.*, 2008, 2009), or support conclusions that proposed answers to questions are the best ones. Strategies found were mainly in the form of initial essay writing instructions, such as those found in textbooks, and reminders through marking feedback.

Teaching and Support Strategies

- Teachers can augment theory teaching with examples and stories of practical applications to back up content (Hutchinson & Loughlin, 2009).
- Harrelson's use of narrative assignments (2012, p. 132), where pre-sessions are used to discuss and develop ideas, provides a range of examples that can be analysed in class sessions.

Discussion

Where time is limited, the number of sessions that can be used to generate and discuss ideas and examples will also be limited. These may have to be explored alongside the teaching of theory; however, care is needed to ensure discussion of practical evidence and examples does not take lessons off track. Teachers would also need to emphasise

that these are ‘examples’ that students can use in their own essays, while continually reminding them that examples must be used critically.

b) Analysis and Application

Analysis means looking more closely at the construction of arguments, identifying the conclusions of arguments and isolating premises (Vaughn, 2006). Greater familiarity with texts allows sharper analysis of arguments put forward (White & Chern, 2004). Extended texts might contain chains of argumentation over several paragraphs (Kneupper, 1978, p. 239) which could be difficult to follow. As well as following arguments, student must remain alert to fallacies such as restricting options, slippery slope, confusing analytic and synthetic propositions or correlation with causation, circular arguments and generalising the particular (Baron & Poxon, 2012). However, students may need large amounts of knowledge to fully follow how concepts are used and to engage with key points in arguments (Adler 2004).

Teaching and Support Strategies

- Gosnell (2012) asks students to carefully read and deconstruct text in order to select three quotes which most closely represent the argument. Providing reading guidance also helps students read actively and analytically (Hayward, Jones & Cardinal, 2014, p. 362). This includes:

  - number (in the margins) the main points being made;
  - identify and label signposting to break extracts into chunks;
  - draw out ideas in diagrammatical form (perhaps a mind-map);
  - re-order chunks into a logical order;
  - rewrite chunks of the argument into their own words.

  Argument maps, both computerised and hand-drawn, can help students ‘see’ essay structures (Twardy, 2004; Rowe, *et al*, 2006; Harrell, 2005, 2008). Below are two simple examples (Images 2.10, 2.11) demonstrating how argument maps break down arguments and show links between premises or chunks of writing used to support premises. Models can be extended to show additional warrants or unstated/ implied warrants or qualifiers (Reed & Rowe, 2005).

Image 2.10: Toulmin's Example of an Argument Map (Toulmin, 1958, p. 104)

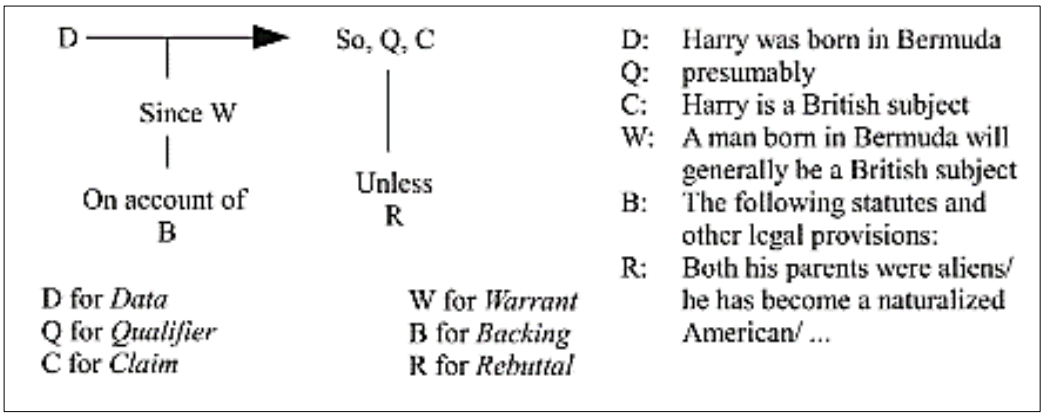
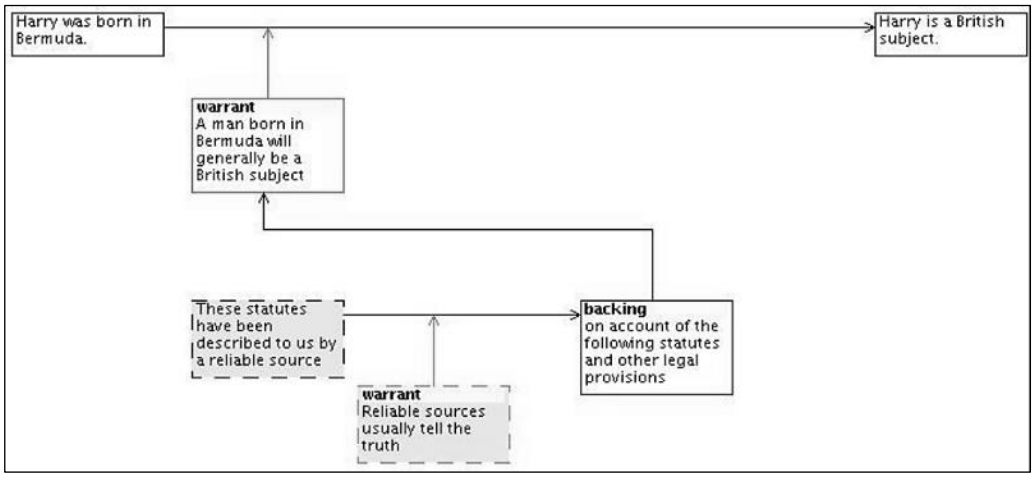


Image 2.11: Extension of Toulmin's Argument Map (Reed & Rowe, 2005, p. 378)



- Baron & Poxon (2012, p. 39-40) use questioning to guide students' thinking towards links that join chunks of argumentation:

  - What is the central/ starting point?
  - What is the final point of the thesis?
  - What is the relationship between the different assumptions in the theory?
  - How does the philosopher move from their premises/ assumptions to their conclusion?
  - Do some assumptions lead from or rely on other assumptions?

- Baron & Poxon (2012) use Lego blocks to create tactile analysis of arguments. One colour block represents each key idea of the argument while a second colour represents examples used by the philosopher. A third colour could include ideas scholars make that are not directly relevant to their arguments. Students are asked

to link blocks in such a way as to demonstrate how each part relates to other parts of the argument. Students' reasoning can be tested when they explain how their Lego structures represent arguments.

- White & Chern (2004) adopted a graduated approach to written assignments, with initial papers concentrating on exposition, and later papers introducing analysis and criticality. Only final papers required the defence or attack of particular positions.

Discussion

Students must work through the text in order to identify and begin to understand the content of the argument. This could be particularly difficult where students must isolate 'side trips to analyses, illustrations, explanation, digressions, and speculations' (Vaugh, 2009, p. 9). If students rely on teachers to deconstruct arguments, these exercises can help students see links between sections of text but will not necessarily teach them how to deconstruct arguments themselves. However, they can prove useful tools to quickly test students' understanding of arguments and can help develop the understanding that philosophical argumentation involves building and linking premises, warrants and guarantees.

c) Assessment and Evaluation

A wide range of approaches to questions is acceptable, but students must evaluate their own and others' claims based on reason and analysis (Lone & Green, 2013). They must consider and discuss possible objections to their theses and adjust claims if it appears that there are insufficient answers to objections (Vaughn, 2006). Students tend to rely on exegesis rather than critical argumentation (Cho & Jonassen, 2002; Baron & Poxon, 2012), but while exegesis is required for critical analysis, this element carries relatively little weight in the rubrics (Farmer 2003). Baron & Poxon (2012, p. 58) state that while middle to lower ability students produce essays with 'a sense of flow and purpose', their essays present different positions as a list, concluding with 'some fairly nondescript judgement'. Evaluation involves an informed judgement about whether arguments cohere by relating clearly to one another. Deductive arguments are valid if conclusions

follows from premises, and sound if the argument is valid and the premises can be accepted as credible. Inductive arguments are judged to be 'strong' if the premises make the conclusion probable, and 'cogent' if the argument is strong and the premises convincing. The persuasiveness or credibility of an argument will be judged on the strength of evidence or logic provided (Vaugh, 2009, p. 28-30). When defending their view against acknowledged criticisms and critiquing others' views (Earl, 2015), students may struggle to consider different perspectives or they may experience difficulties structuring their essay in order to move back and forth between different points (Bosley & Jacobs, 1992). Developing criticisms and counter-arguments requires understanding of theories studied. Small exercises may help demonstrate the basic outline of point-criticism-response (Earl, 2015), but students must then transfer the process into longer essays.

Teaching and Support Strategies

- Teachers use a range of games to help students engage in the back-and-forth aspect of argumentation. Baron & Poxon (2012) use Jenga towers built to represent premises supporting an argument. Students take turns removing blocks from the towers, discussing strengths and weaknesses of assumptions surrounding premises. If other students can defend the assumptions, blocks can be replaced. The objective is to show students that arguments can be attacked by attacking base assumptions, and rebuilt if premises' assumptions are strengthened or adjusted.

- Students play a form of 'in-door tennis' where strengths and weaknesses are metaphorically batted back and forth between students (Baron & Poxon, 2012). The objective is to encourage students to think up points made by different philosophers for and against particular views.

- Bosley & Jacobs (1992) encourage students to explore problems and counterviews through discussion and debates, which helps them co-produce more opponent positions. Skills can be developed in relation to topics outside the syllabus, focusing on understanding original claims, selection and analysis of points to support or refute these claims and develop clear positions in relation to the reasonableness of the claims (Butler *et al.*, 2008, 2009).

- These exercises can be used in paired written exercises (Baron & Poxon, 2012):

  (1) Student A outlines the original argument, bringing in some criticisms.
  (2) Student B responds to student A's evaluation with a critical comparison, clarifying which arguments are strong or weak.
  (3) Student A responds to student B's evaluation.

- Earl (2015, p. 53) suggests the 'four-sentence paper' to develop students' awareness and ability in providing objections and responses.

  (1) They say _____.
  (2) I say _____, because _____.
  (3) One might object that _____.
  (4) I reply that _____.

  Students practice framing their views in terms of objections and responses without requiring full essays which takes time for students to write and teachers to mark.

- Students can be given examples of good and poor critical reasoning (Farmer, 2003), augmented with simulated debates between philosophers (e.g. via podcasts), and by engaging students with debate through questions and forcing discussions (Hutchinson & Loughlin, 2009). The previous section described mind maps and games that can help students break down and analyse argument.

Discussion

The strategies found focus on helping students produce a range of points and counterpoint which are needed for criticality. There seems less emphasis on developing students' skills in structuring the back-and-forth movement between questions, their theses and different positions in their written work. Earl's four-sentence paper (2015) introduces the notion that points, responses and counter-responses must be used in defence and/or challenge of different views, but additional guidance would be needed to ensure students utilise language and links within paragraphs to achieve clarity of argumentation.

d) Relevance, Language and Links

Relevance involves selecting appropriate material to develop premises and linking discussions back to theses and questions to make clear students' positions (Vaughn, 2006). Johns (1986, pp. 248-250) distinguished between cohesion ('ties between sentences'), and register (the relationship 'among propositions … sticking to the point'). As A-Level students tend to limit themselves to material provided in the syllabus, difficulties more often involve ensuring logical links between components or avoiding repetitious or tangential components within their arguments (Earl, 2015). The analysis of abstract ideas in philosophy (Bosley & Jacobs, 1992) calls for 'advanced reasoning and language skills' (Lone & Green, 2013, p. 214) to enable students to articulate 'connections between words, concepts or images' (Vassilopoulou, 2009), which requires substantial training (Garver 2004). Qualifying and linking words (e.g. 'however', 'similarly') help keep their theses in mind, remind readers how paragraphs answer original questions, signal development of arguments or show when points contrast with previous points (Baron & Poxon, 2012).

Teaching and Support Strategies

- The demonstration of relevance and links requires a linguistic skills set. Garver (2004) suggests introducing students to these language skills through non-traditional philosophical reading. He suggests *Four Reasonable Men*, but for shorter articles the *Philosophy Today* magazine would suffice. Advantages include exposing students to concepts, language and skills required for advanced reading against a backdrop of 'a concrete person' (p. 6), but starting with language that is accessible to students.

- Demonstrating coherence goes beyond language used. Students must see how parts of their arguments work together. Johns (1986) helps students deconstruct questions before writing first drafts in order to develop theses around which to build and structure arguments. Review of work focuses on 'thesis development, relationships among assertions and to the thesis, and the adequacy of the information structure' (p. 252). Johns advocates working with students to revise one student's draft, followed by students revising their own work. This method, however, relies on students being able to transfer practised skills to their work.

- Cahill & Bloch-Schulman (2012) utilise a stepped approach to help students evaluate arguments for relevance. Using an argument diagram, they evaluate each premise, individually or conjunctively, for relevance and acceptability. Students can be trained to perform this exercise on their own and each other's essays.

- Cho & Jonassen (2002) utilise scaffolds to encourage students to frame argumentation around warrants. Constraint-based scaffolds 'impose different conversational ontologies onto the discussion', forcing students to think through grounds for their positions. This can encourage them to expound the steps of their arguments more carefully in their writing.

Discussion

The strategies outlined concentrate on introducing students to language required to explicate links and relevance in their writing and on helping them plan and review sections of essays against their theses and essay questions. Students can be taught to utilise lists of linking words, but unless they see the links between portions of their essays these can be applied in haphazard ways that fail to explicate the relevance of materials used. However, as problems just as frequently arise with students failing to make clear their thinking, training is vital to develop clarity in their writing. Progress in using links requires redrafting and practise in order to embed good writing habits.

2.5 Development of Research Questions

Following the first literature review into the theory of argumentation, the four broad research questions were developed to inform the first data collection and development phase (Table 2.2). However, as mentioned previously, ongoing review of literature into teaching strategies was conducted to inform developments of the research questions.

Table 2.2: First Development of Research Questions

OVER-ARCHING RESEARCH QUESTIONS	FIRST DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS
How do students and teachers define doing philosophy, with a focus on written argumentation?	1.1 What level of written argumentation does the examination rubric require? 1.2 Did marks for written argumentation change? 1.3 If so, what changed? 1.4 How do the expectations change at A2-Level?
What aspects of written argumentation do students and teachers find problematic and unproblematic?	1.5 What have students found more or less problematic in producing written argumentation?
What range of strategies do more and less successful students employ around developing written argumentation?	1.6 What strategies have students found more or less useful in producing written argumentation?
What range of strategies do teachers consider more and less successful for supporting students around developing written argumentation?	1.7 What have teachers found more or less useful in teaching written argumentation?

I turn in chapter 3 to present an account of the development of my research design and the attendant methodological and conceptual thinking that shaped it.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

> '… philosophy comes into existence when men [and women] are confronted with problems and contradictions which common sense and the special sciences are able neither to solve nor resolve.'
>
> (Dewey, 1884, p. 162)

3.1 Introduction

The Methodology Chapter briefly outlines the ontological and epistemological perspectives underpinning the subtle realist (Hammersley, 1992) and interpretivist (Yin, 2014) stances adopted in this study. It also explains the pragmatic, 'toolkit' approach posited by Ritchie *et al.* (2014, loc. 853) which was adopted to facilitate a flexible research design aimed at tracing, over a two-year period, development of written argumentation skills and responsive pedagogic strategies through accounts of the experiences and perspectives of the students and teachers (Robson, 2011) directly involved. A practitioner-research approach, utilising interventionist case study methodology, facilitated research into my own teaching practice and that of my colleague, Sarah, as well as the learning experiences of our students. The aim was to embed the design of the case study in the routine social processes and contexts of classroom teaching and learning, so that the realisation and development of the research design in practice shared much of the classroom's qualities of contingency, surprise, complexity and messiness (Mellor, 2001). One aim of practitioner-research is to interpret and understand reality (Heikkinen, de Jong & Vanderlinde, 2016, p. 4), requiring confidence and honesty from informants and accuracy of understanding and interpretation on the part of the researcher. This requires careful development of 'strategies through interview, student writing, or interpersonal activities that invites students to disclose their unique self-understanding' (Hauser & Thomas, 2012, p. 286). It also requires awareness and balancing of the practitioner-researcher's positioning. Although practitioner-research may be understood as taking an 'insider view' (Anderson & Herr, 1999), the relationship in this study between practitioner researcher, colleagues and students placed me partially as an insider in terms of studying my teaching experience, but remaining as an outsider when eliciting my colleague's and

students' experiences. These challenges and their effect on quality of data are considered in more detail in sections 3.5.3, 3.5.4 and 3.8 below. Practitioner-research has the advantage of allowing practitioners to notice and change practice where appropriate (Ollerton, 2008; Quezada, Lattimer& Spencer, 2012). Data collection and analysis is accompanied by continuous reflection that can affect ongoing change (Quezada, Lattimer& Spencer, 2012, p. 190). This is especially useful in a small case study where results are most applicable to individuals being studied at the time. Although the philosophical debates underlying my approach were not abandoned, the main methodological challenge remained the selection of methods that would allow for the emergent, iterative and longitudinal nature of the research questions (Seale, 1999; Ritchie *et al.*, 2014) while maintaining focus on the original questions, outlined in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Over-Arching Research Questions

OVER-ARCHING RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. How do students and teachers define doing philosophy, with a focus on written argumentation?
2. What aspects of written argumentation do students and teachers find problematic and unproblematic?
3. What range of strategies do more and less successful students employ around developing written argumentation?
4. What range of strategies do teachers consider more and less successful for supporting students around developing written argumentation?

Following Robson (2011, p. 131), the term 'flexible' was preferred to 'qualitative' as it was anticipated 'that the design [would] emerge and develop during data collection'. A flexible research design is 'inherently emergent, reflexive, and messy', meaning the original focus was kept as open as possible, allowing the design and data collection methods to emerge and evolve (Halse & Honey, 2010, p. 128) in response to the experiences of participants. A wide range of qualitative data collection methods over a

series of phases of development allowed an evolving data set based on students' and teachers' accounts. A combination of interview, observation and work scrutiny provided scope for students and teachers to reflect on these research questions, exploring what they understood by argumentation, how definitions of argumentation were iterated in the examination rubrics and what students and teachers found difficult or helpful in teaching and learning written argumentation. In Section 3.3.2 on research design a detailed explanation outlines the process of development which effected both the refining of research questions and trialling of teaching and learning strategies in response to initial analysis conducted at each phase. The strengths and risks of this iterative process are discussed in relation to the authenticity and trustworthiness of the findings.

3.2 Participant Profiles

Before outlining the methodological perspectives and research design, I briefly introduce the key informants of the study. My first degree was Bachelor of Theology, studied via distance learning. I initially worked as Head of Music in a private school in Zimbabwe, retraining in the UK via the Graduate Teacher Programme in Religious Education (RE) and Music. After completing my NQT year, I joined my current Academy in 2004 and started teaching A-Level Philosophy in 2005 while completing my MEd via distance learning. I also taught RE at KS3 and KS4 with the additional responsibility of Assistant Head of Year. My colleague, Sarah, joined the Academy as an NQT in 2007, having completed a Philosophy degree and teacher training through the PGCE Teacher Training Programme. Sarah taught Philosophy at A-Level and RE at KS3 and KS4. I was appointed as her NQT mentor, allowing a close working relationship. At the time of this project Sarah held the additional responsibility of Head of Year. We continued to work closely together, discussing student progress and sharing teaching strategies, allowing a natural transfer of collaboration to the research project.

Profiles for students involved in the study are summarised in Table 3.2. GCSE and A-Level results show their spread of ability, ranging from middle to higher ability. Three students studied similar subjects at A2-Level, possibly resulting in correlations between

their responses that were absent from Ruth's feedback. Extra-curricular activities, responsibilities and part-time employment are also shown as these possibly contributed towards reported difficulties with time management when balancing studies and school duties.

Table 3.2: Profiles for Student Informants

Pseudonym	**Gender and Age**	**Part Time Employment**	**Responsibilities/ Hobbies**	**GCSE Subjects**	**A Level Subjects**
John	Male 16 y 2 m	No	Head Boy	Additional Science (A*), English Language (A*), English Literature (A*), Geography (A*), History (A*), Mathematics (A*), Science (A*), RE Short Course (A*), Design & Technology (A), International GCSE English (A), French (B), ICT (Dist)	AS-Level: English Literature (A), History (A), Philosophy (A), General Studies (B), Physics (C) A2-Level: English Literature (A*), History (A*), Philosophy (A), General Studies (B)
Lydia	Female 16 y 6 m	Yes	Teaching Bursary Scheme Tae Kwon Do and Kick Boxing	Biology (A), English Literature (A), History (A), Physics (A), RE Short Course (A), Chemistry (B), Design & Technology (B), English Language (B), Psychology (B), French (C), Mathematics (C), ICT (Dist)	AS-Level: English Language (B), General Studies (C), History (C), Philosophy (C), Chemistry (U) A2-Level: English Language (B), General Studies (B), History (C), Philosophy (C)

Mary	Female 16 y 2 m	Yes	Volunteer – wildlife centre Karate Club Academy Choir	Additional Science (A), English Language (A), English Literature (A), French (A), Mathematics (A), Psychology (A), RE Short Course (A), Art & Design (B), Design & Technology (B), Science (B), ICT (Dist)	AS-Level: English Language (A), History (A), Art & Design (B), Philosophy (B), General Studies (C) A2-Level: History (A*), English Language (A), General Studies (B), Philosophy (B)
Ruth	Female 16 y 6 m	Yes	Senior House Captain Duke of Edinburgh Award World Challenge Piano, Speech and Drama Academy Choir	Additional Science (A*), English Literature (A*), Mathematics (A*), Psychology (A*), Science (A*), RE Short Course (A*), International GCSE English (A*), Design & Technology (A), English Language (A), History (A), Music (A), ICT (Dist)	AS-Level: Psychology (A), Biology (B), General Studies (B), Philosophy (B), Mathematics (C) A2-Level: Extended Project Qualification (A), Psychology (A), Biology (B), General Studies (B), Philosophy (C)

3.3 Methodological Perspectives

‘"Paradox" denotes contradictory yet interrelated elements – elements that seem logical in isolation but absurd and irrational when appearing simultaneously’ (Lewis, 2000, p. 760). Apparent paradoxes can obfuscate social, qualitative research design where methodology and methods cross borders previously defined by competing research traditions. Practice-based, participant research rarely conforms neatly to these, complicating the explication of researcher positions and perspectives. For example, the term ‘flexible design’ can appear paradoxical in nature. ‘Design’ infers planning and structure, while ‘flexibility’ allows for development and change. However, a flexible design can and should maintain a scientific attitude which aims to collect and analyse data systematically, sceptically and ethically (Robson, 2011). The value of paradox can be its demand for closer inspection and theorising, resulting in greater understandings of the links and relationships between competing elements, or alternately eliciting new insight into the elements themselves. Researchers feel under pressure to arrive at some resolution of these apparent paradoxes in order to position their work within clear, tidy theoretical boundaries. Perhaps a richer way forward is to find useful ways of living with and embracing these apparent contradictions, creating the opportunity to ‘recognise the complexity, diversity, and ambiguity’ (Lewis, 2000, p. 760) of multi-voiced contexts, such as schools.

3.3.1 Ontological Stance

The distinction between realist and interpretivist orientations can be artificial, or can confuse different aspects of the same case. For instance, in a philosophy course, the course materials, written assignments and final results are not products of the students’ mind. How each student approaches, interprets and relates to these, creates different representations of reality which are relative and subjective (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Hammersley, 1992). Education is a communicative process (Edwards & Mercer, 1987) and in this research, students’ perspectives, as revealed through written and verbal communication, created the reality under scrutiny. These data articulate individual and shared perceptions and understandings of revealed aspects of teachers’ and students’

experiences and understandings in relation to teaching and learning of written argumentation in students' work.

Whereas objectivist approaches attempt to place the researcher outside the arena of the observed, Hammersley's (1992) subtle realism accepts an independent social world, but argues that reality can only be 'knowable through the human mind and socially constructed meanings' (Ormston *et al.*, 2014, p. 5). It utilises the researcher's and participants' complex and diverse co-created interpretations as the studied reality (Crotty, 1998; Guba, 1990; Ritchie *et al.*, 2014; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004; Loxley & Seery, 2008; Robson, 2011).

The effect of time on this process must not be underestimated. Avital (2000, p. 670) uses the example of photography as a method to study movement, where photographs record multiple snapshots in time, which does not stand still. Similarly, a longitudinal study attempts to understand a process which occurs over time, but can only achieve this by studying snapshots within the process. The context is created as certain aspects of the process are singled out for scrutiny as the researcher attempts to arrive at an explanation of the process, or parts of the process (Stake, 1995; Mjøset, 2009). The reality created through the snapshots of data that are collected is necessarily distorted, as they represent what has been collected and recorded rather than the full history of what actually happened over the period of time. This means that inferences and findings must be drawn with care as the causal effects behind the data may be more complex and evolving than what can be observed or documented.

Furthermore, these snapshots only reveal what the communicator chooses to share, and are subject to the interpretation of the observer (Mack, 2010). Although the participant's own interpretation of their learning and development constitutes the data, the researcher must remain alert to 'false assumptions that what seems commonsensical to the researcher is seen in the same way by the participants' (Edwards & Mercer, 1987, p. 15). The pragmatic nature of subtle realism helps create a middle ground between philosophical dogmatism and scepticism, and respects emergent social and psychological worlds (Robson, 2011). If reality is a social and historic construct, the researcher's approach and perception need to be tentative and accepting of change. Any statements about the nature of that change need to acknowledge the complex and multifaceted nature of social reality. Changes within the abilities, approaches and

perceptions of the students may be the result of cognitive and skill development through the phases, but it is just as possible that causes of change may be incorrectly identified (Robson, 2011).

Human behaviour is partly determined by context and is often best studied within that context from the perspective of the research subject; this means accessing their world and conceptual schemes (Gillham, 2010). Within classrooms, students' individual conceptions of their learning experiences contribute towards unique classroom identities and shared conceptions, creating problems for positivistic validity aimed at representing common or shared knowledge (Lin, 1998). For example, students may mean (a), the researcher thinks they mean (b), but through negotiation students realise they perhaps meant (c). Research based on constructionist assumptions becomes a powerful site for constructing meaning between the researcher and participants as meanings are negotiated within a discursive context (Pring, 2000). An acceptance of 'diversity and multiplicity in these meanings' (Hartas, 2010, p. 44) allows for immersion within the complexity of the research data. Social constructionism emphasises our use of socially constructed conceptual schemes to filter ideas, which does not preclude the possibility of observing laws and patterns within the empirical world (Kirk & Miller, 1986). Conclusions, however, need to be drawn cautiously, with rich descriptions allowing readers to make 'naturalistic generalizations (i.e. extrapolations, applications, expectations)' (Stake, 1990, p. 235) concomitant with their unique contexts.

3.3.2 Epistemological Assumptions

The world of the case is created through data collection methods and analytic processes and procedures which balance allowing the case to evolve while applying teaching strategies aimed at influencing this development. Personal choices in what is revealed, time constraints on what can be explored and choices about where focus needs to be all place limits on what is revealed, which is itself the focus of the study. Knowledge is our understanding that emerges from personal reflection and social, more public processes of deliberation, reasoning and negotiation of meaning, on the world around us, our experiences and our interpretation of these (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014). The subtle realist approach bases knowledge claims on judgements that can be made with some

measure of confidence (Duncan & Nicol, 2004), respecting and embracing the subjective aspect of social action (Mack, 2010). It is important that participants not only report their ideas, but that they reflect on their experience and subsequent perceptions. This raises questions about what we can know of 'the other', emphasising the individual, subjective nature of conceptions (Sale, Lohfeld & Brazil, 2002), but recognising shared understanding and consensus as negotiated through interaction and communication of ideas (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Pring, 2000; Hartas, 2010), leading to inter-subjectivity and negotiation of meanings.

The interpretivist approach aims to mirror epistemological views of shared learning in classrooms. Hammersley (1993) explains learning that is less about fact gathering than knowledge making together. The classroom involves a complex multiplicity of individuals, perceptions and experiences. An eclectic approach can embrace this multiplicity of perspectives in an effort to gain greater understanding through trying out different strategies in order to find what works (Greenwood & Levin, 1998; Robson, 2011). Abductive reasoning (Robson, 2011) requires navigation between observations and theories, which complements the emergent nature of the phased development of pedagogy in this study. Tentative conclusions become more firmly established with each phase. Knowledge is constructed, based on the reality of the world in which we live, which means that any claims to truth, while aiming to inform practice, must remain tentative and open to change over time (Robson, 2011).

This study aimed to inform judgements and decisions of both teachers and students in an effort to improve existing practice and suggest new strategies for teaching and learning (Hammersley, 1993). It aimed not to make predictions, but to explain how events occurred in this case, suggesting possible causes and/ or eliminating alternatives (Robson, 2011). The research process attempted to engage participants in ongoing discussion through the construction of puzzles arising from the data, seeking solutions to these puzzles through further debate and discussion (Hanké, 2009). For example, when students asked for an essay structure, Sarah and I responded with a range of essay outlines and frames over-and-above outlines previously given. When students continued to revisit the idea of needing 'set' structure, it required repeated probing and discussion to reveal the exact nature of the guidance being requesting and why outlines provided in philosophy differed from those provided by other subjects. Each person's

journey through the course is personal, but as individuals interact and share ideas, a corporate understanding and experience emerges.

Written work and documentation available for analysis included class essays, examination scripts, marking and feedback, and examination rubrics and reports. However, the study sought to go beyond raw outcomes of students' learning, their graded essays and final examination marks, in order to explore and understand how they perceived them and how these perceptions influenced subsequent attitudes and action. Their written work could be explored through direct observation, but students' explanations for and understandings of their action needed exploration through conversation. It is possible to study a combination of written work as well as meanings attributed by participants to their social action within these conditions (Ormston *et al.*, 2014). Puzzles may arise when participant feedback does not match their actions. For example, when asked directly, most students reported doing extra reading and research outside of the lesson, while analysis of written work revealed little evidence of this. On further examination it was found that one student reviewed summarised outlines of notes found online and lesson PowerPoints while another student mainly revisited reading previously completed at the beginning of the first year. The perception of teachers and students around 'extra reading' did not match and needed clarification. The search for understanding requires simple, continuous sharing and measuring of teaching and learning strategies, including attempts to work out what is 'going on'.

3.4 Research Design

The decision to conduct my research project as a practitioner researcher limited to our philosophy students was a matter of circumstance rather than choice. At the start of this project, time away from my full-time teaching position was not an option and timetabling constraints within our Academy made it impossible for me to observe Sarah's lessons. This meant I had to work with the students available in my lessons. Our small class sizes, explained in the introduction, again made the sample size a matter of circumstance rather than choice. Although I considered collaboration with other schools, which would have afforded a wider sample size and broader data set, I felt that the pressures of full-time work and postgraduate research would make this

unsustainable. These constraints also affected choices available when selecting data collection methods which are explained below. However, they afforded the opportunity to conduct a longitudinal interventionist research study, examining the experiences of teachers and students over the two-year period. This was well suited to the research questions which aimed to examine in detail teaching and learning experiences, perceptions, successes and frustrations of teachers and students. Although action research and practitioner research are often used interchangeably, I did not adopt an action research design because time restrictions meant I could not follow all the elements of this design. Similarly, although a naturalistic approach may have answered questions seeking to understanding what was going on in the context, an interventionist approach was needed because lack of progress in developing written argumentation meant we needed to intervene in an attempt to drive progress. Table 3.3 outlines interventions trialled with reasons for and outcome from the interventions summarised in table 3.4. Analysis and findings from these interventions are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. The small sample size was well suited to an interventionist case study design, explained in section 3.4. The validity and relevance of the study are discussed in section 3.7.

Practitioner research enjoys several advantages and faces several challenges. The researcher has an insider perspective, conducting research that is 'pragmatic and goal-oriented (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 43). This is well-suited to research questions that attempt to find out what is going on or why teaching and learning strategies appear to be more or less effective. Practitioner research involves ongoing analysis of data that informs practice without affecting the research design (Campbell, 2013). This is, again, well-suited to an interventionist research approach that aims to trial, test and improve practice. A challenge in practitioner research is that of time pressures because the task of collecting, documenting and reflecting on research data adds extra workload to that of teaching (Fang, Lee & Haron, 1999). Time pressure necessarily places limitations on the types and frequency of data collection and amount of ongoing analysis that is possible. I was fortunate in my research project that the students and Sarah gave up a lot of their time to facilitate additional interviews, but on a few occasions the pressures of teaching and learning meant that data sets were incomplete. These challenges are discussed further below in section 3.5

Table 3.3: Interventions Trialled and Developed Across Developmental Phases

TYPE OF INTERVENTION	**PHASE 1**	**PHASE 2**	**PHASE 3**	**PHASE 4**	**PHASE 5**
PEDAGOGIC FOCUS	Introductions to written argumentation.	Juxtaposed and tangential argumentation.	Use of scaffolds. Common errors. Linking premises within essays.	Independent reading and text annotation. Exploring implications in argumentation.	Developing depth and precision in written argumentation.
SCAFFOLDS/ PLANNING	Essays discussed with planning on the board.	Essays discussed with planning on the board.	Detailed scaffolds provided with and without specified theses.	Less detailed scaffolds to inform students' planning. Collaborative planning.	No scaffolds provided. Detailed teacher-led planning.

FEEDBACK ON ESSAYS	Essays and redrafts marked with in-text and summative comments.	A mix of short feedback commands and conversational feedback between and after redrafting.	Explicit/ detailed independent verbal and written feedback between and after redrafting.	Self-assessment between redrafting. Individual verbal and written feedback, including colour-coded marking, between and after redrafting.	Detailed group feedback/ discussion of plans and essays between redrafting. Detailed individual verbal and written feedback between and after redrafting.
ESSAY REDRAFTS	Suggestion: Essays redrafted in response to marking and remarked.	Requirement: Essays redrafted in response to marking and remarked.	Requirement: Essays redrafted in response to marking and remarked. Peer assessment and advice between redrafting.	Students given time to prepare responses to feedback. Redrafts completed in lesson under timed conditions.	Requirement: Essays redrafted in response to marking and class discussions and submitted for remarking.

EXEMPLARES AND MODELLING		Samples of linking words provided and scrutinised to support peer assessment.	Portions of students' work redrafted and discussed.	Examples of common errors provided and discussed.	Exemplar essays provided and discussed.
INDEPENDENT READING/ STUDY	Extra reading recommended – students asked to record independent reading.	Student-led reading sessions timetabled. Explicit reading passages set.	Explicit texts set with questions to direct reading. Students directed to hand in notes.	Scaffolds included space for reading notes and recording of time spent on independent reading.	Explicit texts set. Students directed to hand in annotated reading.
EXAMINATION PREPARATION	Summarised revision grids provided	Summarised revision grids provided	Detailed revision notes provided.	Detailed revision notes provided with list of past/ possible examination questions.	Detailed revision notes provided with list of past/ possible examination questions.

Table 3.4: Types, Reasons, Developments and Outcomes of Interventions

TYPE OF INTERVENTION	**REASONS FOR INTERVENTIONS**	**RESULTS OF INTERVENTIONS**
SCAFFOLDS	Detailed scaffolds in response to students requests for structure.	Reliance on scaffolds and lack of students' planning led first to less detailed scaffolds and then to more detailed planning without scaffolds.
PLANNING	Supervised planning to replace students' reliance on scaffolds.	Supervised planning improved structure of students written argumentation, but skills were not transferred to subsequent essays or examination work.
FEEDBACK ON ESSAYS	Detailed conversational feedback trialled in response to students' requests aimed at encouraging deeper thinking and review of work. Verbal feedback trialled to encouraging students' discussion of ideas prior to review of work. Colour-coded feedback trialled to develop aspects of argumentation.	Feedback remained 'patchwork', lacking integration into overall argumentation. Verbal and colour-coded feedback resulted in improvements but lacked transference to subsequent essays.

ESSAY REDRAFTS	First and second redrafts aimed at improving students work, allowing them to see good examples of written argumentation in their own work.	Supervised redrafting resulted in improved argumentation and students reported greater understanding of errors. Redrafting limited to explicit instructions and checking.
EXEMPLARS AND MODELLING	Exemplars trialled to raise understanding of common errors and demonstrate elements of higher and lower levels of argumentation as required by the examination rubric.	Students reported greater understanding, but improvements in written argumentation remained sporadic. Simple concepts such as adding examples were more successful than complex concepts such as maintaining a thesis through the body of an essay.
INDEPENDENT READING/ STUDY	Collaborative reading sessions using non-traditional texts trialled to develop students' understanding away from the demands of the syllabus. Reading and annotation demonstrated in lessons aimed at developing students' reading skills. Readings set with questions aimed at guiding students to important points in the text.	Teacher-led exercises proved more successful than student-led or independent exercises. Work set outside of lesson was either not completed or completed to a poor standard.

EXAMINATION PREPARATION	Revision grids provided at AS-Level to develop students' knowledge and understanding of the theories studied. Longer revision notes provided at A2-Level aimed at providing more detail and evaluation at the revision stage.	Students found the grids very useful but did little to go beyond the notes provided. Students reported finding the notes too detailed and sought shorter summaries online.

3.4.1 Interventionist Case Study

In education, a paradoxical tension exists between pedagogy, which aims to theorise strategies for improved teaching and learning, the individual case of each teacher and learner, and the relationship that exists between them. Students behave and perform differently in different subjects and/ or groups, making problematic any attempt to draw conclusions around questions on how to encourage and promote learning. Pedagogy explores and develops what is known about teaching and learning, but it must be recognised that each instance of learning calls for a unique application and adjustment of the theory. Thus educational research lends itself to the case study method which 'investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth ... within its real world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident' (Yin, 2014, loc. 5731).

Thomas (2016, loc. 2345) highlights the 'multi-faceted nature of a case study' that allows researchers to relate 'one bit to another and offer explanations based on the interrelationships between these bits.' The explanations are, of necessity, limited to what is provided by students and teachers, and to the researcher's ability to make sense of what is made available. Paradoxes may occur between what students say about their perspectives and what is observed from their written work and/or results. The value of the case study is that it allows for some 'drilling down' (Thomas, 2016, loc. 2322) into situations where information offered appears paradoxical, where it confirms previously held suspicions or where it provides unexpected insights.

While cases need to be bounded by time and space (Ragin & Becker, 1992; Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014), case study still allows a holistic study of little understood contexts (Meyer, 2001). It is suited to exploratory and explanatory research where research questions ask 'how' and 'why' (Yin, 2014, loc. 792), facilitating in-depth exploration aimed at producing descriptions of contemporary issues, allowing for late-emerging issues (Marrelli, 2007) and focusing on complex, situated relationships between variables contributing towards a problem (Stake, 1978, 1990). Detailed observations (Gummesson, 2000) allow researchers to get closer to participants' perspectives and explore what is really going on (Greenwood & Levin, 1998; Gillham, 2010). Layered or nested approaches (Marrelli, 2007) can facilitate in-depth study of individual cases, followed by 'cross-patterned analysis' of these cases (Patton, 2002, p.

447) to identify similarities, differences and conclusions. However, this study sought to focus on the case (Stake 2006, p. 9) rather than methods of inquiry (Yin, 2014). It sought to explore how a cohort of philosophy students responded to, and/ or overcame difficulties encountered in developing argumentation skills, how teachers attempted to facilitate this development and why some students appeared to progress more or less easily than others. It also focused on 'what' questions, seeking understanding of processes and experiences relevant to the experience of students and teachers. The interventionist, intrinsic nature of the study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014) allowed intervention strategies consistent with routine classroom practice, informed by inquiry, caution and rigour (Kemmis, 1980, quoted in Bassey, 1999, p. 25). The phased sequence of interventions did not represent radical departures from normal, routine classroom practice, allowing the study of students' experiences and progress as close to 'the normal' as is possible in a context where participants are being observed.

In Philosophy students grapple with argumentation individually, but group socialisation produces group understanding and language. Conversely, group dynamics may affect individual learning, making it appropriate to move back and forth between individual and group experiences, requiring an approach which is holistic in terms of recognising the complexity of systems observed (Yin, 2014, loc. 685), and context sensitive, gathering 'comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information' about the case (Patton, 2002, p. 447). Case study allows a real world, holistic approach within a complex, contemporary social context, where the researcher's lack of control over participants' behaviour calls for a flexible, emergent and iterative research design (Yin, 2014, loc. 3791).

The lack of prior research into teaching and learning argumentation in A-Level Philosophy precluded adopting prior assumptions on which to focus survey or observational approaches (Walker, 1993), making a small scale, case study approach appropriate. Yin (2014, loc. 1458) states that case studies should expand and generalise theories, insisting that all studies be 'preceded by statements about what is to be explored, the purpose of the exploration, and the criteria by which the exploration will be judged successful'. For this research project, establishing clearly defined criteria proved problematic because the aim was to allow the concerns and feedback of students to determine the direction of intervention strategies trialled. As a result, broad criteria

included a greater understanding of both students' concerns and experiences and of the effectiveness of teaching strategies developed and trialled. A practitioner-led case study allows for familiarity with the problem needed to present informed interpretations and value judgments on the findings (Marrelli, 2007), but it is important that the researcher avoids being a slave to any pre-held understandings (Gummersson, 2000). Propositions and choices concerning study direction may reveal implied theory, but maintaining the possibility that implied theory can be challenged allows for exploration and new directions. This approach makes objectivity difficult; however, the interpretivist stance adopted in this research, while acknowledging the researcher's subjective interpretations, requires an openness about pre-held assumptions (Yin, 2014). Yin's claim that theory should be explicitly stated as, 'this case study will show that', seems to narrow the field considerably. In some studies this narrowing would be appropriate and advantageous, but this does not preclude more open studies with more loosely stated propositions. I therefore adopted an open-ended, exploratory and abductive inquiry based on the authentic accounts of students and teachers together with analysis of students' work.

Case studies are able to utilise data from a large range of sources (Yin, 2014), complementing real life research projects where a range of methods are utilised to collect data from a range of perspectives (Stake, 1995). For this research, the small nature of the case (Marrelli, 2007) and an emphasis on the case rather than methods (Patton, 2002) made data collection and analysis of an extended collection of longitudinal data (Yin, 2014) sustainable and viable. Statistical, descriptive or quantitative data were used to measure progress and test the effectiveness of different teaching and learning approaches, but reasons for any apparent success, or the meaning individuals gave to their experiences, feelings and perceptions required narrative, explorative and qualitative data (Marrelli, 2007; Gillham, 2010). The risk posed by the large quantity of data collected and the possibility of going off track (Thomas, 2016) required careful research design. To minimise this risk, the focus and boundaries of the study were allowed to develop with each phase of study (Ragin & Becker, 1992; Yin, 2014), but remained tethered to the original research questions. A second challenge posed by the large quantity of data generated was reporting a complex set of findings in a clear and simple format (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Choices had to be made in presenting

findings, which in itself constitutes a constructivist exercise. This, and the challenge of generalisation, is discussed in more detail below.

3.4.2 Developmental Phases of the Research Design

The research design, phased in over five stages, is outlined in tables (Tables 3.1, 3.3, 3.5, 3.7, 3.9), followed by more detailed discussions of data collection methods. The phases outlined in the sections below (labelled Phase 1 to 5), corresponded roughly to the Academy terms from September 2012 to June 2014, but where exemplar work from examination periods was utilised, relevant dates were given. Student participation in the phases varied due to absence or lack of participation; the effect of this is discussed under data collection methods (section 3.4). Adjustments to these methods were made in response to problems identified by students and quality of data collected. In describing the phases and data collection below, I have attempted to explicate the evolving nature of the research questions (Thomas, 2016, loc. 837), data collection methods and contribution of different participants.

As a participant researcher (Fox, Martin & Green, 2007, p. 83), time constraints resulting from teaching load impacted on levels of analysis that were possible after each phase. Initial analysis at each stage produced preliminary insights which allowed development of more searching questions in subsequent phases.

Phase 1: September 2012 – February 2013

Phase 1 (Tables 3.5, 3.6) sought to lay a foundation for the study aimed at developing understanding of the examination rubrics and gaining initial feedback from students and teachers on their experiences in learning and teaching philosophy.

Table 3.5: First Development of Research Questions

Over-Arching Research Questions	**Development of Research Questions**
How do students and teachers define doing philosophy, with a focus on written argumentation?	1.1 What level of written argumentation does the examination rubric require? 1.2 Did marks for written argumentation change? 1.3 If so, what changed? 1.4 How do the expectations change at A2-Level?
What aspects of written argumentation do students and teachers find problematic and unproblematic?	1.5 What have students found more or less problematic in producing written argumentation?
What range of strategies do more and less successful students employ around developing written argumentation?	1.6 What strategies have students found more or less useful in producing written argumentation?
What range of strategies do teachers consider more and less successful for supporting students around developing written argumentation?	1.7 What have teachers found more or less useful in teaching written argumentation?

A main focus of Phase 1 was to better understand the progressive levels of argumentation required by the examination rubrics, and to identify strengths and weaknesses in students' early attempts at written argumentation. A second focus aimed to elicit students' and teachers' perspectives on their learning and teaching experiences.

Although analysis of the examination rubrics afforded clearer insight into levels of argumentation required, no explicit adjustment was made to teaching methods, materials, marking and feedback in this phase. This created a base of teaching and

learning from which to develop a range of alternate strategies. For example, it was noted that tangential or juxtaposed argumentation prevented students from accessing the higher grades; however, most students reported being uncertain about what these terms meant. A series of intervention lessons were planned, occurring in phase 2, to help students recognise both types of argumentation and identify them in their own work. A semi-structured group interview, together with reflection diaries, aimed to capture participants' perspectives. An initial analysis of the data informed the focus of teaching in phase 2.

Table 3.6: Overview of Research Design – Phase 1

Data Collected	**Research Action**	**Participants and Research Questions**
Examination rubrics, reports, exemplars.	Analysis of rubrics and reports.	Karen. RQ. 1.1 – 1.4
Students' class work. Teachers' feedback on work. Students' redraft of work.	Analysis of: - Students' argumentation. - Teachers' feedback on students' work. - Students' redrafted work.	7 AS-Level students. RQ. 1.5
Semi-structured group interview (videoed/ transcribed/ observed).	Scrutiny of students' perceptions of their learning and teacher's teaching.	7 AS-Level students. RQ. 1.6
Students' reflection diaries – free writing.		
Karen's reflection diary.	Comparison of Karen's and students' perceptions of teaching and learning.	Karen. RQ. 1.7

Phase 2: March 2013 – July 2013

In Phase 2 (Table 3.7, 3.8) the responsive and emergent nature of the research design allowed ongoing adjustments to the use of a range of data collection methods, with a particular focus on written argumentation produced in class, at home and under examination conditions. Development of argumentation remained focal to all lessons, but specific sessions were dedicated to trialling and assessing a range of teaching strategies. In order to improve the collection of participants' perspectives, reflection on learning and teaching was linked more firmly to these sessions.

Table 3.7: Second Development of Research Questions

Over-Arching Research Questions	**Development of Research Questions**
How do students and teachers define doing philosophy, with a focus on written argumentation?	2.1 What progress have students made in producing written argumentation in examination essays?
What aspects of written argumentation do students and teachers find problematic and unproblematic?	2.2 What do students find more or less problematic in using language to improve flow and connectivity of ideas in written argumentation?
What range of strategies do more and less successful students employ around developing written argumentation?	2.3 What strategies do students find more or less useful in developing quality of language utilised to improve flow and connectivity of ideas in written argumentation?
What range of strategies do teachers consider more and less successful for supporting students around developing written argumentation?	2.4 What strategies do teachers find more or less useful in developing quality of language utilised to improve flow and connectivity of ideas in written argumentation?

Explicit teaching over four lessons focused on identifying and avoiding tangential and juxtaposed argumentation, with Sarah and I delivering similar material. Sessions were recorded affording the opportunity to observe and analyse students' participation in lessons. A whole-class interview, followed by individual interviews, explored what students found more or less helpful. Analysis of marked essays measured students' progress in written argumentation. Some students did not submit written work or attend lessons in order to concentrate on examination revision, producing gaps in the data.

Table 3.8: Overview of Research Design – Phase 2

Data Collected	**Research Action**	**Participants and Research Questions**
PHIL1 examination scripts.	Analysis of students' use of language in written argumentation.	8 AS-Level students. RQ. 2.1 – 2.2
4 development lessons over 1 week – videoed and observed. Feedback lesson on Plato.	Scrutiny of students' use of language in their written argumentation.	8 AS-Level students (varied levels of attendance). Karen/ Sarah. RQ. 2.2 – 2.4
Lesson material – planning, resources, guidance, etc. Examples of guidance provided for structuring essays.	Comparison of: - Students' essays with guidance provided. - Teaching and students' stated perceptions.	8 AS-Level students. Karen/ Sarah. RQ. 2.3 – 2.4
Semi-structured group interview (videoed/ transcribed). Individual interviews.	Scrutiny of students' perceptions of their learning and teachers' teaching.	8 AS-Level students. RQ. 2.2 – 2.3

Students' reflection diaries – responding to directed questions.		
Teachers' reflection diaries.	Scrutiny of teachers' perceptions of teaching strategies and students' performance.	Karen/ Sarah. RQ. 2.4

Phase 3: September 2013 – November 2013

In Phases 3 to 5, four students continued through to A2-Level. The examination no longer included short knowledge and understanding questions. Instead, greater emphasis was placed on discussion questions and the need to develop argumentation. In response to students' feedback, Phase 3 (Tables 3.9, 3.10) focused on using written scaffolds to assist students' development of discussion essays. During this period the 10-week Jacobsen program, run by the Royal Institute of Philosophy, was launched for A-Level students, with some sessions recorded. The four A2-Level Philosophy students attended these sessions, allowing comparison of students' argumentation in more or less formal settings.

Table 3.9: Third Development of Research Questions

Over-Arching Research Questions	**Development of Research Questions**
How do students and teachers define doing philosophy, with a focus on written argumentation?	3.1 What progress have students made in their understanding of written argumentation?

What aspects of written argumentation do students and teachers find problematic and unproblematic?	3.2 What do students find more or less problematic in structuring written argumentation? 3.3 What do students find more or less problematic in reviewing and redrafting written argumentation?
What range of strategies do more and less successful students employ around developing written argumentation?	3.4 What classroom strategies do students find more or less useful in learning to structure written argumentation? 3.5 What strategies do students find more or less useful in reviewing and redrafting written argumentation?
What range of strategies do teachers consider more and less successful for supporting students around developing written argumentation?	3.6 What classroom strategies do teachers find more or less useful in teaching students to structure written argumentation? 3.7 What strategies do teachers find more or less useful in teaching students to review and redraft written argumentation?

January and July examination scripts allowed comparison of students' work and progress from Year 12 to Year 13. Due to the growing quantity of data, only essays related to development objectives were copied and analysed, with more time given to preparation and development of each essay and redraft. Students were supported with detailed writing frames, written and verbal feedback between essay redrafts with exemplar work provided.

Table 3.10: Overview of Research Design – Phase 3

Data Collected	**Research Action**	**Participants and Research Questions**
Students' examination scripts – PHIL2 paper and PHIL1 re-sits.	Analysis of examination scripts.	9 AS-Level students. RQ. 3.1 – 3.2
Lesson materials, resources, guidance, etc. (focus on scaffolding argumentation). Samples of scaffolds. 2 lessons videoed and observed.	Comparison of: - Different types of scaffolds. - Written work against scaffolds provided. - Students' use of different types of scaffolds.	4 A2-Level students. Karen/ Sarah. RQ. 3.4 – 3.5
Students' marked essays with written feedback/ redrafts. Verbal coaching and feedback (videoed/ taped).	Analysis of students' responses to marking in original and redrafted work.	4 A2-Level students. Marking: Karen and Sarah. RQ. 3.2 – 3.7
Jacobsen Program.	Comparison of informal and formal argumentation.	4 A2-Level students (varied attendance). RQ. 3.2, 3.4, 3.6
Whole class interview – videoed.	Scrutiny of students' responses to teacher's feedback.	4 A2-Level students and Sarah. RQ. 3.2-3.5
Students' perceptions of scaffolds in response to	Scrutiny of students' perceptions of guidance	4 A2-Level students. RQ. 3.2 – 3.5

structured questions.	provided and their progress.	
Teachers' reflection diaries, emails and discussion (taped).	Scrutiny of teachers' perceptions of teaching strategies and students' performance.	Karen/ Sarah. RQ. 3.6 – 3.7

Phase 4: December 2013 – January 2014

With no examinations set in Phase 4 (Table 3.11, 3.12), the focus remained on classwork, with special efforts to help students develop essay outlines, supported by independent reading. Another focus was developing strategies to support students' reflections, interpretations and feelings about their experiences of developing argumentation skills.

Table 3.11: Fourth Development of Research Questions

Over-Arching Research Questions	**Development of Research Questions**
How do students and teachers define doing philosophy, with a focus on written argumentation?	4.1 How do students perceive independent reading and research?
What aspects of written argumentation do students and teachers find problematic and unproblematic?	4.2 What do students find more or less problematic in engaging with written argumentation in their independent study?
What range of strategies do more and less successful students employ around developing written argumentation?	4.3 How much independent study do students do? 4.4 What strategies do students find more or less useful in engaging with independent reading and research?

What range of strategies do teachers consider more and less successful for supporting students around developing written argumentation?	4.5 What strategies to teachers find more or less useful in encouraging independent reading and research?

In response to analysis on the effectiveness of essay scaffolds, students were encouraged to develop their own outlines and further extend independent reading and essay preparation. Students' responses in group or individual interviews were often stilted or short, and their use of reflection diaries sporadic. Some students felt uncomfortable in front of the camera, while others performed for the recording. In order to address this, we explored alternate methods of data collection involving more directed questioning.

Table 3.12: Overview of Research Design – Phase 4

Data Collected	**Research Action**	**Participants and Research Questions**
Students' reading and planning notes.	Analysis of students' use of notes and outlines.	4 A2-Level students. RQ. 4.1, 4.6
Individual verbal feedback to students between/ after essay drafts (recorded).	Comparison of students' verbal responses to feedback and redrafted work.	4 A2-Level students. Karen. RQ. 4.3
Students' perceptions in response to structured questions.	Analysis of students' perceptions of their learning and teachers' teaching.	4 A2-Level students. RQ. 4.1, 4.2, 4.4 – 4.5
Lesson material, resources.	Evidence of students' extra reading and research.	4 A2-Level students. Karen.

Samples of students' essay plans and reading.	Analysis of materials delivered through teaching and students' independent work.	RQ. 4.2, 4.4
Teachers' reflection diaries, emails and discussion (taped).	Scrutiny of teachers' perceptions of teaching strategies and students' performance.	Karen and Sarah. RQ. 4.5

Phase 5: February 2014 – May 2014

For Phase 5 (Tables 3.13, 3.14) we utilised insights from the reading in the previous interventions, together with conclusions from previous analysis, to focus on developing depth of argumentation through precise and sophisticated analysis and discussion. Another focus was to develop strategies to encourage further independent reading and research, leading into in-depth revision and preparation for producing argumentation under examination conditions. We also aimed to explore students' perceptions of their learning in more depth through individual, semi-structured interviews.

Table 3.13: Fifth Development of Research Questions

Over-Arching Research Questions	**Development of Research Questions**
How do students and teachers define doing philosophy, with a focus on written argumentation?	5.1 What do students understand by precision and sophistication in written argumentation? 5.2 What progress have students made in producing precision and sophistication in written argumentation?
What aspects of written argumentation do students	5.3 What do students find more or less problematic in producing precision and sophistication in written argumentation?

and teachers find problematic and unproblematic?	5.4 What do students find more or less problematic in preparing for formal examinations?
What range of strategies do more and less successful students employ around developing written argumentation?	5.5 What strategies do students find more or less useful in developing precision and sophistication in written argumentation? 5.6 What strategies do students find more or less useful in preparing for formal examinations?
What range of strategies do teachers consider more and less successful for supporting students around developing written argumentation?	5.7 What strategies do teachers find more or less useful in helping students develop precision and sophistication in written argumentation? 5.8 What strategies do teachers find more or less useful in helping students prepare for formal examinations?

Sarah and I trialled different lesson ideas to provide a range of strategies and feedback in this last period of data collection. As students approached the examination period they again prioritised their work load which produced gaps and adjustments in data collected. The final examination scripts were received after students had left, making any final consultation around results impossible. Despite these setbacks, the gradual analysis and focusing of data collection methods resulted in a range of rich data which could be compared and contrasted with students' initial and progressive attempts at argumentation.

Table 3.14: Overview of Research Design – Phase 5

Data Collected	**Focus**	**Participants and Research Questions**
Lesson materials, resources. Samples of students' notes, essay outlines.	Analysis of students' work in response to different teaching strategies.	4 A2 students. Karen/ Sarah. RQ. 5.5 – 5.8
Whole class interview – audio recorded.	Analysis of students' perceptions of teachers' strategies.	4 A2 students. Karen. RQ. 5.1, 5.3 – 5.6
Students' essays and mock examination: - Marking. - Essay redrafts.	Analysis of students' use of feedback and redrafting to improve and prepare examination responses.	4 A2 students. Karen/ Sarah. RQ. 5.3 – 5.6
Students' individual interviews (audio recorded) based on responses received in Phase 4 used to conduct in-depth individual interviews.	Development and analysis of students' feedback responses in Phase 4.	3 A2-Level students. Karen. (4th student could only respond in written form). RQ. 5.1 – 5.6
Students' and teachers' reflection diaries.	Scrutiny of students' and teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning strategies and students' performance.	4 A2-Level students. Karen/ Sarah. RQ. 5.7 – 5.8

Final examination scripts.	Analysis of written argumentation. Assessment of progress achieved.	4 A2-Level students. RQ. 5.2

3.5 Data Collection Methods

Real world constraints influenced decisions around data collection methods as these had to be completed either as part of the teaching and learning process or in my own time. The collection and storing of samples of students' work, teachers' marking and lesson resources did not pose difficulties beyond remembering to keep copies of everything. However, the collection of students' independent work and reflections proved more problematic as this relied on them bringing and submitting the work. Observations and interviews proved more problematic as these required either additional time commitments from Sarah and the students or intruded into lesson time. The challenges and effectiveness of utilising each method of data collection are discussed further below.

Yin (2014) emphasises the need to review collected evidence quickly to make judgements on the need for additional or new evidence. In this research, initial analysis after each phase informed development of further data collection. Yin also emphasises the need to ask good questions throughout the data collection process. Ongoing analysis facilitated development of the research questions, enabling greater depth of study. The research design was continually reviewed, with data re-documented into a research data-base in order to 'balance adaptability with *rigor* – but not rigidity' (Yin, 2014, loc. 2240). Instead of a pre-study pilot, an assessment of methods was conducted at the end of Phases 1 and 2, utilising work from the first module, the January examination documentation, and perceptions from student interviews and reflection diaries. The data collection methods, findings from the pilot study and subsequent adjustments are discussed together. However, continual assessment and adjustment allowed development of the most useful methods of data collection possible, as summarised below (Table 3.15).

Table 3:15: Summary of Data Collection Methods Utilised

	Phase 1	**Phase 2**	**Phase 3**	**Phase 4**	**Phase 5**
Examination documentation and scripts (formal and mock).	X	X	X	X	X
Students' work – examples of argumentation/ feedback (some videoed/ taped).	X	X	X	X	X
Interviews – group and individual.	X	X	X		X
Students' reflection diaries/ questionnaires.	X	X	X	X	X
Teachers' reflection diaries and field notes.	X	X	X	X	X
Targeted lessons – lesson material (some videoed).		X	X	X	X
Additional data (Jacobsen program/ other teachers).			X		

The following description of data collection methods used is divided into four sections:

- Understanding and assessing students' progress.
- Developing and assessing pedagogy.
- Capturing students' perceptions.
- Capturing teachers' perceptions.

Each section begins with a summary of data collection methods used, research questions addressed and aspects of the data collection methods tested in the Phase 2 assessment of methods.

3.5.1 Understanding and Assessing Students' Progress

In this section I discuss data collection methods used to assess students' achievements and progress which includes developing a clearer understanding of the examination requirements in order to more accurately analyse and assess students' written work.

Scrutiny of Examination Rubric, Reports and Scripts

a) Description of Method

Some research has been conducted into the use of a rubric to standardise assessment of argumentation (Kelly, Druker & Chen, 1998; Farmer, 2003; Harrell, 2005), and the use of a rubric as a teaching tool (Andrade, 2005; Hafner & Hafner, 2003). For my research, the examination documentation counted as data because they provided criteria and exemplars that helped to inform teachers' and students' definitions of argumentation. They were also used as a data collection tool. Utilising a comparison between marked examination scripts, exemplar material and the rubric, I extracted examples of different qualities of argumentation. This provided evidence of aspects of argumentation that students found problematic or unproblematic. The mark schemes and examiners' reports from the January 2012 examination were analysed and compared to gain greater insight into levels of argumentation required in A-Level Philosophy. From the rubric, the marking criteria labelled 'Knowledge and Understanding' tests students' ability to explicate ideas and arguments taught in class, while 'Analysis, Assessment and Evaluation' tests their ability to 'transfer this knowledge to the novel situation of creating [their] own argument' (Harrell, 2005:3). However, without clear understanding of the technical language in the rubric, its value to teaching, learning and assessment remains limited. This supplemented feedback given to students (Harrell, 2005), and was used to design explicit lessons and guidance aimed at developing students' critical reasoning skills (Farmer, 2003).

b) Merits of Method

The context of production is important when judging the value of documentation as data (Mason, 2002). Although the collection of examination documentation is indirect and non-reactive (Robson, 2011), rubrics and reports are intended for examiners, often

omitting detail provided at pre-marking and feedback meetings. The constructive element of the process was acknowledged (Mason, 2002), especially where it was unclear which words or phrases in students' examination scripts were referenced by examiners' comments on the scripts. Some scripts contained more comments, inserted at the point where strong or weak argumentation was acknowledged, which helped in identifying examples of writing to which comments applied. However, general comments at the beginning or end of longer responses required interpretation, which risked misinterpretation. It would be too ambitious to claim the insights gained as representing examiners' perspectives (Hartas, 2010), but they proved useful, augmenting teachers' and students' understanding of expected outcomes in this performance-based context (Hafner & Hafner, 2003).

c) Initial Assessment and Findings

The published report (AQA, 2013a) provided a general overview of strengths and weaknesses identified nationally, but scrutiny of our students' scripts gave clearer understanding of their performance. Using a combination of word clouds and analysis diagrams, key terms and comments from the reports and examination scripts were sorted into those demonstrating stronger or weaker aspects of argumentation. Positive comments showed that detail, clarity and illustration gained higher grades. Although the comment 'tangential' did not appear in any of the examination scripts, comments linked to 'precision', 'clarity' and 'relevance' demonstrated non-tangential material. Positive comments were concentrated on work explicating knowledge and understanding, with few acknowledging evaluation. When compared with negative comments, analysis and evaluation appeared in conjunction with the words 'vague', 'brief', and 'limited'. Again the word 'tangential' did not appear, but was perhaps represented by terms referencing vagueness and imprecision.

The scrutiny was helpful in clarifying the marking criteria and showing where students met or missed those requirements. For example:

> **Unclear**: 'Locke would say that it is in our interest to be ruled and governed so we know how our lives would be. He would say that it is his duty to do that and if they don't do it then we shouldn't give them our consent.' (Anon.Exam.Jan.2013)

> **Detailed & Precise/ Focused on the Question**: 'If the sovereign fails to uphold [stability], we may revolt and replace it with a new one, in the interest of self-preservation. On the matter of consent, he suggested that past the original point of agreeing to enter the contract, we are not required to consent [as] the sovereign is acting in our best interests' (John.Exam.Jan.2013).

This provided data for comparison with definitions of argumentation and difficulties noted in the literature. Specific examples of strong and weak writing were used to develop teaching materials for subsequent phases and afforded focus for further questions which explored strategies students had used to develop their writing through the year. However, I felt the production of clearer measurement tools (Appendices 5 and 6), explained in the section on 'Analysis of students' written argumentation' below, was needed for more precise collection and measurement of students' progress and a more detailed comparison between work produced in lesson or under examination conditions.

d) Adjustments to Method

Although this analysis provided clearer understanding of marking criteria and levels, time constraints would not allow this level of analysis on every essay. It is acknowledged that teachers' judgements in marking would develop and change as the research progressed, but a distinction was made between general marking and detailed analysis of essays. During this study, the AS-Level rubrics changed, allowing analysis of these changes. The collection of all examination scripts allowed comparison in marking and examiner's comments. The focus, however, remained on trying to understand what students found problematic with argumentation, and whether errors evident in examination work were similar to those in class work.

e) Quality of Findings and Conclusions

Both Sarah and I have experience in examination marking for the AQA examination board, myself at GCSE level and Sarah at A-Level. We also have several years' experience teaching A-Level Philosophy through different iterations of the syllabus. Augmented by the literature review, we felt confident that our interpretation of terminology used in the rubrics and reports was accurate. More problematic was our

attempt to further develop our understanding of the examiners' application of the rubrics. Circular arguments in philosophy are problematic because premises or evidence from the argument are used to prove themselves. In teaching, however, a cyclical process of setting standards, marking against these standards, and then reviewing the standards, is a standard process borrowed from performance enhancement models. In this study we were attempting to use our understanding of the rubrics to analyse and extract examples of set criteria based on the examiner's marking, and then use the extracted examples to test and develop our understanding of the rubrics. I had to take care that I did not look for examples that would confirm my interpretation of the criteria whilst acknowledging the reciprocal nature of applying my understanding in order to develop my understanding. The process was further complicated by heavy and inescapable dependence on interpretation. This can be demonstrated with a paper that was marked by two examiners.

For AO3, Assessment and Evaluation, the examiners comments were:

- Examiner 1 – AO3 – 13 marks – points are evaluated to reach a reasoned judgement.

- Examiner 2 – AO3 – 7 marks – highly descriptive, a limited attempt.

An examination of the script showed that Examiner 2 had marked one section as AO3 and underlined the portions of the script that met the criteria.

> 'This seems <u>unreasonable</u>. … In order for us to be able to help those in need <u>the money must be taken from those who earned it</u>, which is unjust'.

Examiner 1 showed where points were made, where explanation was clear and where criticisms were included, but did not indicate which portions were ascribed to AO1, AO2 or AO3. Differences demonstrated in the marking and comments supported historical claims about the unreliability of examination marking but could also indicate that in applying the rubric, some examiners could be seeking too much precision in students' responses. While rules for writing better philosophical essays may be identified, this type of essay is more about defending a viewpoint and offering reasons to persuade the reader that the view is worthy of acceptance (Vaugh, 2009, p. 55).

Confidence in our interpretations grew with repeated analysis of all scripts collected and the emergence of patterns in the marking. However, I remained aware that I did not have direct access to examiners' thoughts and was constrained to my interpretations of marking on the scripts; where scripts lacked marking, inferences were drawn with greater care.

Analysis of students' written argumentation

a) Description of Method

The focus of the research study was the development of students' written argumentation, making the collection and analysis of students' written work essential in order to assess what they found problematic and unproblematic in written argumentation and their progress over time. A quantitative assessment of grades alone would not answer this question as grades were allocated under broad headings. During the data collection phase, findings from the analysis of examination documentation were used to extract elements of argumentation for analysis, but in the formal data analysis phase this proved inadequate. Tick sheets were developed to facilitate more precise extractions of samples and more detailed analysis (explained below).

In Phase 1, students were set numerous essay questions to promote writing, and to provide a clear idea of their writing development in the first few months. 15 mark essays needed description, explanation and illustration of theory, written in a clear, succinct style. 30 mark essays required fully developed discussion and critiques of appropriate theories. All marked essays were copied for future analysis with analysis focused on argumentative essays (Appendix 7).

To measure improvement I initially adopted the criteria set by Andrews, Costello & Clarke (1993):

1) Length of an argument – ability to sustain an argument.
2) Sensitivity to other points of view (more than rejection/ incorporation) – ability to demolish an argument or use it to strengthen their own position.
3) Diction of the argument (signposting terminology) – ability to fully understand and apply terminology.

4) Logical coherence of the argument.
5) Awareness of rhetorical possibilities – used to convey message or frame argument.

To assist development of written work, students were encouraged to submit first drafts of their essays to allow for review and improvement. These drafts were scrutinised to gain insight into how students reviewed their work and how well they understood and responded to feedback given. Students' work, teachers' comments and redrafts of work were all counted as data. Conclusions from initial analysis of these were used to construct questions for interviews and to develop pedagogy in subsequent phases.

b) Merits of Method

The collection of written work was the easiest aspect of data collection, as it constituted a natural part of the teaching and learning process. However, it quickly became evident that the volume of essays being collected threatened sustainability and required careful logging, especially if students handed work in late. Choices had to be made in terms of which work was more or less useful for further analysis and scrutiny. The need to distinguish between examination and class work became evident, as there was a clear difference in both length and quality of writing. Argumentation produced under examination conditions introduced elements of complexity as students must work from memorized material under strict time constraints, and could not reveal the full extent of their understanding or grasp of argumentation. The scrutiny of class work therefore provided a clearer picture of progress over time. Also, as Sarah and I had marked the work, the link between the feedback comments and aspects of strong or weak argumentation were easier to define.

c) Initial Assessment and Findings

The first essays of the year were analysed to set a benchmark for further work and progress, and also to identify problems with students' explanation and illustration of philosophical theory. Attainment and improvement comments from drafts and final essays, as well as comments from feedback sheets, were collated. An initial comparison was also made between drafts and final essays to examine students' ability to redraft their work. Similar exercises were conducted with two of the longer assessment essays, one from each teacher, to determine whether there was a difference between students'

performances in different modules. This also afforded initial analysis of their argumentation skills. We examined whether students were making similar or different errors between 15 and 30 mark essays and between the two topics on the course, as well as identifying the nature of these mistakes.

A more in-depth analysis extended the scrutiny of one 30 mark essay. Students first produced a draft explaining in detail the theories of Locke and Hobbes in preparation for the subsequent lesson which concentrated on teaching analysis and assessment skills. The draft and final essays were analysed in detail against the marking criteria, aimed at determining whether particular errors were re-occurring across the work of all students. The two drafts were compared to determine what changes occurred as a result of the reviewing exercise. I was also interested to see whether my initial mark would change with more thorough analysis of their work. I was aware that my continuing exploration of the requirements for argumentation could account for differences in marks given.

Analysis of the essays showed that students failed to articulate reasoning required to justify their views or to show links between different ideas used in developing their position. This elaboration is either missing, resulting in assertions or leaps in logic, or present but limited or lost within disorganised presentation (Greenwald *et al.*, 1999). Comparisons between students' verbal and written argument showed that components of argumentation that are evident or teased out in verbal debate are often lost when these ideas are transferred into written work (Felton & Herko, 2004). Feedback from students revealed their struggle to deploy language and structure to indicate the multiple conversational turns required to demonstrate different positions and responses between disagreeing parties (Reiser, 2004; Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). It became apparent that in phase 2 students were less reliable in submitting written work. The submission percentage for most students was 56% or 67% of essays set, with only one student submitting all set pieces across both subject units. This affected opportunities for feedback and development, but also affected the data available for analysis. It was also noted that students did not submit any draft work unless this was specifically set.

d) Adjustments to Method

For both units, one longer discussion question was completed in lesson with students given time to prepare at home. This was to combat low submission rates, and to test students' ability to write under timed conditions, to a pre-set theme. It was found that the analysis process was very time consuming. It was therefore decided that a range of essays would be analysed with special focus on those linked to intervention lessons and those submitted by the students who continued through to A2-Level.

It also became clear, once the formal analysis began, that the AQA mark scheme's descriptions were too broad to generate useful data for the purpose of addressing the research question, 'What aspects of written argumentation do students and teachers find problematic and unproblematic?' An analysis and synthesis of the taxonomies, rubrics and self-help literature previously reviewed (sections 2.3 and 2.4) was used to:

1. more accurately categorise elements of argumentative writing;
2. develop a sheet to identify and track levels of argumentation demonstrated in students' written work.

The AQA A2-Level mark scheme level descriptors (2014b, p. 5) were scrutinised for knowledge and skills criteria (e.g. 'Reasoning and argumentation are effective, penetrating … with some insight and sophistication' and 'construction of argumentation is relevant and sustained'). Following several readings of taxonomies and textbooks I picked out and synthesised descriptions of elements of argumentation. After designing and testing several tick sheets, two were used to track students' progress through consecutive essays; one identified elements of argumentation used by students' in their essays (Appendix 1), the other differentiated between more and less successful use of these in essays (Appendix 2).

e) Quality of Findings and Conclusions

Essays were written and marked as part of the normal teaching process with deeper analysis following at a later date. The iterative nature of the study meant that Sarah and I were constantly developing our understanding of what was required for good argumentation, and linked with our scrutiny of the examination scripts, our understanding of examiner's expectations was changing. Therefore, it had to be

acknowledged that our approach to the essays and marking was changing over time. This was important when trying to judge changes to students' work based on marking and feedback comments. For example, in Phase 2 the intervention lessons concentrated on the use of vocabulary to link discussion back to the question. This would have influenced future marking, meaning an increase in feedback comments about linking would not necessary mean that students were making more errors in this area. Therefore, I avoided any attempts to quantify comments. Rather, where a specific focus emerged, this was adopted as an analysis code and used to scrutinise and assess written work through all the phases. The use of the tick sheets helped extract specific examples of elements of argumentation, such as descriptive text, illustrations, critical analysis, evaluation, etc. It was then possible to ascertain whether students were including more element of argumentation in their work as well as judging which aspects of style and structure they were utilising. An unexpected benefit was the introduction of objectivity to the analysis process because the AQA mark schemes allowed me to mark in my role of teacher, and the tick sheets allowed me to analyse students' work in my role of practitioner researcher. This also afforded the opportunity for the collection of additional data, as the comments and marks developed through marking could be analysed separately and compared against findings from the analysis. For example, on one essay (KAS.1.4), I had awarded a grade A to John's essay, whereas analysis utilising the tick sheets suggested a lower grade. This raised questions around the accuracy of marking using the broad descriptors in the AQA mark schemes as well as suggesting possible reasons for inconsistency in examination marking.

3.5.2 Developing and Assessing Pedagogy.

In this section I discuss data collection methods used to assess teaching and learning in lessons and the development of pedagogy through observation of intervention lessons and extra-curricular sessions.

Observation and Analysis of Lessons/ Lesson Materials (Some Videoed)

a) Description of Method

The choice between being unobtrusive or participant observations (Marshall & Rossman, 1999) was not an option due to timetabling constraints explained above. It was not possible for either Sarah or I to be physically in one another's classroom lessons observing each other (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010); attempts to change our timetables to afford this opportunity were unsuccessful. I was initially reluctant to use video recordings to facilitate retrospective observations as non-participant observation would have allowed the noticing of details that the use of video excluded. However, the recordings afforded opportunities to observe lessons repeatedly and notice things that might have been missed otherwise. Observations and transcriptions of the videos allowed me to collect examples of students' and teachers' interactions and words. Where appropriate, these contributed to the data on students' and teachers' perspectives addressed in all the research questions.

For this research project the view was taken that, as well as immersing students in argumentation, this was a skill that needed explicit teaching 'through the provision of suitable activity, support and modelling' (Simon, Erduran & Osborne, 2006). In each phase, beginning from Phase 2, a selection of lessons was set aside to focus on specific aspects of argumentation, as outlined below:

- Phase 2 – four lessons focusing on identifying and avoiding tangential and juxtaposed argumentation.
- Phase 3 – focus on providing students with scaffolds to develop structuring of argumentation.
- Phase 4 – focus on encouraging student to develop their own essay outlines, augmented by extra reading.
- Phase 5 – focus on encouraging additional research and reading to develop depth of discussion in argumentation.

The viewings of video recordings were conducted as retrospective analytical observations (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). These started as unstructured observations, allowing the capture of a wider range of behaviour, followed by analysis for patterns of

behaviour or relationships. Some partial structure developed in order to focus on certain aspects that emerged. These included:

- observing interactions between students, such as finishing sentences or interrupting feedback;
- observing behaviour such as notetaking, answering questions or asking each other for help;
- asking for clarification or offering examples for or explications of theory discussed;
- observing examples of tangential or focused/ unfocused contributions to discussions.

b) Merits of Method

As participant-observers, Sarah and I were able to develop rapport with the participants and augment the video recordings by noting our own and participants' interactions in lessons (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010). Although we did not have to make the decision on whether to remain unobtrusive (Marshall & Rossman, 1999), it is clear from watching footage that students were conscious of the camera. Despite using video, it was felt that detailed descriptive notes following lessons encouraged careful observation, ensuring that as much detail as possible was 'noticed'. Repeated viewings and transcriptions of the videos made the process of 'noticing' the actions of teachers and students easier. However, with the positioning of the camera, it was often only the teachers' voice that could be observed. It was clear that the introduction of the video camera influenced the actions of the students, which was acknowledged and included in interpretations (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1992).

Although interpretation is inevitable and useful when describing observations (Thomas, 2016), it was important to avoid drawing premature conclusions (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), especially in view of our prior knowledge of the students. It was also important to ensure conclusions and inferences were not purely subjective to the researcher, meaning that tentative conclusions had to be more fully explored through follow-up interviews (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1992). The initial intention was that teachers would remain alert, jotting down keywords as reminders of significant events; however, we

found that we soon entered 'teaching mode' and forgot to do this. It did, however, prove useful to record our perceptions as soon after the lesson as possible.

A strength of video observation is that it allowed the researcher full participation in the lesson (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1992). When deciding what to observe with the camera, I began with the view that words were more important than body language or behaviour. However, focus on behaviour and body language became important, but required a rearrangement of the seats, meaning students were placed into an unfamiliar seating pattern. This resulted in reactive behaviour, requiring cautious interpretation. Although the static nature of the camera proved frustrating where possibly significant behaviours had not been captured, the use of video allowed for layers of observation to be built up, providing evidence that could be used to prompt later discussions with students. As with general observations, although non-verbal behaviours and communications can provide hints to the interaction, reasons for these remain unclear and need further exploration through other methods such as interviews.

c) Initial Assessment and Findings

When viewing the lessons, the focus was on trying to understand how well students had responded to teaching strategies, and whether there were any behaviours or responses that did not confirm data or reports received from other data collection sources. Following a transcription of the first two lessons and several viewings of the accompanying group interview, the following layers of description and analysis were recorded (Thomas, 2016):

- Thick, detailed descriptions of what the students were doing, the interaction between them, possible causal relationships between events;
- Interpretation and impressions of what was happening;
- Developmental notes demonstrating the researcher's thinking process and the connection between different strains of thought;
- A clear delineation between observed and interpreted detail, but acknowledging the interplay between the two; as the observer's thinking develops, their 'seeing' will change, and *vice versa*.

Below are some examples of behaviour that caught our attention:

- Tactics employed by students to avoid making notes or writing down their thoughts;
- Students completing each other's sentences, or helping others express their views;
- The point at which students put up their hand to ask a question or interject an idea, together with types of interjection made;
- Whether students spoke in clear, structured sentences or whether their communication was halting and disjointed.

d) Adjustments to Method

It became apparent that certain practical issues needed to be taken into account. The positioning of the camera needed careful consideration as in some of the lessons key contributors could not be seen. The use of an external microphone was required to ensure that the words were clearly heard. It also became apparent that a full transcription of all recordings would not be possible. Therefore, analysis was built up from repeated viewing and recording of significant events, with key intervention sessions fully transcribed. Each viewing focused on a different aspect, e.g. were students making notes, how quickly were they responding to questions, were responses focused or were students making errors such as giving tangential responses, were they helping each other with clarifications?

e) Quality of Findings and Conclusions

The collection of data via lesson observation was less successful for a number of reasons. As the recorded lessons were restricted to intervention or interview lessons, there is little evidence of 'normal' teaching, and lessons that were recorded are too sporadic to give a clear picture. Together with the self-consciousness of students, these data cannot be counted as representative of routine lessons in philosophy. However, the data proved useful in two ways. Comments made by students were added to their feedback given through interviews, diaries and questionnaires, and in some instances were found to augment or challenge what students had said elsewhere.

On a few occasions it was also possible to compare what students had taken away from the lessons and added to their written work. One such exercise highlighted problems with students' review of work. A lesson that constituted feedback on written work

included detailed focus on creating links between paragraphs and themes. Students were then asked to review and resubmit their work. When comparing the essays with the lesson, it was noticed that one student's work followed the lesson closely, while the other essays appeared more disjointed. To explain this, redrafts were compared with the original essays, revealing a patchwork approach to redrafting. In other words, the students had dropped ideas into their original essays but changed very little else, resulting in less cohesion in their writing.

Additional Observation Data (Jacobsen Program/ Other Teachers)

a) Description of Method

During phases 3 and 4, students attended the ten-week Jacobsen Philosophy Program hosted by the Royal Institute of Philosophy and run by a university Philosophy tutor. This source is described briefly as its contribution to addressing the research questions was judged to be tangential, yet important. Some sessions were recorded, affording opportunities to compare students' oral contributions and argumentation in formal and informal settings. One session was allocated to discuss different approaches to structuring argumentation essays. This afforded the opportunity to compare students' written essays with the discussion in the session. It was also possible to compare their essays with those of Year 12 students who attended the same session. There was no initial assessment made of this method. Permission was gained from the tutor and all students to record the sessions in the hope that something useful might be captured.

Another source of data arose from students' repeated reference to scaffolds and marking received from other teachers. Data collected from other teachers was used to develop more searching interview questions to interrogate some responses provided by students.

b) Quality of Findings and Conclusions

It was difficult to draw meaningful inferences directly from this data due to differences in context. The Jacobsen Program sessions were less formal than lessons and focused on different content, participants included non-philosophy students and the program had no formally assessed outcomes. Essay writing and expectations in formal lessons would necessarily be different. However, the data proved useful in developing further inquiry.

For example, the Jacobsen session aimed at essay planning raised important questions. When reviewing the videotaped session I noticed the Year 13 students appeared to 'switch off', making little contribution. A review of subsequent essays showed little inclusion of the advice given. Deeper questioning revealed students' perceptions that the session was only relevant to Year 12s.

Similarly, data received from other teachers afforded opportunities to scrutinise students' perspectives. When asked how much reading was expected/ undertaken in other subjects, John responded:

> 'Generally I'd turn up for those lessons [History] and just find out what I need to learn … it's not like philosophy where you might need to read a bit more just to understand it. You will understand it, because it's just information. Um … so I don't ever need to go any further.' (John.SIQ.5.2)

This contrasted with essay preparation advice given to students by the History teacher (Image 3.1).

Image 3.1: Sample of Essay Writing Advice from History Teachers

Read the question	Read notes and a book	Read more books
• Understand the demands of the question – how far/to what extent etc. • Think of 4 or 5 simple answers to	• Using the simple answers you have already thought of, make notes from a book and your notes to gain ideas and examples	• Read more widely around the subject to get more examples and details • When reading look for useful ideas and points of view, ways

Again, care was needed in drawing conclusions from this data, but it informed deeper questions about students' study habits. It also informed subsequent interventions, whereby Sarah and I devised exercises aimed at encouraging extra reading and synoptic links.

3.5.3 Capturing Student Perspectives

In this section I discuss data collection methods used to capture student perspectives through interviews, reflection diaries and questionnaires.

Interviews – Group and Individual

a) Description of Method

Gaining access to students' responses through some form of questioning was vital for accessing students' understandings, perceptions and experiences. The research questions, to a large extend, addressed their learning and experience of our teaching, making it important to find ways to elicit their views. This data could have been collected using surveys or questionnaires and these may have been utilised if the sample size had been bigger. Surveys and questionnaires allow the collection of large quantities of data whilst requiring less time of the researcher, which may have been appropriate in view of time constraints explained above. However, due to the small sample size, I wanted to use interviews to allow more scope for open questions and deeper questioning at the data collection stage. Where students' responses or ongoing data analysis raised questions, the continual cycle of interviewing afforded the opportunity to revisit topics individually with students.

Since Philosophy involves group discussion, I used a balance of group interviews to access group perspectives, and individual interviews to allow for more privacy and time to elicit individual insights. Students' concerns and perspectives were transcribed and compared with emergent ideas informing the selection and trial of subsequent teaching strategies (Simons, 1981). As some students appeared reluctant to contribute, with others dominating conversations, Sarah and I moderated and facilitated discussions (Thomas, 2016), making an effort to balance predetermined and emergent themes. All group interviews were video or audio recorded, as were most of the individual interviews. To allow us to see the students, group interviews were conducted in the format of classroom question-and-answer sessions, with students sitting at their desks and the camera set up at the front of the room. Individual interviews were initially

videoed, but as some students demonstrated discomfort in front of the camera, later interviews were audio recording.

b) Merits of Method

Eliciting students' perspectives in relation to their learning (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1992; Sagor, 1993) was both crucial and problematic for this research project. Since the research was primarily about students' experiences and teachers' roles in supporting and facilitating their learning of argumentation, they were best placed to reflect on difficulties and successes experienced (Wellington *et. al.*, 2009). As well as risks of subjectivity, responses such as 'I know what I mean' and 'I don't know how to put it into words' revealed students' struggles to verbalise their experiences and difficulties, which necessitated the revisiting of responses in different phases and through different methods.

Although structured interviews can be administered and coded more quickly according to predetermined categories and provide consistency across respondents (Fontana & Frey, 2000), non-structured interviews facilitate the exploration of ideas where pre-determined theories are absent. These require more patience, sensitivity and skill, with longer accounts and more in-depth data requiring careful and time consuming analysis, but transcription can encourage slow and repeated readings of interviews, focusing attention on previously missed aspects of conversations, and making the familiar unfamiliar (Atkinson, 1981). The lack of pre-determined themes allows individual voices within conversations to emerge before data is analysed across interviews (Chase, 2010), allowing for co-production and negotiation of data and understanding (Simons, 1981). However, as interview involves interaction and cooperation (Harris & Brown, 2010), the relationship between researcher and respondent is important (Heyl, 2007), especially where this is one of teacher and student (Maxwell, 2013).

Marshall & Rossman (1999) identify a range of strengths and weaknesses offered by the use of interviews. Interviews allow the collection of large amounts of varied information from a few informants, which was useful for my small case study. They facilitate immediate follow-up and clarification if responses are unclear, and when combined with observations can afford greater understanding of meanings behind participants' verbal responses and actions. Interviews can provide data not directly

observable, such as thoughts and perspectives, and allow exploration into areas where little previous theory exists (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1992). They also allow participants to provide historic background to this data (Creswell, 2003).

c) Initial Assessment and Findings

The group interviews began with open-ended questions, hoping for a full and deep exploration of students' feelings and ideas (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1992; Sagor, 1993). However, as students struggled to articulate their experience clearly beyond feelings of frustration over their progress, the interviews quickly moved to semi-structured thematic questions prepared in advance, with discussion moving back and forth to allow all parties opportunities to seek or give clarification (Mason, 2002; Thomas, 2016).

The initial interview revealed students' lack of certainty as to whether they were producing argumentation and whether their writing remained focused on questions. Responses about their performance in the January examination included the following:

- '... don't know if you're presenting it properly ...';
- '... felt a bit hit and miss ...';
- '... wasn't sure how to approach it ...';
- ' ... you're not sure if what you're writing is relevant or right ...'

When asked whether they found the mark schemes helpful, they felt these had limited value as they were too vague. A scrutiny of comments showed that structure remained a difficulty:

- the mark scheme was not helpful in showing 'the core way you write the essay';
- it 'doesn't help you know what you need to do more of';
- comments on draft essays were more helpful as the mark scheme was 'too general';
- it was more helpful to have clear indications of 'exactly where' improvement was needed.

Group interviews allowed some discussion between students but created problems for comparing responses. The informal format of the interviews meant students were not asked the exact same questions. This was more noticeable when comparing initial and follow-up interviews as the latter, with more specific questions, generated more

comparable responses. However, even here it was noticed that students did not always answer questions posed. Their responses demonstrated developing understanding of the requirements of philosophy. They also demonstrated what students found difficult or were beginning to learn about argumentation. However, in terms of exploring what students found more or less useful, the interviews had limited value as it was evident that some students were moderating their responses for the group. They did, however, elicit useful discussion points for more in-depth exploration in individual interviews.

Group interviews were completed within lessons, which exacerbated problems with time constraints, requiring the maintenance of a reasonable pace and the abandonment of some questions. The use of recording equipment meant that the teacher/ researcher could concentrate on communicating with and listening to the students, but transcription of the interviews proved time consuming.

d) Adjustments to Method

Subsequent interviews were more carefully planned to ensure that questions were related to the study's objectives and to assist with subsequent coding. However, to avoid losing unexpected insights, both group and individual interviews maintained a conversational format to allow students freedom to interject their own ideas when appropriate. Initially a follow-up interview was not planned, but difficulties noted with group interviews made these necessary to fully explore some responses and observed behaviour. While the use of follow-up discussions risked faulty recall or the subsequent mis-construction of participants' experiences (Grant, Rohr & Grant, 2012), it was useful to refer back to the recorded lessons and group interviews as a means of prompting students' memory.

e) Quality of Findings and Conclusions

The aim of interviews is to elicit an account of the social world from participants' perspectives and it is the responsibility of the interviewer to foster the trust and openness (Boeije, 2010) needed as a pre-condition for developing trustworthy, authentic, detailed, contextualised accounts. In Phase 1 questions were kept as open as possible to elicit this perspective, but influence from the teacher-student relationship, classroom setting and peer opinion could not be ignored. When it became clear that more direction was needed, this further limited spontaneous disclosure. This was

mitigated to some extent by the phased nature of the study which allowed topics to be revisited and responses to be triangulated. The mix of interview methods provided further triangulation and allowed strong and weak patterns to emerge from responses. Video and audio recordings allowed voice inflections, hesitations, and other clues to add authenticity to accounts and informed some of the interpretations. However, one particular recording created problems when I was called away from the interview for a few minutes. During transcription I heard the students discuss something that they were clearly not comfortable sharing with me. This raised an ethical dilemma. The disclaimer signed by students (Appendix 10) allowed them to make judgements on what could be included, and gave them the right to withdraw from the research at any point. I therefore felt I had to respect the fact that they had made the statement 'outside my hearing'. However, this remained problematic. Although I could not 'unhear' the exchange, I made a conscious effort to exclude it from my own perspective and subsequent analysis. Secondly, it highlighted the fact that data collected through interviews are constrained by interviewees' choices. Thus, any interpretations must recognise that aspects of interviewees' perspectives might be withheld despite every effort at building rapport and trust. I felt precedence must be given to their rights to privacy of thought over-and-above the aims of the study.

As with written work above, I was also aware that comments made and language used by students would be influenced by the focus of intervention lessons at each phase. For example, after the Phase 2 intervention, which focused on linking words, students spoke more about using linking sentences and vocabulary. I took care with any inferences drawn from patterns that appeared to emerge in direct correlation to intervention lessons.

Students' Reflection Diaries/ Questionnaires

a) Description of Method

The purpose of reflective diaries was to capture personal perspectives from students and teachers, as well as reveal patterns of learning in individual work. The data collected here was initially meant to differ from that collected in interviews and lesson observations as the diaries were meant to allow for ongoing personal reflection. In

phase 1 students were given reflection diaries and asked to record their 'thoughts, emotions, actions, reactions' (Thomas, 2016, loc. 3553) to their learning, both in lesson and independently. At the end of this phase it became evident that students were not utilising the diaries; some students were also unreliable in bringing them to lessons. It was also noted that the depth of reflection varied between students. It was decided that time would be set aside during focus lessons in order to capture a more reliable set of responses. The data captured here lacked the spontaneity that I had initially hoped for when devising the data collection method, but they proved useful in capturing students' thoughts and perceptions at the time of the lesson. This differed from interview responses which were elicited days or weeks after the event. In phases 4 and 5 questionnaires, utilising open-ended questions, were used to elicit more focused and detailed responses. These, again, were answered after-the-fact, but they allowed the collection of a larger amount of individual data in students' own time. The timing of these questionnaires was helpful to the students as they were approaching their final examinations, but they were also timely in terms of data collection as students could reflect on their progress and how their perceptions and learning had progressed.

b) Merits of Method

Weaknesses in using reflection diaries and questionnaires are that accounts are likely to be partial, reflecting particular interests or concerns of the authors. Construction of ideas (Mason, 2002) occurs as students seek clearer self-understanding of their perspectives and as they interpret memories and experiences within the contexts of questions asked. Students were aware that their reflections would be read, influencing their reported perception of their learning (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Furthermore, when interpreting guidance questions and mapping responses, it is assumed that respondents have correctly interpreted information that is conveyed indirectly (Grant, Rohr & Grant, 2012), but this may not be true. If respondents misinterpret questions, responses could be tangential and not convey accurate perspectives on questions being asked.

However, a related strength is that students who felt uncomfortable offering comments in lessons may be more forthcoming with their ideas in diaries and questionnaires (Creswell, 2003). Furthermore, the process of reflection can in itself become a learning strategy as students gain greater insight into their own learning. The subjective nature

of the data made coding difficult and time consuming. The interpretation and use of the data was, therefore, cautious and verified through follow-up interviews and data collected from other methods.

c) Initial Assessment and Findings

Although the initial data collected through the reflection diaries appeared sparse, when the entries were analysed, they were found to contain a large amount of useful information. The entries were scrutinised, with examples such as the following highlighted:

- Students' perceptions of what philosophy involves;
- Aspects of philosophy they found more or less difficult;
- Learning/ study strategies they employed;
- Whether these strategies were helpful.

From the highlighted samples, initial coding themes were constructed (Table 3:16).

Table 3.16: Initial Categorisation of Coding Themes

	Difficult or Unhelpful	**Helpful**
Knowledge and Understanding	Language in the text. Reading from the book.	Discussion. Hearing different opinions. Seeing the bigger picture. Doing independent research.
Selection and Application	Selecting relevant points. Making points relevant. Which philosophers to use. Remembering the different theories. Which illustrations to use.	Seeing examples. A list of possible controversial discussion points from which to choose.

Structure	Identifying and using premises and conclusions.	Relating sentences back to the questions or conclusions. Keeping the conclusion in mind. Text analysis. Argument formulation. Plans with arrows to show connections. Structural information.
Writing	Planning. Examination technique.	Sample essays. Individual help via email. Timed questions, reviewed and with the opportunity to rewrite and improve. Philosophical vocabulary.

This brief analysis provided focus for the development of future lessons and pedagogy. It was decided that reflection diaries were useful as a data collection method, but that adjustments were needed to ensure some consistency in their use.

d) Adjustments to Method

A range of open and focused questions were used to elicit greater depth, focus and consistency in students' reflections (see Appendix 8). In phases 2 and 3, students were asked to respond to broad questions in order to guide their reflection. In phase 4 this feedback was augmented with a list of open questions in the form of a questionnaire. In phases 2, 3 and 5 students' reflections were completed by hand in diaries, with students given 5 to 10 minutes lesson time for reflections. In phase 4, more targeted questions were emailed to students, allowing them to respond in more detail and in their own time. At each phase students' responses informed subsequent interview questions, but at the end of phase 4 a detailed interview schedule was drawn up to interrogate previous

responses in more detail. Students' responses were used to construct a schedule of individual extension questions which were posed in individual interview sessions.

e) Quality of Findings and Conclusions

Data collected through reflection diaries and questionnaires are subject to the same limitations as previously encountered. Participants make choices about what they choose to share and interpretations of data remain subjective. This was highlighted where students chose to ignore certain questions and where responses were shared in bullet-point format, resulting in gaps. The longitudinal nature of the study afforded opportunities for member-checking which strengthened my confidence in inferences drawn, but once students left further checking became impossible. Furthermore, familiarity with the students proved both helpful and problematic. On the one hand, familiarity with everything students had shared in lessons provided background, giving additional understanding and clearer interpretation to responses. However, this also provided problems when attempting to look at the data with fresh eyes. No attempt was made to view the data 'objectively', as I felt this was not possible, but attempts were made to view responses through different lenses to encourage unexpected themes to emerge. For example, one student's response to feedback questions included:

1. 'Argumentation is less knowledge more analysing.'

2. 'My writing is quite juxtaposed and doesn't link. I cram knowledge in and don't analyse as much as I should.'

   (Ruth.SRQ.2.2)

This feedback appears very basic, and having taught this student at GCSE Level, this response was as expected. However, repeated review and analysis of all responses and deeper questioning through interviews brought the realisation that the student was blurring analysis and juxtaposition. She had not fully realised that two ideas could be fully analysed and still juxtaposed, or that they could both be linked back to the question without drawing out the implications between them.

A further limitation on this research method is reliance on students' honest introspection. Some inconsistencies in reporting emerged as a result of the longitudinal nature of the study, and careful consideration was needed to judge whether this was a

result of students' progress and development, increasing depth of questioning both written and oral, or an indication that students were not being honest with themselves or me. In most cases a closer analyses and deeper questioning demonstrated growing self-awareness in terms of study habits or developing knowledge in understanding what was required.

3.5.4 Capturing Teachers' Perspectives

In this section I discuss data collection methods used to capture teachers' perspectives through reflection diaries.

Teachers' Reflection Diaries

a) Description of Method

The use of teachers' reflection diaries was, again, aimed at capturing our perspectives, understandings and accounts of experience. Two kinds of data were collected, our perspectives and observations related to our teaching and students' learning. As we were continually discussing our planning, teaching practices and experiences, perspectives and viewpoints, it was decided that formal interviews would not elicit new data. Instead, we felt that the use of reflective diaries would afford the opportunity to record these at the time when they were fresh in our minds. Not only did this count as data, but it also helped us remember and discuss aspects of our teaching experiences during planning and reflection sessions.

Sarah's and my reflections centred on planning selected lessons, expected learning outcomes, and perceptions of strengths and weaknesses observed in subsequent lessons and written work. In addition to reflecting our ongoing perspectives, our diaries also acted as 'devices for formulating and testing [our] analytical ideas' (Mason, 2002, p. 99). It was hoped these would provide opportunities to analyse progressive elements of our reflections in order to inform decisions for further reading and interventions.

b) Merits of Method

The subjective nature of the data made coding difficult and time consuming. Interpretation and use of the data would, therefore, need to be cautious, tested and verified through interview and data collected from other methods. It was recognised that entries would most likely reflect our particular interests or concerns. In terms of the constructivist approach adopted, this did not prove a flaw in the design, but Sarah and I tried to record our actions and teaching strategies as factually as possible, while being as honest and objective as possible in recorded perceptions. Philosophical underpinnings of the study recognise 'objectivity' is not possible; this meant we tried to utilise descriptive language while avoiding emotive and value laden observations.

c) Initial Assessment and Findings

It transpired that Sarah had not recorded any reflections in Phase 1. As part of the initial analysis an entry from her diary in Phase 2 was analysed against findings from other data collection sources in order to assess the value of this data. She noted that when students were forced to make their own notes, their responses showed greater understanding of materials. This contradicted students' reports: they found reading from textbooks difficult and unhelpful, but independent research was judged helpful. However, Sarah noted students still '[struggled] to make the connection between the criticism and how the criticism challenged the theory'.

Her diary recorded a broad format given to students to encourage deeper discussion and critique in argumentation:

- Explain theory/ criticism.
- Illustrate theory.
- Explain why illustration is relevant.
- Explain relevance to the question.
- Response.
- Evaluate response.

Three students used the outline, with essays demonstrating some success. They achieved better structure in terms of their overall argument and elements of argumentation were evident. It also appeared to help keep them focused on issues

relevant to the question. However, Sarah noted that the use of outlines included drawbacks. Students stuck too rigidly to the outline and did not appear sufficiently confident to include any new material. They did not produce any discussion beyond the suggested outline.

From this and other samples it was evident that reflection diaries facilitated capture of a rich and detailed thought process that may have been lost if Sarah had been interviewed at a later stage. Her perspective did not require transposition and any points that seemed unclear could be clarified through later conversations.

d) Adjustments to Method

As with students' diaries, it became apparent that reflective entries would need to be tethered to focus lessons and specific periods of data analysis and pedagogic development. It also became evident that, in relation to my own reflections, I needed to attempt a distinction between reflections, field notes and analytical notes. This proved the most difficult aspect. To make this distinction I used different methods of recording: reflections were recorded in diaries, discussions with Sarah and planning notes were communicated through email, and analytical notes were recorded in Word. It was acknowledged that a clear and complete distinction was not possible, but different recording methods helped with managing the growing quantity of data.

e) Quality of Findings and Conclusions

Sarah's reflection diary was less problematic than mine as she was reflecting directly on her teaching and students' learning. Ongoing analysis of data created difficulties for me in separating out reflection on teaching and learning, analysis of data and reflection on that analysis. At the time of writing I attempted to keep separate accounts, but where I found myself blurring accounts, I tried to record this in different coloured pens. It was ultimately impossible to stand back and view my reflections objectively because of the nature of the study, and I realised that Sarah's view would have been coloured by ongoing discussions and development of teaching and learning strategies. This data must, therefore, be viewed as emerging perspectives, and cannot be counted as our perspectives 'at the time'. While acknowledging the influence of these factors on the data collection process, I feel this does not significantly weaken the findings of the research. A reflexive approach and evolving understanding of the difficulties faced by

both students and teachers complements the aim of the research to develop strategies that support students' progress in philosophical argumentation.

3.6 Processes and Procedures of Data Analysis

Due to the longitudinal and iterative nature of the study, initial analysis conducted at each phase allowed for ongoing formulations of ideas (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014). During later, formal analysis, a substantive approach was adopted, 'concerned with capturing and interpreting meanings in the data' (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014, loc. 6640). Patton (2002) suggests that explanations in qualitative research are conjectures about why something happens rather than invariable laws.

Initial and ongoing analysis sought to understand changes to examination specifications and rubrics with several returns to examination documentation as new questions emerged. Terminology used in AQA rubrics was analysed against existing taxonomies (explained in section 4.2.A), and the distribution of marks across different AQA rubrics (AQA, 2008a, 2008b, 2012c, 2011, 2014b) was analysed and compared with Religious Studies rubrics (AQA, 2012a, 2013b) to elicit greater understanding of the complexity behind the allocation of marks. This provided a base against which to measure expectations and students' progress across data sets.

Data was drawn from students' and teachers' reflections, students' work, teachers' marking and feedback, teaching strategies trialled and observed lessons. Formal inductive analysis started with students' feedback to provide a window on their experiences of learning philosophy at A-Level (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014, loc. 6640). All students' words in the form of responses to interview questions, contributions to discussions, responses to questionnaires, reflections in response to prompt questions, were transcribed into separate documents for each student. In Nvivo10, transcripts were read and reread, utilising constant comparative method (Thomas, 2016, loc. 3820) to generate data-driven themes (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Yin, 2014) from 'the language and terms of those being studied' (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014, loc. 6656). Later on a cluster process was used to develop themes into more abstract and complex interpretive categories (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014, loc. 6656; Yin, 2014, loc. 3457). Themes generated were instrumental in informing analysis of data sets under sections 4.2.B (Development

of Teaching and Learning Strategies) and 4.2.C (Development of Argumentative Writing). A theme map (Image 3.2) was developed and used to apply cross-sectional analysis across data sets, providing systematic overview of the data and exploring connections between data sets (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014, loc. 6671). Data sets drawn from the case were used to 'examine and explicate' the themes (Thomas, 2016, loc. 2512). Non-cross-sectional deductive analysis was used to generate theory-driven codes (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) which helped seek out and test rival explanation for evidence drawn from the data.

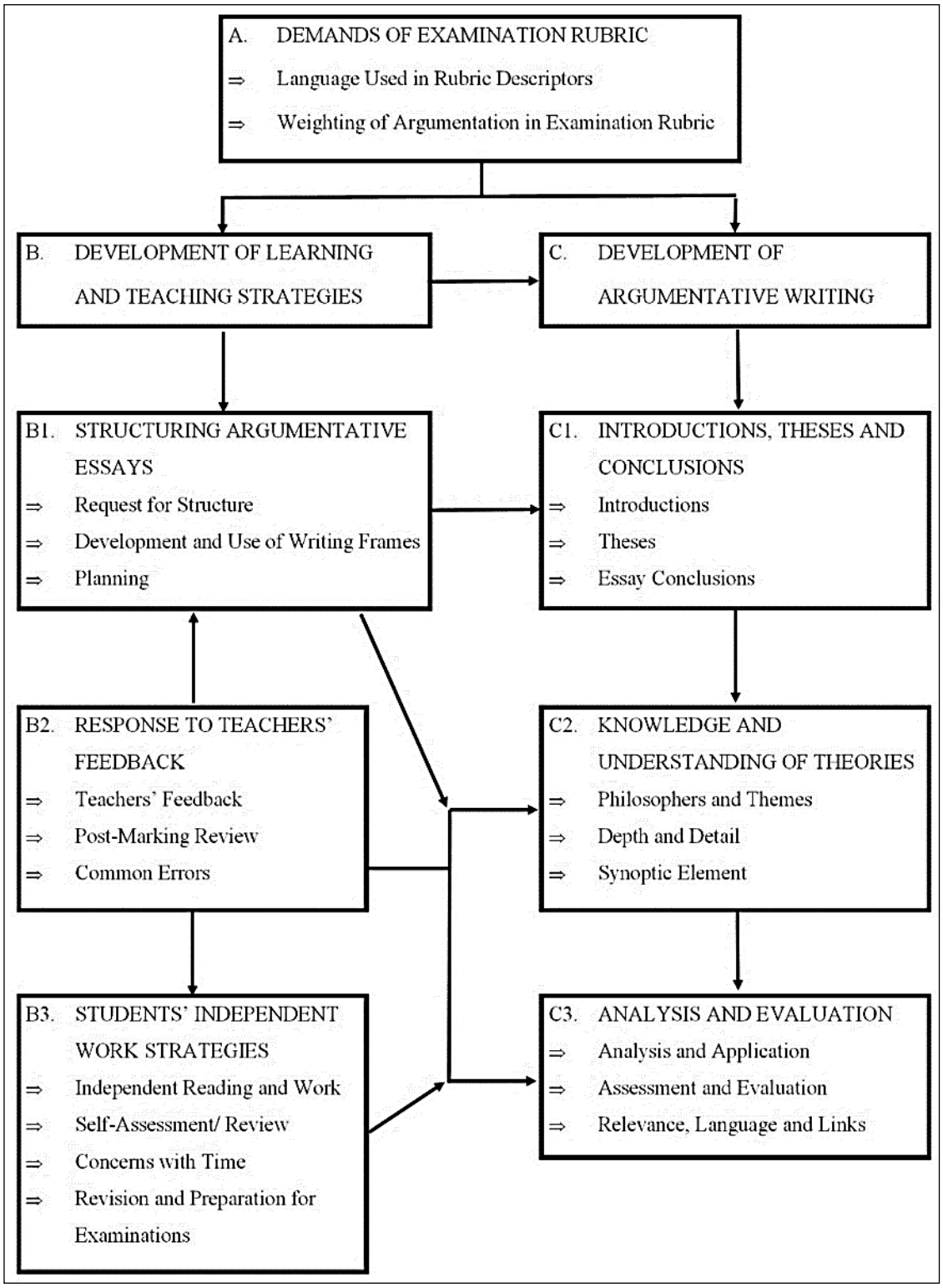
The tick sheets developed from the analysis of the taxonomies (Appendices 5 and 6) were used to facilitate the collection and analysis of elements of argumentation in students written work. They highlighted differences between knowledge (understanding concepts) and skills (ability to work with concepts at increased levels of complexity). This required careful analysis as similar words within taxonomies often denoted different outcomes. For example, Biggs (2011) gives examples of verbs said to indicate understanding. If students perform certain tasks, it is assumed they possess corresponding levels of understanding required to produce levels of argumentation. Bloom distinguishes between knowledge of subject-specific skills, techniques, methods and procedures, and abilities in carrying out these procedures in given situations (Krathwohl, 2002). Andrews (1995) focuses on relationships between concepts and ideas in support of arguments, again assuming students demonstrating different levels of argumentation possess corresponding procedural and metacognitive knowledge. However, on Bloom's taxonomy it could be argued that argumentation modelled by teachers can be understood at conceptual levels and imitated by students. This was important when assessing success and progress as students' outcomes can appear to match lesson objectives, but this is not necessarily the case. This was tested by checking students' abilities in transferring knowledge and procedures into new settings and through interview and discussion.

A further tick sheet (Appendix 9) was developed and used deductively to analyse teachers' written feedback on students' essays. Criteria were adapted and combined from a mix of literature for teaching English as a second language (Hyland, 1990; Hyland & Hyland, 2001) and teaching philosophy (Concepción, 2014; Stump, undated). Teachers' in-text and summative feedback was transcribed into an excel file and coded

against criteria on the tick sheets. This allowed the development of graphs to assess frequencies of types of comments and also allowed easy sorting of comments for cross-analysis with other data sets. Referencing against students' essays allowed comments to be tracked back to essays.

In a few instances (e.g. marking feedback, essay length) the use of numbers and counting instances (Yin, 2014, loc. 3451) proved useful to gain an overview of phenomena. These were not taken as statistically significant but used to 'add to the descriptive nature of the sample' and provide 'contextual information' (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014, loc. 6686).

Image 3.2: Concept Map of Analysis Themes



3.7 Wider Relevance of the Research

Overarching objectives of the study included a deeper understanding of the experiences of students and teachers during the two-year A-Level period to inform the trialling of teaching and learning strategies aimed at helping students develop written argumentation in philosophy. The production of knowledge that other teachers and students would find useful was expected. However, this objective is served by giving careful attention to the first two, and by inviting readers into the experience through rich and detailed documentation of the process and conclusions (Delamont & Hamilton, 1993).

Schofield (1993, p. 93) compares 'classical conceptions of external validity' with the internal validity sought in qualitative research; the former seeks replicability while the latter seeks credibility. Single case studies cannot utilise statistical sampling procedures applied to large population studies (Hancké, 2009), but their use of thick descriptions and explicit discussion of processes leading to conclusions aims to provide readers with the means to reach similar conclusions. In both cases validity aims to ensure that claims made correspond as closely as possible to the reality studied, with generalisation referring to the transferability of results onto a wider population. However, confidence in validity and generalisability in each research tradition comes from different sources. In quantitative research, confidence is based on statistical probability and the replicability of the research, with careful sampling giving confidence that results apply to the wider population from which they are drawn. With qualitative research, transferability relies on resonance with readers, with confidence in conclusions based on readers understanding the described processes and reaching similar conclusions. This requires vividly detailed, exemplified and contextualised presentations of data and findings. Qualitative research considers combinations of factors contributing to an outcome (Hancké, 2009) within a 'life cycle' (Schofield, 1993). This complements my research as students' experiences are examined over time, constituting a portion of their overall and ongoing progress within their larger educational experiences. Problems reported nationally by other teachers and students appear similar to those reported by our students, but it would be a leap to apply simplistic conclusions to the apparent similarities.

Bassey's fuzzy generalisation (2001) utilises cautious predictive language when reporting conclusions within a case study in an attempt to circumvent problems encountered in generalising from one case, or cluster of cases, to wider populations. Payne & Williams' moderate generalisations (2005) are moderate in the scope of their predictions and their openness to change. Both emphasise the importance of thick descriptions, providing confidence in the reliability and internal validity of accounts and allowing readers to judge the transferability of findings. Hammersley (2001) and Pratt (2003) both offer critiques and expansions of Bassey's fuzzy generalisation which highlight important considerations. Hammersley states that all scientific generalisations should utilise cautious predictive language, as the replication of conditions of application are crucial to any statements of generalisation. He emphasises that readers need to combine knowledge of the study's context with their practical experiences when judging and utilising predictions. Pratt adds to this by distinguishing between readers as researchers and practitioners, emphasising the role of practitioners in applying research to their own contexts and measuring a study's usefulness in 'effecting change proactively in their own situation' (p. 30). This is very useful when deciding the point of a case study, especially for my research, as the study aims to share insights that others will find useful, adapt and hopefully take forward in new ways. 'The singularity of case studies makes them suggestive rather than prescriptive, enlightening in so far as they resonate with the experiences of others' (Mitchell, 1994, p. 2).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

All research is intrusive to some extent (Lindsay 2010), necessitating the consideration of intentional and unintentional negative consequences. All students, parents and teachers gave informed, written consent (Robson 2011; Lindsay 2010), and the study aimed to ensure research would not hinder teaching and learning (Appendix 10). Our Sixth Form is still classed as a 'school', making it appropriate to seek parental consent. The Academy, as a training school, routinely acquires permission from all students to record or tape lessons, but explicit consent related to my study was sought rather than assumed. Informed consent included the 'demands, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, and benefits that might be involved' (Halse & Honey 2010, p.128).

In order to respect approximate normal teaching techniques and students' choice in terms of levels of participation, conscious attempts were made to keep lessons and development of teaching in line with Academy practice and policies. In some instances students did not attend lessons or interviews, or did not hand in work or reflections. This produced gaps in the data, which added to the 'messiness' (Mellor, 2001) of the data collection process. The flexible, emergent nature of the study required renegotiation of consent throughout the study. These aspects required some adjustment to data collection processes. For instance, later in the study some students became uncomfortable being filmed; therefore, later interviews and classroom interactions were captured via audio recording rather than video. Where students felt unable to attend interviews due to time pressures, adjustments were negotiated and data was collected using alternate methods. Due to the participant nature of the study, covert observation was not used (Robson 2011). Balance between individual privacy and group reflection was sought through a mix of group and individual data collection methods. This required careful reflection on differences between normal teaching where students are encouraged to risk uncertain responses and group interviews where reticence to participate should be respected and responses negotiated.

Ethical issues relating to the fair and accurate handling of data collection, analysis and reporting link to validity (Lindsay 2010). Care in collecting, recording and transferring data into a full Research Data Database (Yin, 2014, loc. 3217) allowed for checking. Adjustments or compromises have been documented and reported as clearly as possible (Lindsay 2010).

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

> ‘Philosophy is like trying to open a safe with a combination lock. Each little adjustment of the many dials seems to achieve nothing, only when all is in place does the door open.’
>
> (Wittgenstein, quoted in Drury, 1981, p. 96)

4.1 Introduction

The research questions, restated below for ease of reference (Table 4.1), were developed at each phase, with initial data analysis conducted at each stage to inform subsequent development, linked to feedback from students and insights gained. At the end of the data collection periods all data were analysed systematically across all phases. Space limitations necessitated the reporting of significant instances, with samples of data representing more extensive analysis. Appendix 11 provides a matrix used to ensure all research questions were considered. However, in the report below, research questions pertinent to each theme are summarised for ease of reference.

Table 4.1: Development of Research Questions

OVER-ARCHING RESEARCH QUESTIONS	**FIRST DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**	**SECOND DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**	**THIRD DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**	**FOURTH DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**	**FIFTH DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**
How do students and teachers define doing philosophy, with a focus on written argumentation?	1.1 What level of written argumentation does the examination rubric require? 1.2 Did marks for written argumentation change? 1.3 If so, what changed? 1.4 How do the expectations change at A2-Level?	2.1 What progress have students made in producing written argumentation in examination essays?	3.1 What progress have students made in structuring written argumentation?	4.1 How do students perceive independent reading and research?	5.1 What do students understand by precision and sophistication in written argumentation? 5.2 What progress have students made in producing precision and sophistication in written argumentation?

What aspects of written argumentation do students and teachers find problematic and unproblematic?	1.5 What have students found more or less problematic in producing written argumentation?	2.2 What do students find more or less problematic in using language to improve flow and connectivity of ideas in written argumentation?	3.2 What do students find more or less problematic in structuring written argumentation? 3.3 What do students find more or less problematic in reviewing and redrafting written argumentation?	4.2 What do students find more or less problematic in engaging with written argumentation in their independent study?	5.3 What do students find more or less problematic in producing precision and sophistication in written argumentation? 5.4 What do students find more or less problematic in preparing for formal examinations?
What range of strategies do more and less successful students employ around developing written argumentation?	1.6 What strategies have students found more or less useful in producing written argumentation?	2.3 What strategies do students find more or less useful in developing quality of language utilised to improve flow and connectivity of ideas	3.4 What classroom strategies do students find more or less useful in learning to structure written argumentation? 3.5 What strategies do students find more or	4.3 How much independent study do students do? 4.4 What strategies do students find more or less useful in engaging with	5.5 What strategies do students find more or less useful in developing precision and sophistication in written argumentation? 5.6 What strategies do students find more

		in written argumentation?	less useful in reviewing and redrafting written argumentation?	independent reading and research?	or less useful in preparing for formal examinations?
What range of strategies do teachers consider more and less successful for supporting students around developing written argumentation?	1.7 What have teachers found more or less useful in teaching written argumentation?	2.4 What strategies do teachers find more or less useful in developing quality of language utilised to improve flow and connectivity of ideas in written argumentation?	3.6 What classroom strategies do teachers find more or less useful in teaching students to structure written argumentation? 3.7 What strategies do teachers find more or less useful in teaching students to review and redraft written argumentation?	4.5 What strategies do teachers find more or less useful in encouraging independent reading and research?	5.7 What strategies do teachers find more or less useful in helping students develop precision and sophistication in written argumentation? 5.8 What strategies do teachers find more or less useful in helping students prepare for formal examinations?

A key to referenced excerpts from interviews, essays, diaries, etc. is provided (Table 4.2). Names and terms identify types of data; the first number references the phase of research in which data was collected, the second number (where applicable) references instances within phases (e.g. 'SRQ.2.4' refers to Student Reflection Questions, phase 2, Reflection 4). In some instances dates and months are used.

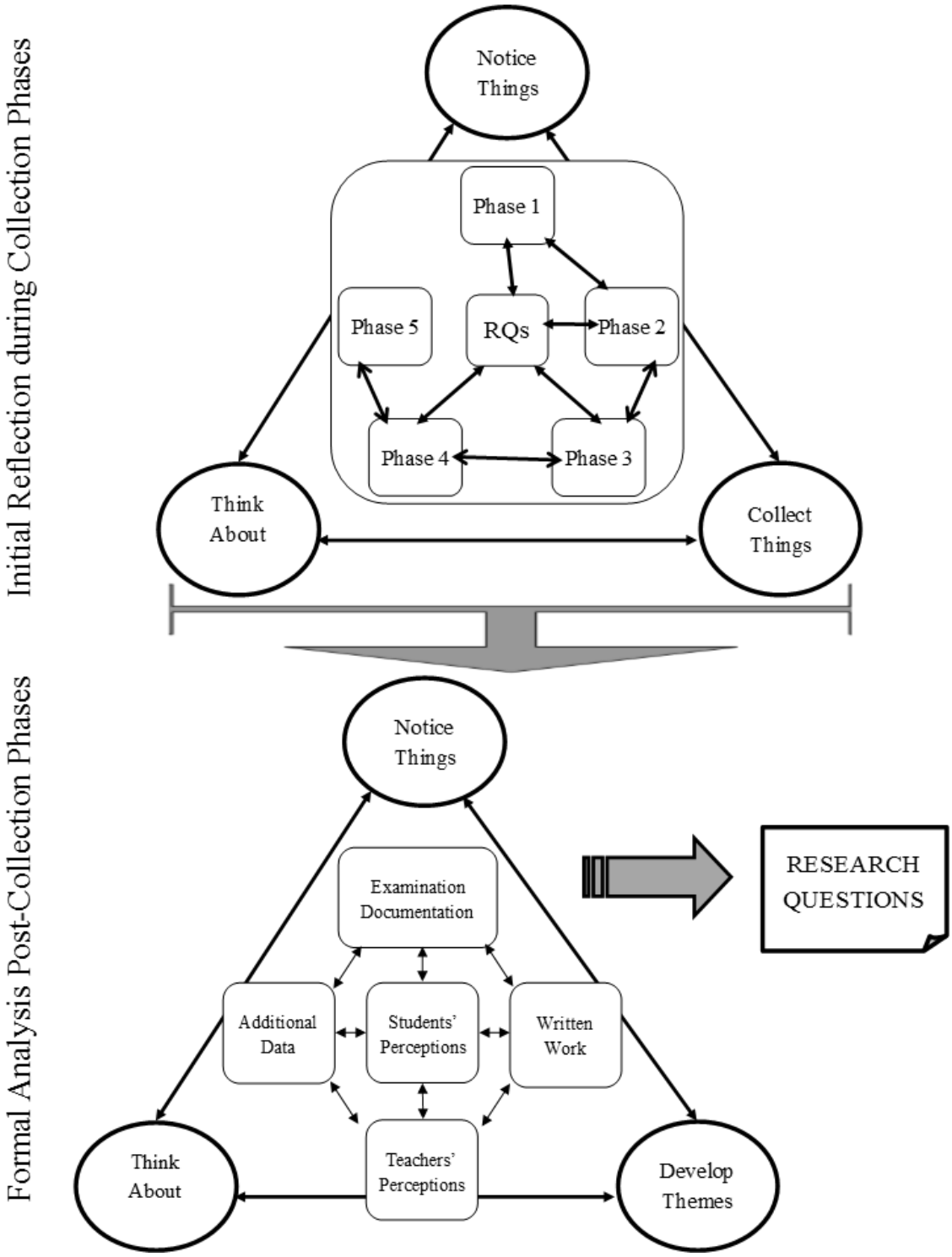
Table 4.2: Key to Referenced Excerpts

Data Type	**Data Code**
Students or teachers	John, Lydia, Mary, Ruth (students) KAS (me), SAS (Sarah, my colleague)
Types of data collected	SRQ – student reflection questions (reflection diaries/ questionnaires) SIQ – student interview questions (individual and group interviews) Reflect – teachers' reflection diaries (SAS.Reflect; KAS.Reflect) Essay – class essays Exam – examination scripts (followed by month and year) Frame – writing frames Feedback – teachers' written/ verbal feedback on essays
Numbers to indicate phases	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Second numbers to indicated more samples in same phases	.1, .2, .3, .4

4.2 Findings

The model in Image 4.1, explained below, was developed using Seidel's model of 'noticing, collecting and thinking' (1998, p. 1) and aimed to reflect the recursive, iterative and progressive nature of both the data collection and analysis.

Image 4.1: Process of Reflection and Analysis (based on Seidel, 1998)



Both the initial reflection and formal analysis were recursive, meaning each part of the process drew attention back to previous parts and informed ways forward, and iterative and progressive, meaning a cycle that kept repeating, allowing the generation of new ideas and deeper thinking about things. In the initial reflection stage this process referred to ongoing reflection during the collection of data. As new data was collected, new things were noticed, informing thinking about data already collected and influencing thinking about new data collection. This process suited my project's aim of allowing students' perceptions to inform the direction of research while tethering the process to the original research questions. During formal analysis, the recursive approach referred to the development and refining of themes. As parts of data were analysed, new things were noticed and thought about, either resulting in previous data being reanalysed or informing the analysis of new data, again tethered to the research questions.

The findings are reported in three main sections, with sub-sections in each.

- **Section A** – Demands of the examination rubric;
- **Section B** – Development of teaching and learning strategies;
- **Section C** – Development of argumentative writing.

Section A lays the foundation for the analysis because this is the standard against which students' work is assessed in the examination. Section B focuses on the process of teaching and learning strategies because this outlines the work and learning of teachers and students during the two-year period. In the analysis model (Image 4.1), 'Additional Data' is included here because it refers to the Jacobsen program and information received from other teachers, making it part of teaching and learning strategies. Section C focuses on students written argumentation, the outcome or product of the teaching and learning process.

4.A Demands of Examination Rubrics

Changes to AQA A-Level specifications (AQA, 2005) elicited much criticism, suggesting the revised requirements were too difficult for students to access (Skelhorn & Lewis, no date). Teachers and students found the language of rubrics and supporting material unclear. Research questions 1.1 to 1.4 explored these claims (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Research Questions Addressed – Analysis of Examination Rubrics

Research Questions
1.1 What level of written argumentation does the examination rubric require?
1.2 Did marks for written argumentation change?
1.3 If so, what changed?
1.4 How do the expectations change at A2-Level?

4.A1 Language Used in Rubric Level Descriptors

Two students reported finding mark schemes limited in their usefulness. Mary did 'not like using the mark scheme as it is too vague and general' (SRQ.3.5) and Lydia found it 'quite general' (SIQ.2.1). The wording of the generic mark scheme (AQA, 2011) was analysed against taxonomies and thinking frames (section 2.4.1), grading schedules (Appendices 1 and 3) and the tick lists developed to analyse students' written work (Appendices 5 and 6), in order to better understand how writing and argumentation skills are conceptualised and described in the examination rubric. Although a hierarchy of skills is evident, terminology appears vague. Table 4.4 shows descriptions for 'analysis'. The difference between analysis at Level 4 and Level 5 is relatively clear in terms of whether or not material is juxtaposed, but it is unclear what Level 5 proposes instead of juxtaposition. Also, the difference between 'some material' at the higher level is vague, and it is uncertain whether students lose marks purely for juxtaposition or whether they could also be penalised for employing insufficient amounts of material. The difference between 'some imprecision' at Level 5 and analysis from 'a secure knowledge base' at Level 6 is clearer than the distinction between 'analysis' at Level 5 and 'limited analysis' at Level 3. However, problems with mark schemes and supporting material go beyond language used.

Table 4.4: Criteria for Analysis in Examination Mark Scheme (AQA, 2011)

MARK SCHEME LEVEL	**Analysis – Unit 1 & 2 (30 mark questions)**
1	... extremely basic awareness of one relevant point without development or analysis
2	Analysis ... predominantly simple and/ or lack clarity in places ... errors in reasoning and understanding
3	... narrow focus on one aspect or a range of issues ... with limited understanding or analysis
4	Explain and analyse some relevant material ... juxtaposed rather than critically compared
5	Relevant philosophical issues ... analysed and explained but there may be some imprecision
6	Relevant philosophical issues ... analysed ... proceed from a secure knowledge base

The examiners' report (AQA, 2013a, pp. 3-5) was analysed to extract comments that identified problems limiting students to lower assessment levels:

- 'concentrates on [one aspect of the question]';
- 'limited either in scope or understanding';
- 'lacked detailed and precise development and analysis';
- 'tangential discussions';
- 'ideas rarely connected';
- 'more comfortable when describing positions';
- 'analysis and evaluation were under-developed';
- 'not clear how such discussions were connected to the question';
- 'lacked detailed analysis;
- 'left implications implicit'.

The first two comments refer to quantity and breadth of material utilised, as well as understanding demonstrated in their use. The remaining comments reference utilisation of material selected. However, the mark scheme fails to indicate how much of the mark is allocated to each skill or what terms like 'basic', 'narrow', 'some' or 'secure' mean. Hafner & Hafner (2003, p. 7-8) make distinctions on both these levels (Appendix 3). For example, students' theses count for 5 marks, distinguishing between 'excellent', 'good' and 'needs improvement', which are explicitly explained:

- Excellent: 'A clear statement of the main conclusion of the paper.' (5 marks)
- Good: 'The thesis is obvious but there is no single clear statement of it.' (4 marks)
- Needs Improvement: 'The thesis is present, but must be uncovered or reconstructed from the text of the paper.' (3 marks)

This analysis supported students' and teachers' perceptions that some terminology in the philosophy mark schemes was broad, requiring analysis to unpick differences between level descriptors. It is recommended that teachers develop their own rubric to identify and explain in detail the elements of argumentation that students need to development. Whether teachers explicitly explain links between their rubric and the examination mark scheme would be a matter of professional judgement based on whether such explanations would enhance students' understanding.

4.A2 Weighting of Argumentation in Examination Rubrics

The AQA 2007 specification (p. 17) outlined 3 Assessment Objectives (AOs), but my summary in Table 4.5 distinguishes between selection and application of 'examples' and 'relevant points', the reasons for which are explained below.

Table 4.5: Assessment Objectives (AQA, 2007, p. 17)

Assessment Objectives	**Objective Description**
A. Knowledge and Understanding	'Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant issues arising in the themes or texts selected for study. Show an awareness of the central debates and relevant philosophical positions and of the nature of arguments employed.'
B. Illustration	Select relevant examples to '[i]nterpret and analyse' philosophical arguments.
C. Selection, Application, Analysis	'Interpret and analyse philosophical argument, applying relevant points.'
D. Interpretation, Assessment, Evaluation	'Assess arguments and counter-arguments. Construct and evaluate arguments in order to form reasoned judgements.'

To judge whether complexity had been increased through the rubric's weightings, I analysed AOs across different rubrics. In Table 4.6, PLY2 (AQA, 2008a) is the pre-2009 Philosophy syllabus and RSS03 (AQA, 2012a) is the Religious Studies syllabus. Weightings in PLY2 and RSS03 were similar with a larger weighting given to AOs A and B (80% and 75% respectively). The new, generic PHIL1 mark scheme (AQA, 2012c) allocates 60% of the mark to the discussion elements of argumentation. In the first iteration of PHIL1 (AQA,2011), examples are marked with Knowledge and Understanding. The second iteration marks examples with the analytical element. A comparison of PLY2, Question c (Qc), against the first iteration of PHIL1, Questions b (Qb), shows a large different in elements A and B, dropping from 15 marks to 3 for knowledge, understanding and illustration. This is remedied in the second PHIL1 iteration, but combining elements B and C creates difficulties in assessing how much of the mark should be applied to examples and how much to selection and application of other materials. If elements are hierarchical, with elements such as analysis, assessment

and evaluation adding levels of complexity to argumentation, then moving more marks onto these elements increases challenges students face to access higher levels. Additionally, in Religious Studies, marks for A/B and C/D are split clearly between questions meaning students can concentrate on fewer criteria in each question.

Table 4.7 compares PLY3 (AQA, 2008b), PHIL3 (AQA, 2014b) and RST3B (AQA, 2013b). Although weightings in Philosophy for elements C and D increased from 32% to 40%, this brings the rubrics in line with the Religious Studies rubrics. However, Religious Studies rubrics are less complex as marks for A/B and C/D are separately allocated to part a and b questions respectively, making it easier for students to understand where marks are achieved. What none of the rubrics provide is a clear breakdown of marks against elements of argumentation, as seen in Hafner & Hafner (2003) (Appendix 3).

This analysis supported teachers' and students' perceptions that allocation of marks in philosophy mark schemes were unclear. Additionally, the new rubric made it more difficult, as compared with other subjects, for students to understand exactly which aspects of argumentation to include in their essays in order to access higher levels, especially at AS-Level. However, in Chapter 6 I discuss subsequent changes to the mark schemes made after my project ended which address both of these points (section 6.5).

Table 4.6: Comparison of Weightings in PLY2 (AQA, 2008a), PHIL1 (AQA, 2011, 2012c,) and RSS03 (AQA, 2012a).

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Assessment Objectives</th><th colspan="5">PLY2 – Philosophy of Religion</th><th colspan="4">PHIL1 – The Idea of God</th><th colspan="4">PHIL1 – New Generic Mark Scheme</th><th colspan="6">RSS03 – An Introduction to Religion and Science</th></tr>
<tr><th>Qa</th><th>Qb</th><th>Qc</th><th>TOTAL</th><th>%</th><th>Qa</th><th>Qb</th><th>TOTAL</th><th>%</th><th>Qa</th><th>Qb</th><th>TOTAL</th><th>%</th><th>Q1</th><th>Q2</th><th>Q3</th><th>Q4</th><th>TOTAL</th><th>%</th></tr>
<tr><td>A. Knowledge, Understanding</td><td>6</td><td>6</td><td>6</td><td>18</td><td>40</td><td rowspan="2">15</td><td rowspan="2">3</td><td rowspan="2">18</td><td rowspan="2">40</td><td>9</td><td>9</td><td>18</td><td>40</td><td rowspan="2">10</td><td rowspan="2">10</td><td rowspan="2">15</td><td rowspan="2">10</td><td rowspan="2">45</td><td rowspan="2">75</td></tr>
<tr><td>B. Illustrate</td><td></td><td>9</td><td>9</td><td>18</td><td>40</td><td rowspan="2">6</td><td rowspan="2">12</td><td rowspan="2">18</td><td rowspan="2">40</td></tr>
<tr><td>C. Select, Apply, Analyse</td><td></td><td></td><td rowspan="2">9</td><td rowspan="2">9</td><td rowspan="2">20</td><td></td><td>18</td><td>18</td><td>40</td><td rowspan="2">15</td><td rowspan="2">15</td><td rowspan="2">25</td></tr>
<tr><td>D. Interpret, Assess, Evaluate</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>9</td><td>9</td><td>20</td><td></td><td>9</td><td>9</td><td>20</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>6</td><td>15</td><td>24</td><td>45</td><td>100</td><td>15</td><td>30</td><td>45</td><td>100</td><td>15</td><td>30</td><td>45</td><td>100</td><td>10</td><td>10</td><td>15</td><td>25</td><td>60</td><td>100</td></tr>
</table>

Table 4.7: Comparison of Weightings in PLY4 (AQA, 2008b), PHIL3 (AQA, 2014b) and RST3B (AQA, 2013b).

Assessment Objectives	**PLY4 – Philosophy of Mind, Political Philosophy or Philosophy of Science**				**PHIL3 – Key Themes in Philosophy**				**RST3B – Philosophy of Religion**					
	Qa	Qb	TOTAL	**%**	Qa	Qb	TOTAL	**%**	Q1a	Q1b	Q2a	Q2b	TOTAL	**%**
A. Knowledge, Understanding	9	8	17	**34**	15	15	30	**30**	30		30		60	**60**
B. Illustrate	9	8	17	**34**	15	15	30	**30**						
C. Select, Apply, Analyse		16	16	**32**	20	20	40	**40**		20		20	40	**40**
D. Interpret, Assess, Evaluate														
	18	32	50	**100**	50	50	100	**100**	30	20	30	20	100	**100**

4.B Development of Teaching and Learning Strategies

Teachers provide opportunities, resources, instruction and guidance with the aim of helping students develop as thinkers. Students study works of experienced philosophers to learn and understand conventions of critical thinking while practising the craft of argumentation. Data analysis in this section concentrated on strategies utilised by students and teachers in developing written argumentation.

4.B1 Structuring Argumentative Essays

Table 4.8: Research Questions Addressed – Structuring Argumentative Essays

Research Questions	**Request for Structure**	**Development of Writing Frames**	**Planning**
RQ. 1.5, 1.6, 1.7 Producing written argumentation: - What have students found more or less problematic? - What strategies have students found more or less useful? - What strategies have teachers found more or less useful?	X	X	X X
RQ. 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 2.6 Structuring written argumentation: - What progress have students made? - What do students find more or less problematic? - What classroom strategies do students find more or less useful?	X X	X X	X X X

- What classroom strategies do teachers find more or less useful?		X	X
RQ. 5.5, 5.7 Developing precision and sophistication in written argumentation: - What strategies do students find more or less useful? - What strategies do teachers find more or less useful?		X	X

Requests for Structure

The iterative and progressive nature of the analysis becomes more evident in this and subsequent sections as analysis of data raised questions, which then led to further data collection and analysis which afforded opportunities for the development of clearer and more comprehensive understandings. Problems identified through the literature review included organisation of ideas into forms or structures and lack of logical links between points (Freedman & Pringle, 1989), especially when presenting dialogic discussion in monologue presentation (Gleason, 1999). Gravett (2015) advocates teacher input to help students overcome new modes of inquiry with thinking frames suggested to help students organise their thoughts. Analysis of students' reflections confirmed their concerns with structure, but showed further that they were seeking similar structures to those provided in other subjects. Students made several requests for a specific 'layout [to] use for each essay' (Mary.SRQ.2.1). In addition to guidance provided through lessons and essay instructions, students' reflections showed they wanted 'a blueprint for every essay' (John.SIQ.5.2), into which they 'could then just … substitute … the philosophy' (Ruth.SIQ.2.1). This raised questions around types of structure that would facilitate the thought and discussion needed for argumentative essays in philosophy.

Several writing frames were developed and trialled, while gradually placing more onus on students to develop their own essay plans (Colter & Ulatowski, 2015). Despite several iterations, analysis of students reflections and interview responses identified repeated requests for 'structure' with students referencing guidance received from other

subjects. John stated, ‘In history I need to do certain things in each paragraph … every essay will look the same’ (SIQ.5.2). Mary, referring to guidance received in English, said, ‘teachers outline what theme we should write about in each paragraph’ (SIQ.5.2). Ruth said in Biology, ‘these few words were the reason I didn't get any marks last time’ (SIQ.5.2). Mary summed up her frustrations stating, ‘I don’t see why sometimes we shouldn’t be told what to write’ (SIQ.5.2). Analysis of writing frames developed in the study is discussed in the next section, supporting Sarah’s reflection that a ‘basic outline … applied to all essays would not work’ (SAS.Reflect.3). However, to gain clearer insight into kinds of support provided by other subject teachers, resources supplied by English and History teachers were compared against our writing frames. These included model answers, assessment grids outlining marking criteria, advice on picking apart questions, essay plans, etc.

On English outlines (Images 4.1, 4.2), each paragraph or section has a ‘theme’ provided (e.g. graphology, grammar, etc.), prompt questions guide students to relevant evidence material, and questions or advice direct evaluation. These grids showed the concept ‘themes’ differs in English and Philosophy. In English ‘themes’ are devices (sentence function, length of utterances); ‘themes’ are given, and students select examples of these to include.

In philosophical argumentation, ‘themes’ are ideas or concepts upon which premises are built. For example, Locke and Hobbes (Lacewing, 2008, pp. 49-51) develop their ‘state of nature’ theories around conceptualisations of human nature, liberty and law of nature. Themes therefore change between arguments. Students’ reflections showed they struggled to pick out themes from arguments studied, but Sarah and I felt these were provided through textbooks, teaching of theory and pre-writing instructions. While textbooks presented arguments in prose, teaching resources presented claims and premises with signposted headings (Image 4.3).

The structure of each argument studied in philosophy was worked through premise by premise with questions prompting discussion and students expected to make notes. All PowerPoints were available for further reference. However, teachers’ reflections showed problems with transferability. Where students were given step by step guidance on what to include in their work, they demonstrated understanding during class discussions but failed to reproduce this in their essays (KAS.Reflect.2). When they

achieved clear structure in one essay ‘they [were] unable to transfer this structure to their next essay’ (SAS.Reflect.2).

Image 4.1: Scaffold – English A-Level Essay (1)

Language and Gender: ‘The Gate’ (2009)

With detailed reference to Text H and to relevant ideas from language study, discuss how language is used to represent gender.

Introduction: consider the context (genre – audience-purpose)

Text H, an advertisement for The Gate leisure complex in Newcastle, has clearly been produced with a primary purpose of …

There may be a secondary purpose of entertainment, suggested by …

It targets its audience of young people, particularly women, by …

Aspects of the representation of gender: graphology

Although The Gate centre is illustrated in the first frame of the text and is referred to again in the strapline at the foot of the text, the focus of the graphology is on the representation of women …

The women are presented as …

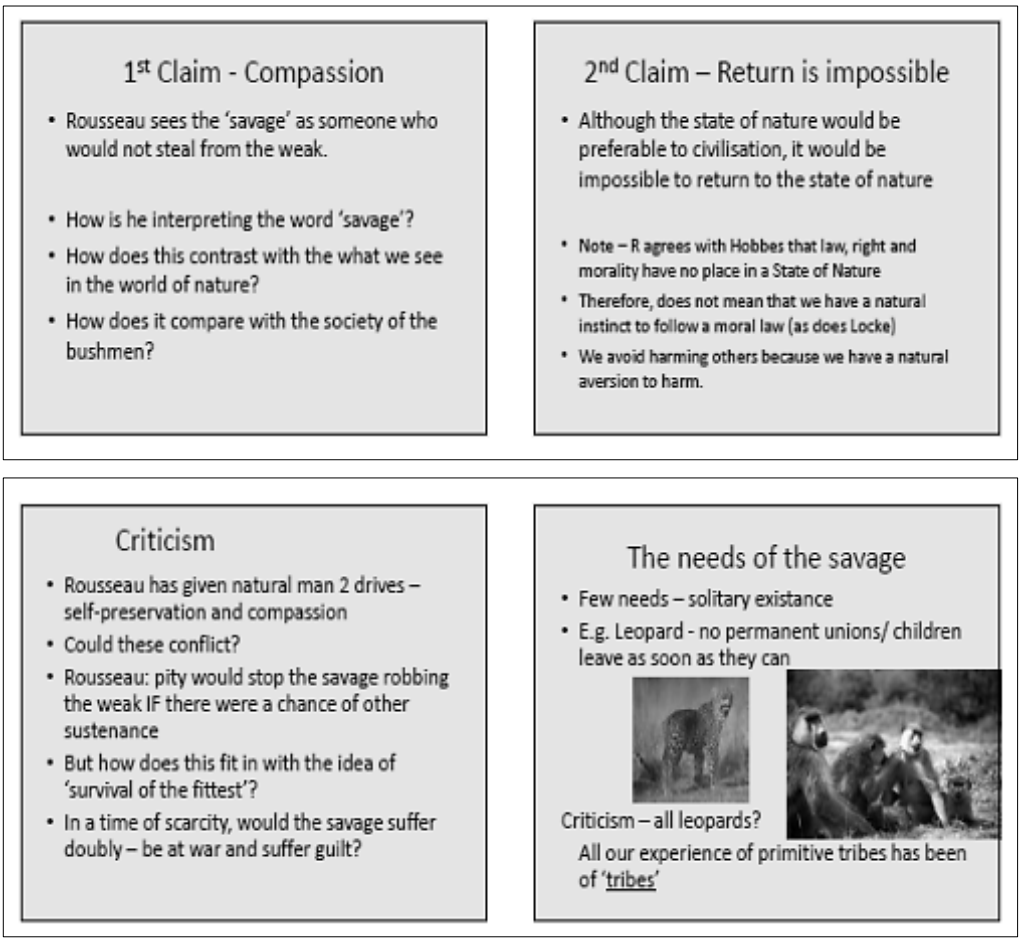
This is a representation of femininity as …

To what extent does this representation conform or challenge stereotypical expectations?

Image 4.2: Scaffold – English A-Level Essay (2)

	SPOKEN	READING
INTRODUCTION Holophrastic/one word Two word Telegraphic Post-telegraphic	Always refer to the context of the transcript. Setting/ relationships etc…Try to get A01-3 in. Identify stages of development with initial evidence. e.g. If context is children playing together you would mention Vygotsky sociodramatic play or if they are reading a book you might mention Bruner’s LASS. CDS features etc…	Importance of reading / different approaches to r experience / ritualistic / where are they reading? factors to explore. Type of book. Stages of the child: Chall; curriculum.
PARAGRAPH 1 It is very likely there will be more than one child in the transcript, and inconsistencies in the stages. Look for influences on language development. E.g. can child use modals because they are imitating brother/syntactic structure of book they are reading?	**Grammar – back up the stages of development.** AO1 - Look for: sentence functions; (imperatives/declaratives) length of utterances; inflections; verbs; determiners; prepositions; auxiliaries; modals; nouns; conjunctions etc…virtuous errors/ overgeneralization. AO2 –Chomsky (LAD) Skinner (Imitation) Brown (inflections and two word utterances –‘agent+action.’) Nelson (nouns.) AO3 – Contextual influences on grammatical acquisition e.g. older sibling / other child / caregiver (imitation: Skinner) influence from the context of the activity (reading book / playing a game.)	**Approaches to reading.** AO1- Phonics (synthetic and analytical) Whole w built into books. A02- how is reading being supported (Bruner LA (Skinner) Positive and negative reinforcement. AO3- Different approaches to phonics / scaffoldi Syntactic / contextual / semantic / visual. If more than one child in transcript look for diffe fluency of the child / gender of the child.
PARAGRAPH 2 If relevant.	**Phonological development.** A01- Look for: substitution; deletion; addition; assimilation; consonant cluster reduction; reduplication; deletion of unstressed syllables.	**How the book supports the development.** A01- Oxford reading scheme – key features. Wh child? Or is this an entertainment book? What ar AO2- How is book developing cognitive underst

Image 4.3: Lesson PowerPoint – Rousseau's State of Nature Theory



Similar prescriptive guidance was evident in History samples (Image 4.4) which included grids providing prompts and space for students' planning. Both samples refer to bespoke essays, with generic aspects relating to process, e.g. outlining the argument. In Philosophy, instructions similar to these were given in lesson, with students encouraged to make notes. However, lesson observations showed they often needed prompting to write down additional instructions or discussion that went beyond information presented on PowerPoints.

Image 4.4: Scaffolds – History A-Level Essay

To what extent was Elizabeth's stability under threat from those who rejected her religious settlement? (45 marks)
Or just use half of this for
To what extent did the Puritans/Catholics (delete as applicable) **pose a serious threat to Elizabeth's stability? (45 marks)**

Introduction
Outline what the settlement was
Show what line argument you will be following.
Suggest some of the areas that you will be considering

Suggested plan:
Show that the threat came from two groups – the Puritans and the Catholics. I would spend half the essay considering each, with a mini conclusion at the end of each section and a main conclusion that analyses where the biggest threat came from and if this was rally anything for Elizabeth to worry about.

So...Puritans

1. We want to know who they were and how their beliefs themselves divided them from the Protestants and made them a threat. Could Elizabeth do anything to change these fundamental beliefs?

2. Puritans within the church – who they were and what they intended to do. Remember the vestments controversy. | Argue ways in which they SHOULD and SHOULD NOT be seen at a threat. Consider how long this group lasted and how Elizabeth responded to them.

How successful was Elizabeth's foreign policy up to 1585?

Identify aims	Argument	Analyse - was she successful?	Evaluate
To secure her borders and to find allies		Yes or no?	How successful/unsuccessful?
Protect the religious settlement		Yes or no?	How successful/unsuccessful?
To avoid war		Yes or no?	How successful/unsuccessful?

This analysis highlighted differences between structure in philosophy and other subjects, providing greater understanding of students' frustrations around guidance we provided. However, the analysis of outlines provided by other teachers made clear that philosophy outlines could not be as prescriptive as our students' interview responses suggested. However, students' preferences persisted around what we should provide to help them access higher grades, resulting in their limited engagement with the interventions (discussed in the next section).

Development and Use of Writing Frames

As mentioned previously, a particular challenge for students is presenting dialogic discussion in monologue presentation (Gleason, 1999). A large range of literature advising students what to include in essays was identified and used to develop several writing frames (Farmer, 2003; Burns & Law, 2004; Andrade, 2005; Harrell, 2005; Martinich, 2005; Hitchcock & Verheij, 2006; Vaughn, 2006; Warburton, 2006; Butler et al., 2008, 2009; Cimitile, 2008; Lacewing, 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Hafner & Hafner, 2003; Thomas, 2011; Baron & Poxon, 2012; Hayward, Jones & Cardinal, 2014; Bradner, 2015; Wheeler, undated). Analysis of students' work and reflections showed they struggled to translate these instructions onto their own work. For example, Warburton (2006) and Wheeler (undated) suggest making a point and backing it up with evidence before showing its relevance. Students struggled to select original points to make. Writing frames developed and trialled through phases 3 to 5 aimed to provide guidance without constraining students' independent thought.

As Sarah and I developed a range of writing frames, we included instructions to encourage argumentative aspects (Warburton, 2006), using language familiar to students. Although we each developed different writing frames (Appendix 12), common objectives were generated during planning meetings. Sarah's frames encouraged students to analyse and assess philosophers in turn (Bradner, 2015; Wheeler, undated); my frames aimed to explore problems thematically (Freedman and Pringle, 1989). The analysis focused on identifying differences between the writing frames, compared what had been developed in each successive frame against students' and teachers' reflections on their effectiveness, and compared students' written work against the advice given in each frame. The aim was not only to assess the effectiveness of the frames in developing written argumentation, but also to explore and compare teachers' and students' appraisals of their effectiveness from their points of view.

My first frame (KAS.Frame.3.1) provided broad directions with samples of exemplar material, demonstrating that questions could elicit several correct responses. My second frame (KAS.Frame.3.3) gave students a set thesis to provide additional stretch and challenge. Lydia and Mary found the first frame confusing, focusing their discussion on one theme instead of three. This confused me as all essays in phases 1 and 2 had been structured around two or three themes, however, attempts to elicit reasons for the

confusion through questioning failed as both girls repeated that they had become confused. On the second frame John admitted missing the instruction about forcing a set position, despite this being stated in lesson and reiterated on the handout. Inspecting the frames, it was unclear why these problems occurred (Image 4.5).

Image 4.5: Scaffolds – Philosophy AS-Level Essays

Step one — look at the general notes and the individual versions of anarchism and try to pick out themes:

For example:

Anarchism generally states that the power and control of the states violates individual liberty.

For each theme:

NOTE: I have told you to answer this from a conservative perspective, which will tend to limit what you will use. However, you can state which ideologies or philosophers you will use to respond. Try

In their reflections students requested more prescriptive guidance. John wanted to be told 'specifically what to write about and when in each paragraph' (SRQ.3.4) and Ruth noted there 'wasn't information on how to structure a paragraph (how to lay out points, etc.)' (SRQ.3.5).

Sarah felt that while frames 'helped their structure and selection of material' (SAS.Reflect.3), the actual discussion within paragraphs needed more detail. In phase 2, Sarah reflected that students 'stuck too rigidly to [the frames] – they were … not confident enough to try anything new'. Although frames in phase 3 attempted to provide more detail (Image 4.6), it was found this constrained students' own ideas.

Image 4.6: Scaffolds – Philosophy A2-Level Essays

The main body of your argument:	This becomes the point at which you start to use your material to argue for your position. There are two implications of naturalism: 1. It is autonomous, therefore we can use facts about the world to make moral judgements 2. It allows us to define 'good' Use examples to demonstrate both of these implications
The two implications:	In turn look at the two implications and evaluate them - in what state is naturalism left as a result of these implications? Do they leave the theory vulnerable or are they a strength of the theory?
Implication 1	Moore's response An evaluation of Moore's response Where does your argument leave naturalism?
Implication 2	Hume's Law What is the issue for naturalism? An evaluation of Hume's Law Where does your argument leave naturalism?

Sarah noted that 'even with a lot of the planning done for them the students had done very little beyond using the plan' (SAS.Reflect.3). In phase 5 she observed, students 'are not confident enough to produce an essay that is theirs. They will work to the parameters they are given but will go no further.' When questioned, students verified this perception. Mary and Ruth agreed frames helped them 'decide how to lay out the essay' and avoid juxtaposition and confusion with 'positions or judgements' (SRQ.3.4). However, students 'tried to follow the essay plan as much as possible' (John.SRQ.3.5) rather than using the frames to inform their own planning. To counter this, frames in later phases aimed to provide more open guidance that forced students to produce their own plans which were submitted with their essays.

Analysis of students' essays demonstrated improvement in overall structure meaning themes or topics were discussed in clear, separate paragraphs with a general flow of ideas evident. However, in terms of quality of argumentation, a comparison of essays scores (Table 4.9) showed no significant improvement overall in marks achieved. The essay showing greatest improvement (SAS.Essay.4.2) had no frame provided (discussed below). Instead, students were guided to create independent plans that were submitted and reviewed before attempting first drafts.

Table 4.9: Essay Grades Using Writing Frames

Essay	**Essay Title**	**John**	**Lydia**	**Mary**	**Ruth**
KAS.3.1	Explain and assess anarchism as a political ideology.	34	29	30	26
SAS.3.1	Naturalist theories argue successfully for moral truth. Discuss.	31	**33**	31	**34**
KAS.3.2	Human nature is such that political authority is necessary.	30	26	29	25
KAS.4.1	Moral judgements do not describe reality. Assess this claim with reference to either prescriptivism or emotivism.	34	28	34	30
KAS.5.5	Evaluate the libertarian view that redistribution of property by the state can never be justified.	31	28	**35**	27
SAS.5.3	Using a practical problem of your choice, discuss whether utilitarianism provides an effective guide to action.	**39**	Not done	Not done	**34**
SAS.5.4	Moral judgements do not describe reality'. Assess this claim.	34	27	31	20

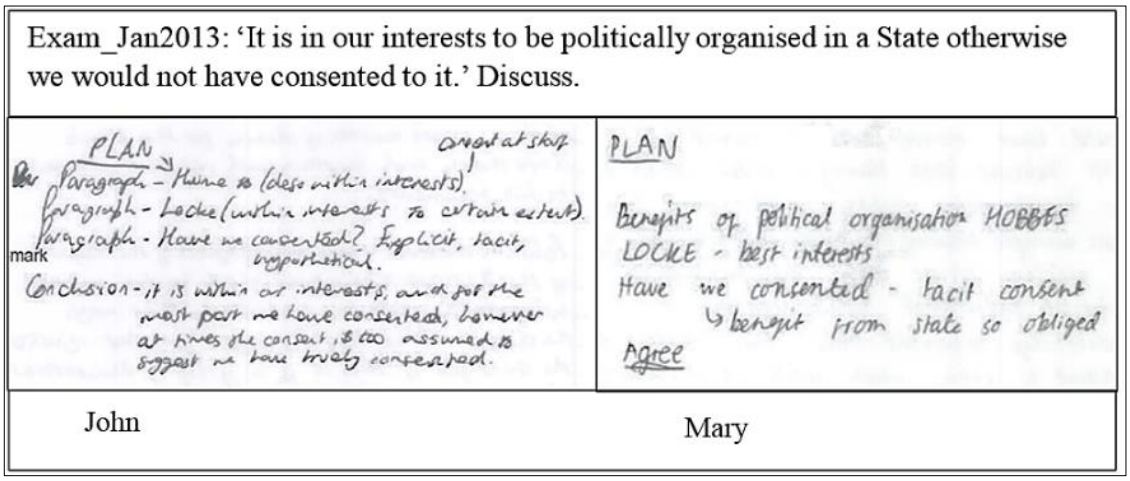
Although frames provided some scaffolding and helped students organise points more clearly, their reliance on explicit guidance restricted their own planning which remained minimal unless explicitly supervised (discussed in the next section). Less detailed plans together with explicit instructions on independent planning proved more effective despite students' requests for detailed structure. Analysis of students' reflections and interview responses over the five phases showed little evidence that they understood this difference as they continued to make comparisons with other subjects. It became clear that students' preconceptions would need to be addressed before the full impact of the intervention could be judged.

Planning

Poor planning can lead to writing in chains or additive styles, leaving causal connections between ideas implicit (White, 1987, cited in Andrews, 1995). Intervention strategies aimed at developing students' planning afforded opportunities to analyse their progress in producing coherent essay plans. While Andrews (1995) observed differences in planning between children and adults, the literature did not provide specific detail on planning preferences or problems at A-Level. Sarah and I attempted to elicit students' views through interactive discussions at planning stages (Bosley & Jacobs, 1992) and thinking frames were provided to assist with structuring thoughts (Clay, 2003; Baron & Poxon, 2012). Several planning strategies (Evmenova *et al.*, 2016) were modelled in phases 1 and 2 including mind-maps (Clay, 2003; Baron & Poxon, 2012) and detailed outlines (Bulter & Britt, 2011), discussed and explained with students when essays were set (Bosley & Jacobs, 1992). During phases 3 to 5 a range of exercises were devised to develop students' use of writing frames to inform individual planning aimed at encouraging the thinking through of materials before responding to essay questions.

Essay plans were analysed to identify elements of argumentation present at planning stages and to compare levels and quantity of planning against quality of written argumentation. I also compared these elements in planning for essays completed under timed and untimed conditions, looking for differences and to see if planning under timed conditions improved over time as a result of work completed with students in lessons. As no essay plans were submitted in phases 1 and 2, examination scripts were examined for evidence of planning. Lydia did no planning, resulting in disjointed prose as she was 'going back and adding a lot of things in at the end' (SIQ.2.1). John and Mary's scripts included short, limited plans (Image 4.7), but both acknowledged needing more (SIQ.2.1).

Image 4.7: Planning A – January 2013 Examination

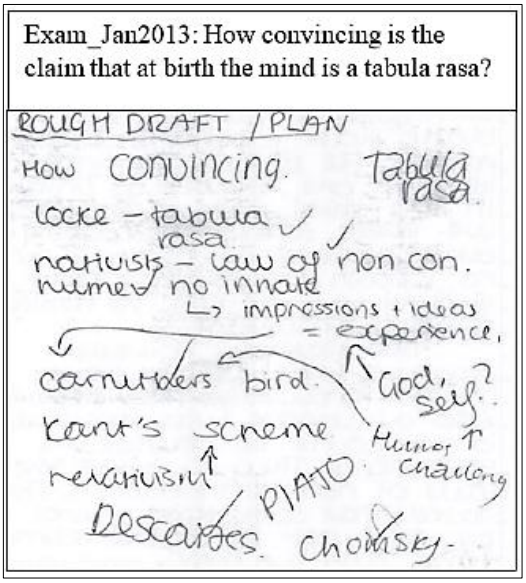


Exam_Jan2013: 'It is in our interests to be politically organised in a State otherwise we would not have consented to it.' Discuss.

John	Mary
PLAN Paragraph - Hume (does within interests). Paragraph - Locke (within interests to certain extent). Paragraph - Have we consented? Explicit, tacit, hypothetical. Conclusion - it is within our interests, and for the most part we have consented, however at times the consent is too assumed to suggest we have truely consented.	PLAN Benefits of political organisation HOBBES LOCKE - best interests Have we consented - tacit consent ↳ benefit from state so obliged Agree

One of Ruth's plans included more detail indicating links between ideas (Image 4.8), but her feedback on planning appeared confused. She reflected that 'drawing out essay plans with lots of arrows and links helps me understand where I'm going' (SRQ.2.1), but at interview she stated that she found 'using arrows to link ideas … confusing' (SIQ.2.1).

Image 4.8: Planning B – January 2013 Examination



Exam_Jan2013: How convincing is the claim that at birth the mind is a tabula rasa?

ROUGH DRAFT / PLAN

How convincing. Tabula rasa.

locke – tabula rasa.

nativists – law of non con.

no innate

↳ impressions + ideas = experience.

carruthers bird. God, self?

Kant's scheme

Hume ↑ challenge

nativism ↑

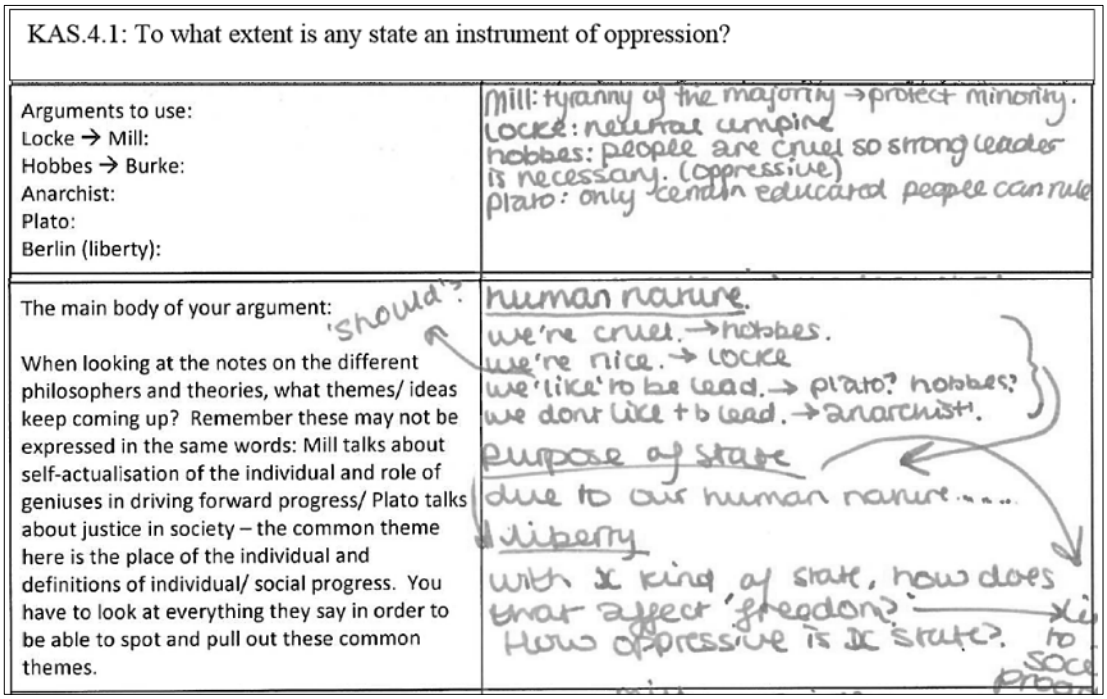
PLATO

Descartes. Chomsky.

Successive iterations of writing frames required more student input and planning. In phases 4 and 5, Sarah and I providing partial frames with questions to stimulate students' research and space for independent planning (Image 4.9). However, improved planning only appeared in response to direct intervention and instructions. In phase 2 John stated that he did not 'plan … what's going to be in each paragraph' (SIQ.2.1) but

in phase 5 he acknowledged he would sometimes re-plan essays in response to feedback, going ‘into detail about each paragraph’ (SIQ.5.1). Lydia reported writing the first sentence of each paragraph (SIQ.3.2). Ruth described writing down what she could remember before trying to organise this into a plan (SIQ.5.2). Where students were made to produce more detailed plans, these did not always match final essays. For example, Mary named four philosophers to include in KAS.Essay.4.1 (Image 4.9), but her final plan only included Locke and Mill. Her essay utilised Hobbes, Locke and Mill, with no mention of Rousseau or Anarchism. Similarly, although John mentioned four possible philosophers, he included three in his essay, adding Anarchists which were not mentioned in his research. His essay utilised Hobbes and Locke, briefly mentioning Burke, Nietzsche and Mill.

Image 4.9: Essay Planning – KAS.Essay.4.1



KAS.4.1: To what extent is any state an instrument of oppression?	
Arguments to use: Locke → Mill: Hobbes → Burke: Anarchist: Plato: Berlin (liberty):	Mill: tyranny of the majority → protect minority. Locke: neutral umpire hobbes: people are cruel so strong leader is necessary. (oppressive) plato: only certain educated people can rule
The main body of your argument: 'should'? When looking at the notes on the different philosophers and theories, what themes/ ideas keep coming up? Remember these may not be expressed in the same words: Mill talks about self-actualisation of the individual and role of geniuses in driving forward progress/ Plato talks about justice in society – the common theme here is the place of the individual and definitions of individual/ social progress. You have to look at everything they say in order to be able to spot and pull out these common themes.	human nature. we're cruel. → hobbes. we're nice. → locke we 'like' to be lead. → plato? hobbes? we dont like to lead. → anarchist. purpose of state due to our human nature..... liberty with x kind of state, how does that affect 'freedom'? → x to soc How oppressive is x state?

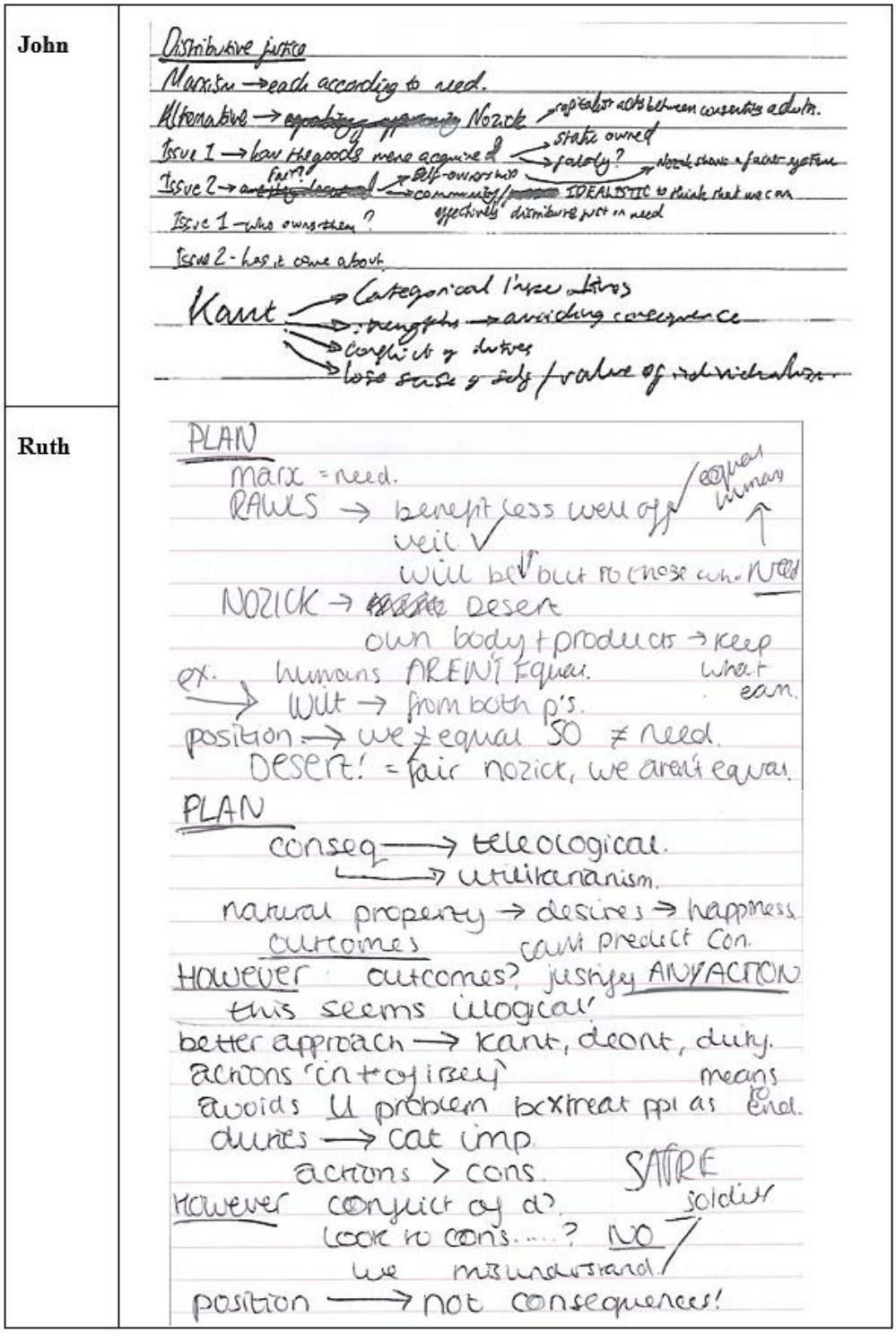
For SAS.Essay.4.2, Sarah guided students through thorough planning which was shared, discussed and improved before first drafts were written. All students produced more detailed plans, but only Ruth’s planning demonstrated evaluation (in the form of ‘+’ and ‘-’ symbols against evaluative points). Essays were generally better quality, demonstrating greater detail and precision in argumentation. Table 4.10 shows marks against a selection of essays. However, as preparation included much additional class work it is difficult to ascribe progress to planning alone.

Table 4.10: Essay Grades without Writing Frame

Essay	**Essay Title**	**John**	**Lydia**	**Mary**	**Ruth**
SAS.3.1	Naturalist theories argue successfully for moral truth. Discuss.	31	33	31	34
SAS.4.2	Cultures make different judgements about what is right and what is wrong, and so there can be no moral truth. Discuss.	40	33	36	34
SAS.5.4	Moral judgements do not describe reality'. Assess this claim.	34	27	31	20

Planning under examination conditions cannot be as thorough, but Sarah and I hoped to see more detailed plans resulting from additional coaching, additional time in A2-Level examinations and students' reflections after earlier examinations. However, differences were very limited (Image 4.10). John's plans were similar to his AS-Level plans. In both A2-Level essays he started with a philosopher rather than the question, introducing juxtaposed responses, noted by the examiner. Both of Ruth's plans showed more structure than at AS-Level but not much extra detail. At A2-Level Lydia completed her examinations on computer with no planning returned and Mary did not plan either A2-Level essays.

Image 4.10: Essay Planning – June 2014 Examination



John

Distributive justice
Marxism → each according to need.
Alternative → ~~equality opportunity~~ Nozick → replicate acts between consenting adults.
Issue 1 → how the goods were acquired → state owned / fairly? → Nozick shows a fair system
Issue 2 → ~~anything learned~~ fair? → self-ownership → community/ ~~[illegible]~~ → IDEALISTIC to think that we can effectively distribute just in need
Issue 1 – who owns them?
Issue 2 - how it came about.
Kant → Categorical Imperatives
→ strengths → avoiding consequence
→ conflict of duties
→ lose sense of self / value of individualism

Ruth

PLAN
marx = need.
RAWLS → benefit less well off / equal humans
veil ✓
will be but no chose who NEED
NOZICK → desert
own body + products → keep what earn.
ex. humans AREN'T Equal.
→ Will → from both p's.
position → we ≠ equal SO ≠ need.
DESERT! = fair nozick, we aren't equal.
PLAN
conseq → teleological.
→ utilitarianism.
natural property → desires → happiness
outcomes
HOWEVER outcomes? can predict Con. justify ANY ACTION
this seems illogical
better approach → kant, deont, duty.
actions 'in + of itself'
avoids U problem treat ppl as means to end.
duties → cat imp.
actions > cons.
SATIRE soldier
HOWEVER conflict of d?
look to cons.....? NO
we misunderstand
position → not consequences!

The analysis showed that students' planning remained minimal in both timed and untimed conditions. Where students were forced to develop detailed plans, improvements in argumentation were observed. However, linking to the previous section on writing frames, it became clear that students' reliance on teachers' input limited the amount of independent planning they were prepared to do. Despite

restrictions on time in lessons, the findings suggest a need to do as much planning with students as possible in order to help them develop this skill. Due to the iterative nature of this study and the development of writing frames in response to student requests, extensive work with students on planning occurred late in the project. It is recommended that this detailed work occurs much sooner in an A-Level course in order to develop the expectation that students must produce and develop their own plans.

4.B2 Response to Teachers' Written Feedback

Table 4.11: Research Questions Addressed – Response to Teachers' Feedback

Research Questions	**Teachers' Feedback**	**Essay Redrafts**	**Common Errors**
RQ. 1.6, 1.7 Producing written argumentation:			
- What strategies have students found more or less useful?	X	X	X
- What have teachers found more or less useful?	X	X	
RQ. 5.5, 5.7 Developing precision and sophistication in written argumentation:			
- What strategies do students find more or less useful?		X	
- What strategies do teachers find more or less useful?		X	
RQ. 2.3, 2.4 Developing quality of language utilised to improve flow and connectivity of ideas in written argumentation:			
- What strategies do students find more or less useful?		X	

- What strategies do teachers find more or less useful?		X	
RQ. 3.3, 3.5, 3.7 Reviewing and redrafting written argumentation:			
- What do students find more or less problematic?	X	X	X
- What strategies do students find more or less useful?	X	X	X
- What strategies do teachers find more or less useful?	X	X	

Teachers' Written Feedback

Students' reflections repeatedly requested specific feedback and made comparisons with written feedback received in other subjects. Poor understanding of or engagement with feedback can affect quality of redrafting and hinder development of written argumentation. Due to limited literature on providing feedback in philosophy, insights from other subjects were utilised. Problems identified included students understanding and use of feedback (Hyland 2003). Our feedback aimed to encourage students to evaluate their work (Adler, 2004) and revise their work (Hyland, 2003; Arvan, 2014). Strategies utilised included providing in-text and summative comments to guide students' correction of their work (Hyland 1990). Graduated approaches to writing assignments were used to train students (Figdor, 2004), with conversational feedback encouraging reflection (Hyland & Hyland, 2001).

The tick sheet developed to analyse teachers' written feedback (Appendix 9) was used to identify types and frequency of feedback comments. These were compared with students' and teachers' reflections on feedback received and their response to the feedback in redrafts and subsequent essays. Mary said History teachers were 'very specific in their feedback [telling] you exactly how to improve' (SRQ.4.1), e.g. 'saying that you need more examples or debate in a certain place' (SIQ.5.2). John commented that other teachers gave 'feedback at the bottom and comments written on [*sic.*]

throughout the essay' (SRQ.4.1). In philosophy he reported struggling 'when something was mentioned and then not explained, for example "you could bring in Nietzsche"' (SRQ.3.5). Lydia said other teachers provided 'detailed comments, mark schemes, targets' (SRQ.4.1). In our reflections and discussions Sarah and I were puzzled as descriptions of other teachers' feedback sounded similar to what we provided, leading to closer scrutiny and reflection on our feedback comments. Comments indicating missing content tended to be short and to the point, e.g. 'example?', 'Kant's view', etc. Image 4.11 shows a sample of my feedback which appears to give clear suggestion for improvement.

Image 4.11: Sample of Written Feedback from Karen

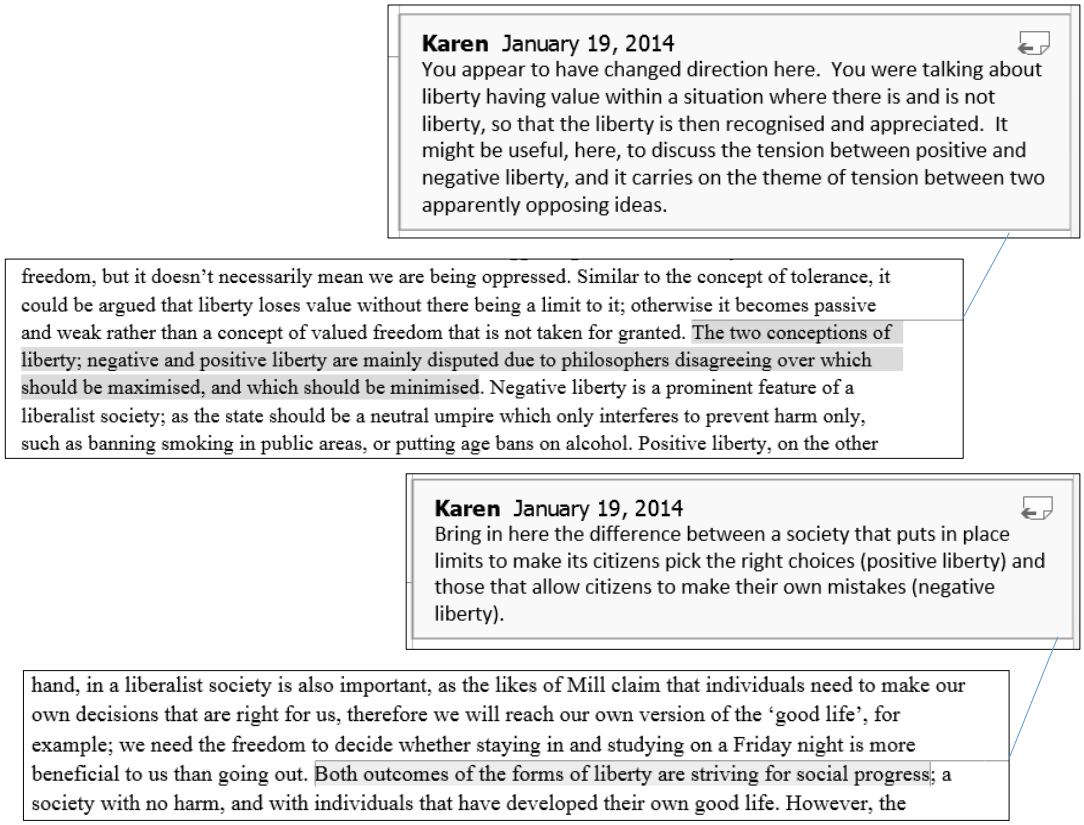


Image 4.12 shows a sample of Sarah's feedback, which incorporates types of feedback students reported receiving from other teachers:

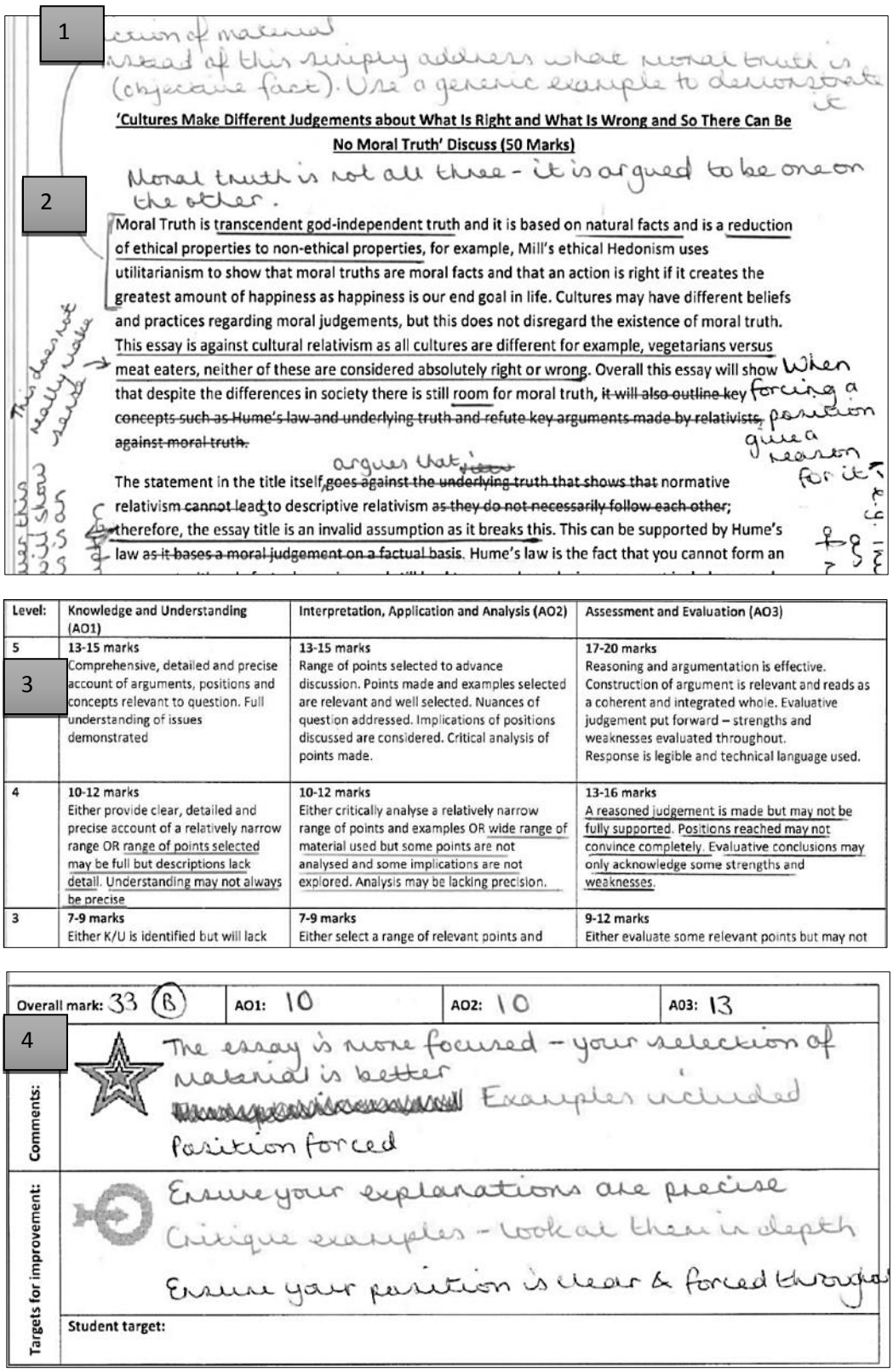
[1] Instructions of what to include or improve in specific places.

[2] Comments written throughout the essay.

[3] Comments referenced to mark schemes.

[4] Comments provided at the end of the essay.

Image 4.12: Sample of Written Feedback from Sarah



1

ection of material
instead of this simply adders what moral truth is (objective fact). Use a generic example to demonstrate it

'Cultures Make Different Judgements about What Is Right and What Is Wrong and So There Can Be No Moral Truth' Discuss (50 Marks)

Moral truth is not all three - it is argued to be one or the other.

2

Moral Truth is transcendent god-independent truth and it is based on natural facts and is a reduction of ethical properties to non-ethical properties, for example, Mill's ethical Hedonism uses utilitarianism to show that moral truths are moral facts and that an action is right if it creates the greatest amount of happiness as happiness is our end goal in life. Cultures may have different beliefs and practices regarding moral judgements, but this does not disregard the existence of moral truth. This essay is against cultural relativism as all cultures are different for example, vegetarians versus meat eaters, neither of these are considered absolutely right or wrong. Overall this essay will show that despite the differences in society there is still room for moral truth, ~~it will also outline key concepts such as Hume's law and underlying truth and refute key arguments made by relativists, against moral truth.~~

This does not really make sense

When forcing a position give a reason for it? e.g.

argues that

The statement in the title itself ~~goes against the underlying truth that shows that~~ normative relativism ~~cannot lead~~ to descriptive relativism ~~as they do not necessarily follow each other~~; therefore, the essay title is an invalid assumption as it breaks this. This can be supported by Hume's law ~~as it bases a moral judgement on a factual basis~~. Hume's law is the fact that you cannot form an

3

Level:	Knowledge and Understanding (AO1)	Interpretation, Application and Analysis (AO2)	Assessment and Evaluation (AO3)
5	**13-15 marks** Comprehensive, detailed and precise account of arguments, positions and concepts relevant to question. Full understanding of issues demonstrated	**13-15 marks** Range of points selected to advance discussion. Points made and examples selected are relevant and well selected. Nuances of question addressed. Implications of positions discussed are considered. Critical analysis of points made.	**17-20 marks** Reasoning and argumentation is effective. Construction of argument is relevant and reads as a coherent and integrated whole. Evaluative judgement put forward – strengths and weaknesses evaluated throughout. Response is legible and technical language used.
4	**10-12 marks** Either provide clear, detailed and precise account of a relatively narrow range OR range of points selected may be full but descriptions lack detail. Understanding may not always be precise	**10-12 marks** Either critically analyse a relatively narrow range of points and examples OR wide range of material used but some points are not analysed and some implications are not explored. Analysis may be lacking precision.	**13-16 marks** A reasoned judgement is made but may not be fully supported. Positions reached may not convince completely. Evaluative conclusions may only acknowledge some strengths and weaknesses.
3	**7-9 marks** Either K/U is identified but will lack	**7-9 marks** Either select a range of relevant points and	**9-12 marks** Either evaluate some relevant points but may not

4

Overall mark: 33 (B)	AO1: 10	AO2: 10	AO3: 13
Comments:	The essay is more focused – your selection of material is better. Examples included. Position forced		
Targets for improvement:	Ensure your explanations are precise. Critique examples – look at them in depth. Ensure your position is clear & forced through		
Student target:			

Comments aimed at developing students' discussions were more conversational (Hyland, 1990; Byrd, 2017; Stump, undated). Most written feedback sought to avoid

writing out answers (Hyland 1990), but occasionally Sarah and I gave examples of possible improvement.

Codes (Appendix 9) generated from Hyland (1990), Hyland & Hyland (2001), Concepción (2014) and Stump (undated), were used to analyse our written feedback. During analysis I noticed a large proportion of feedback containing implicit suggestions for revision without giving students clear revision instructions. For example, when coding the comments, 'Moral truth is not all three - it is argued to be one or the other' (Feedback.SAS.4.2) or, 'The question was – to what extent ARE they oppressive' (Feedback.KAS.4.2), I was uncertain whether to code these as clear suggestions for revision (M8) or as containing revision relative to the current essay (M12). Clear suggestions differ from implicit comments which may imply revision without giving clear instruction. These comments could have been written:

- 'Moral truth is not all three. State which definition of moral truth you are referring to.'
- 'The question was – to what extent ARE they oppressive. Rewrite this paragraph/ sentence to show where they are or are not oppressive'.

Implicit feedback attempts to guide without constraining students' judgements and arguments, which accounts for high quantities of feedback that fitted code M16, 'Directed questions that challenge thinking'. However, these require more effort to think through revisions needed (Stump, undated). Analysis of Byrd's feedback sheet (2017) showed examples where students need to decide what they mean in order to respond. For example, 'Not quite, but sort of. Either you're misunderstanding this or you understand it, but you're not writing clearly enough.' Students must decide what is wrong and make the appropriate revision.

Students' reflections, however, showed they found this type of feedback challenging and indicated their reliance on receiving specific instructions. Mary said, 'feedback I find more useful is just a bit simpler and straight to the point e. g. 'use this example here' or 'use positive liberty' … sometimes it becomes a bit too "philosophical"' (SIQ.5.2). John said comments like, 'you could have gone into a discussion about this' were helpful for that essay, but he struggled to 'think about it in the same way for the next essay' (SIQ.5.2). Ruth's reflections revealed similar dependence on

specificity; she wanted errors to be, ‘underlined … saying you should have said this here’ (SIQ.5.2).

The analysis highlighted areas where teachers’ feedback could be improved, such as including more comments to highlight strengths in students’ argumentation and providing explicit comments for improvement. Although students reported a preference for Sarah’s short, direct comments, there was no evidence that either form of written feedback resulted more clearly in improvements in their argumentation. Questions remained around their reliance on specific and detailed teacher input. Just as frames in philosophy aimed to guide planning, feedback sought to develop, extend and challenge thinking. Instead, the data from students’ reflections suggested a reluctance to engage with feedback that they felt required too much additional thought and work. This reluctance, discussed further in the section on post marking redrafts, would need to be addressed before the effectiveness of different marking strategies could be fully assessed.

Post Marking Redrafts

Several sources emphasise the need for students to develop reviewing and redrafting skills (Perkins, 1987a; Eflin, 2004; Covill, 2010) that produce effective and substantial changes to essay plans and text (Butler & Britt, 2011; Covill, 2010). Strategies identified include explicitly taught and modelled skills (Butler & Britt, 2011) which could include visual aids such as argument mapping (Horn, 2000; Macagno *et al.*, 2006; Cassidy, 2007; Harrell, 2008; Hutchinson & Loughlin, 2009). Analysis of students’ essays drew our attention to students’ limited levels of redrafting, possibly linked to them seeking explicit feedback on what to change. Their reflections confirmed that revision of essays seldom included analysis and review of planning or their theses. Conversational style feedback aims to encourage redrafting to improve depth and detail and to strengthen students’ argumentation. The first can often be achieved by simply adding what is suggested in the feedback; the second requires redrafting that impacts and strengthens students’ lines of argumentation (Covil, 2010).

Students were afforded many opportunities through all phases to redraft work with two exercises aimed explicitly to develop their understanding of ‘redrafting’ (Butler & Britt,

2011). Using Word comparison tools, changes between essay drafts were identified and categorised, with the frequency and types of changes analysed between the phases to assess what types of redrafting were evident. Changes were compared with written and verbal feedback provided to determine levels of responses. Additionally, the quality of written argumentation was assessed in both drafts and compared in order to determine progress. During early analysis I noticed they applied 'patchwork' approaches to essay review, meaning they inserted sentences in response to written comments, but failed to explain the relevance of insertions. For example, in John's first essay, he outlined Hobbes and Locke's main arguments. In both instances feedback asked him to add their view on resources. The highlighted portion (Image 4.13) shows his revision. He has not explained how or why these philosophers reached their views on abundance or scarcity of resources, or how these conclusions support their overall arguments.

Image 4.13: Sample A of Reviewed Work – John (KAS.Essay.1.2)

Hobbes takes a very pessimistic view toward the state of nature. He believes that humanity's most powerful and important instinct is survival. This then leads to the belief that doing what is required to survive is justifiable, whatever it may entail. Humans are equal in that they all have this same drive to live, and all have the tools to do so, although these tools may be different. One may be cleverer than another, or stronger, or have more friends, but the main idea is that each person does have something they can use to survive. Hobbes goes on to say than we should only ever seek peace if others are, if not reaping the advantages of war is logical and not unreasonable. Furthermore he states that war is almost a requirement, due to the scarcity of resources, in Hobbes' opinion seizing what you need to completely natural.

Locke takes a different, more positive view than Hobbes. He states that, "even though the state of nature is a state of liberty, it is not a state of licence," meaning that even though at first glance we could do what we want, this is not true in actuality. Locke asserts that there are unwritten and often unacknowledged law/laws which stop us doing completely what we want, or what a state of nature would in theory let us do. The most attainable liberty is only what we are allowed to do within the parameters of this *Law of Nature.* Equality refers to an inbuilt set of moral rights us as humans share, and we should never harm another through life, health, liberty or possessions. Locke stresses we have no superiors on Earth, but one in Heaven, showing the religious sentiments behind his theory. This is magnified by his admission that there is an abundance of resources to go around, all provided by God

Similarly, Mary was asked to assess theories before reaching preliminary conclusions about which were better (Image 4.14).

Image 4.14: Sample B of Reviewed Work – Mary (KAS.Essay.2.1)

First of all, in a state of nature, Locke suggests that the law of liberty would mean that our freedom would be limited to an extent, as it is in our nature to be considerate and co-operative, so we would work together selflessly. With no exceptions, everyone would share responsibilities in a state of nature. He says that we would not invade the privacy of others, however this would not limit our liberty, as we would accept other peoples' needs, and co-operate with them rather than conflicting with them, as there wouldn't be any natural superiors. An example of Locke's theory here would be the building up of communities, such as tribes, and the co-operation used to find and share food and resources, rather than having privileges over others, but we are unable to know if we would co-operate and live in the same way as them.

Hobbes, on the other hand, says that the law of liberty would mean that it is right to do whatever we need to do to ensure our own survival, whether this being peacefully or causing conflict. He claims that within a state of nature, humans would be greedy therefore we wouldn't co-operate and work together, as our prime instinct would be to protect ourselves and our own liberties. He says that we would not have inhibited liberties, and we'd have no instinct to share. For example, Hobbes would say that in a state of nature, if there was a lack of food, we would fight over it rather than share it; this is fairly evident in human nature because it appears that we are constantly at war because of conflict caused by lack of resources. But, this evidence is not as adequate because we aren't currently in a state of nature.

The insertion in the first paragraph is vague, not stating how lack of knowledge affects the argument. The second asserts, 'this is fairly evident' against 'this evidence is not as adequate' without fully explaining either. She appears to be arguing that modern humans cannot make accurate judgements about life in the state of nature because we have no direct evidence of these types of societies, an idea she could have linked to Rousseau.

Strategies employed to encourage more detailed redrafts included detailed and targeted feedback, in line with students' reflections. They first redrafted KAS.Essay3.1 following detailed verbal feedback discussing their introductions and theses (SIQ.3.1). Second redrafts followed further detailed verbal and written feedback (SIQ.3.2), aimed at helping students access higher assessment objectives. As John's essay showed the greatest overall review, his essay is discussed below. Highlighted sections were changes made during verbal feedback with underlined sections inserted by John. The first redraft elicited a few surface level revisions (Image 4.15), with the entire essay contained 5 insertions, 10 deletions and no moves. The majority of these changes occurred in the first part of the essay where more detailed feedback had been given. The small number of cosmetic changes in the rest of the essay suggested John had read through but not properly reviewed it.

Image 4.15: Sample A of Redrafted Introduction – John (KAS.Essay.3.1)

Anarchism ~~is a theory of political thinking~~ which suggests that humanity would function better after rejecting 'archy', or ce

Karen, 22/09/2013 16:12:00 commented:
This is very unclear - I cannot work out what you are trying to say.

defined as a state. Since it often refers to the definition of, and achieving of, freedom, Anarchism finds itself divided into at least three sub-theories: Philosophical, Communist and Individualist, which stem from said disparity over identifying the particulars of freedom. ~~To make easier~~These concepts will be explored to demonstrate where the ~~comparing of these three, and the assessment of~~ideologies digress. Anarchism ~~as a whole, the simplest thing to do is to highlight their different opinions on a theme of all Anarchism. The one I have chosen is the idea, in Anarchism,~~claims that disputes can be resolved without the need ~~for a neutral umpire, or in other words~~ the state. Each offers a different explanation of how this would work, however none finds itself able to overcome ~~deficiencies which plague~~persistent problems within the Anarchist system, and as such this system will be shown to be unsuccessful unless certain conditions are met.

Written feedback following the first draft included 'This is very unclear – I cannot work out what you are trying to say'; this elicited no change between drafts.

Following the second, very detailed feedback, greater redrafting of the introduction is evident (Image 4.16). The full essay included 30 insertions, 29 deletions and no moves.

Image 4.16: Sample B of Redrafted Introduction – John (KAS.Essay.3.1)

Anarchism is a theory of political thinking which suggests that humanity would function better after rejecting 'archy', or centralised coercive forces most easily defined as a state. ~~Since it often refers to the definition of, and achieving of, freedom, Anarchism finds itself divided into at least three sub-theories:~~ The theory comes in several iterations, such as Philosophical~~, Communist and Individualist, which stem from said disparity over identifying the particulars of freedom. These concepts will be explored to demonstrate where the ideologies digress.~~ [K1] ~~Anarchism claims that disputes can be resolved without the need the state. Each offers a different explanation of how this would work, however none finds itself able to overcome persistent problems~~ [K2]~~within the Anarchist system, and as such this system will be shown to be unsuccessful unless certain conditions~~ [K3]~~are met.~~

~~These, though similar in their desire for the abolition of a state, differ in what they see as needing safeguarding~~[K4]~~. For example Philosophical Realism, deriving from~~ Anarchism, advocated by Godwin, which is constructed on the premise of protecting ~~people's private judgement. By this what is meant is that the state, through its coercion and restrictions, stunts~~ the intellectual development of individuals[K5]~~. As such these people cannot advance their understanding of the greatest good for themselves and others,~~

The effect on the stated thesis was also noticeable.

> Draft 1 and 2 (no change): '… this system will be shown to be unsuccessful unless certain conditions are met.'

> Draft 3: '… it will become clear that this theory is not successful, as it relies upon idealistic principles that people are calm and cooperative with total liberty, and that they will be willing to resolve arguments amicably.'

A document comparison (Table 4.12) shows amendments to Mary and Ruth's essays (Lydia did not submit a draft). No material was moved; all amendments were made in situ. The small number of changes tended to be cosmetic, adding pieces of detail in response to feedback comments with little evidence students had reread their drafts for cohesion.

Table 4.12: Analysis of Essay Redraft – KAS.Essay.3.1

	DRAFT 1 TO 2			**DRAFT 2 TO 3**		
	INSERTIONS	DELETIONS	MOVES	INSERTIONS	DELETIONS	MOVES
Mary	7	12	0	8	5	0
Ruth	9	10	0	13	7	0

Mary's thesis did not change between drafts, and Ruth's first and second drafts contained no thesis. During interview she stated, 'I didn't know what I was going to conclude on, so I thought I'd just leave it alone so I can come back when I see what I decide' (SIQ.3.1).

> Draft 1 and 2: 'As an ideology anarchism itself has problems, however XXXXXXX version puts forward a better argument than the other two, due to XXXXXXXX'

Draft 3: ‘As an ideology anarchism itself has problems, however the communist version puts forward a better argument than the other two, due to their concern for the common good.’

It was also noted that she added 179 words to the end of her essay which was previously incomplete. This suggests she was relying on teacher feedback to direct her thinking.

A similar analysis was conducted on SAS.Essay.4.2 (Table 4.13). This essay involved more teacher input during planning and included substantial teacher-led redrafting. Students received detailed, colour-coded feedback between drafts, with second drafts completed in lesson under timed conditions. Marking consisted of several directed questions to challenge students’ thinking and elicit detailed revision.

Table 4.13: Analysis of Essay Redraft – SAS.4.2

	CHANGE IN WORD COUNT	**INSERTIONS**	**DELETIONS**	**MOVES**
John	1144 → 1093	66	65	0
Lydia	1324 → 1996	37	28	6
Mary	906 → 1041	71	67	0
Ruth	940 → 919	28	28	0

Apart from Lydia, students still avoided moving material. Lydia’s drafts showed substantial change in word count. Essay plans were substantially redrafted resulting in clearer, focused theses, shown in Table 4.14 (Mary’s thesis did not change).

Table 4.14: Development of Essay Theses – SAS.4.2

	THESIS ON FIRST DRAFT	**THESIS ON SECOND DRAFT**
John	‘What does make it invalid is the violation of Hume's Law in the	‘… the argument breaks Hume’s Law, and so becomes logically invalid anyway. As such, there is still a

	concluding of the argument, something it does not get past.'	chance of a moral truth existing, at least when the alternative is cultural relativism.'
Lydia	'Moral progress is necessary for humans to improve as autonomous individuals and as a society, this means that if 'cultural relativism' is blocking moral progress it is not 'good' for us as it blocks our ability to develop and progress as a society and as an individual.'	'Therefore, with the statement itself breaking Hume's law, it cannot be considered as a full argument.'
Ruth	'I will show how despite cultures displaying varying traditions that could be deemed immoral, that there is in fact a possibility of objective moral truth and cultural relativism is an unsuccessful theory.'	'I will show there is in fact a possibility of objective moral truth and cultural relativism is unsuccessful, due to the fact we all share similar values although expressed differently.'

This analysis again showed students' ongoing reliance on teacher-input, suggesting limited development towards self-directed learning. Improvements made in phases 3 and 4 were not evident in phase 5 essays, showing lack of transference of skills. Without direct and monitored input from teachers, students reverted to previous writing habits. This showed that interventions giving specific instructions for improvement and supervised redrafting proved more successful in eliciting improved written argumentation, but lack of transference raised questions around whether this approach would need to be repeated several times during the course. It also raised questions about whether students understood the amendments made or whether they merely implemented suggestions without full understanding. Possible reasons for the lack of progress in this areas are explored in section 4.B3 where students' independent work habits and concerns around time constraints are analysed. However, linking back to students' reflections on the provision of structure and explicit guidance on what to

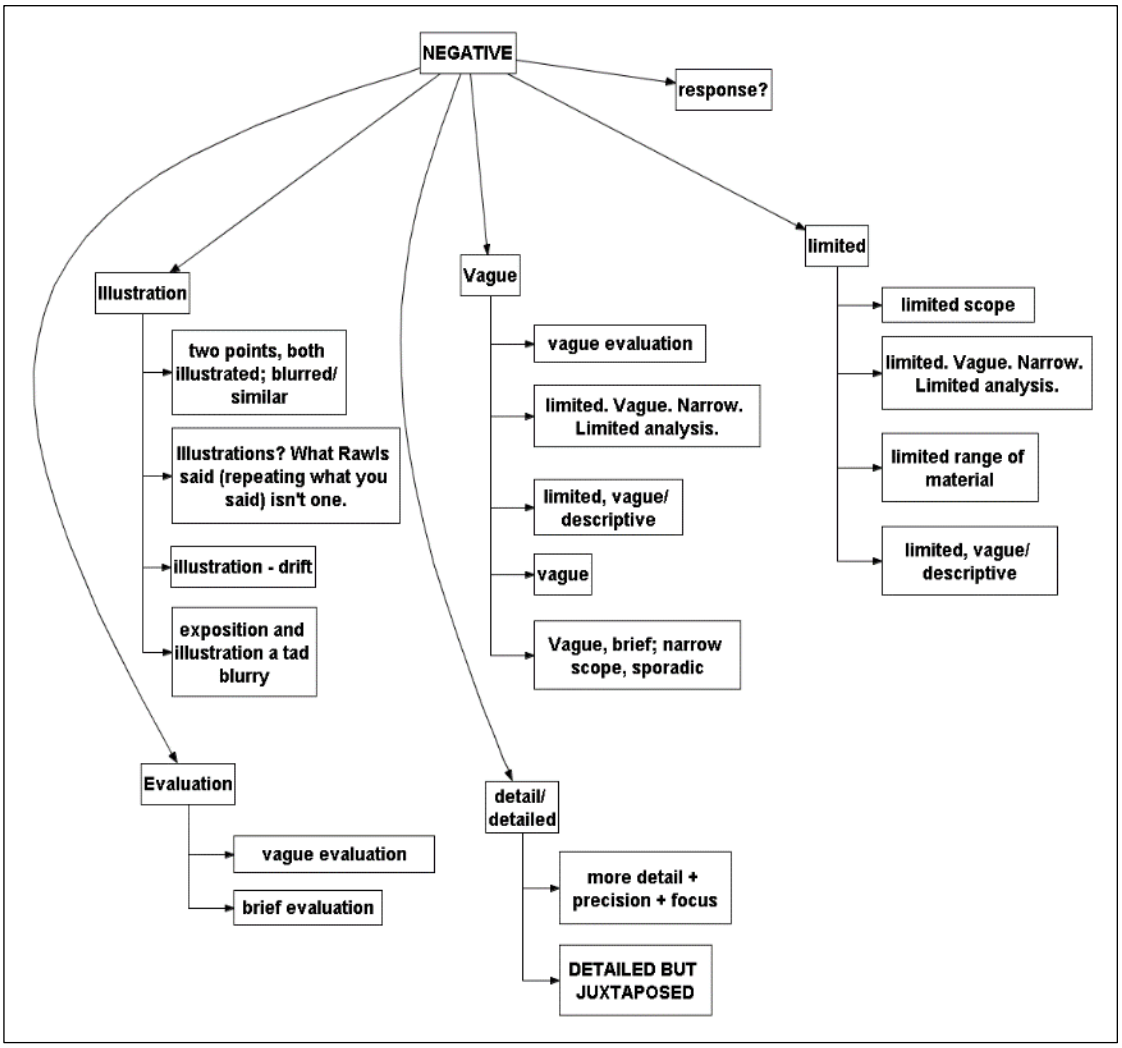
write, it was equally possible that students' preconceptions about which types of feedback and redrafting would prove more effective influenced their engagement with the interventions. These preconceptions would need to be addressed before the effectiveness of the interventions could be fully assessed.

Common Errors

Common errors are features of argumentation frequently missed by students. Helping students develop independence includes developing their ability to identify and revise common errors. The literature review did not identify specific teachings strategies to help students avoid these beyond lists in textbooks provided to guide students' independent work (Vaugh, 2006) and teachers' marking (Byrd, 2017). Hyland (1990) advocates encouraging students to create their own lists.

In phase 2, diagrams of common errors (Image 4.17) were produced from an initial analysis of students' AS-Level examination scripts. All errors mentioned in textbooks were evident, except mixing topics in paragraphs (Vaugh, 2006). During the formal analysis phase, all teachers' written feedback comments were analysed to augment the list and samples of the errors in students' written work extracted. These were further sorted into types of errors and Excel was used to calculate the frequency of each error in and assess possible improvement over time. The majority of errors identified involved misuse of material rather than inclusion of incorrect material. Students' reflections were analysed to identify strategies developed to avoid these in their writing.

Image 4:17: Diagram of Common Errors – AS-Level Scripts (Exams.Jan.2013)



Figures 4.1 and 4.2 show the frequency of errors highlighted through marking, and calculated as percentages over all essays for all students.

Figure 4.1: Frequency of Errors from Marking – In-Text Feedback

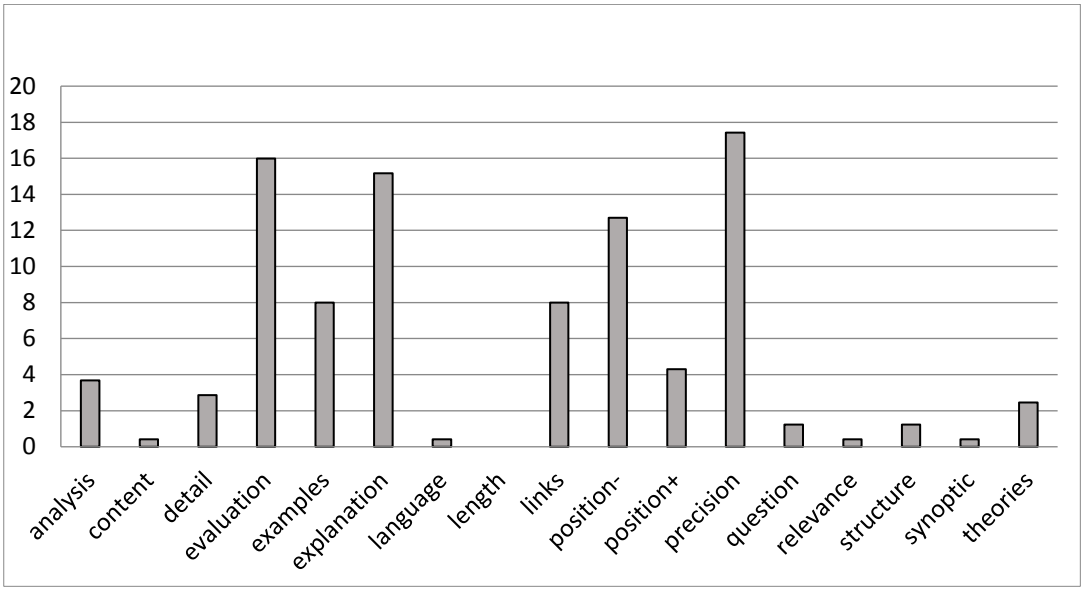
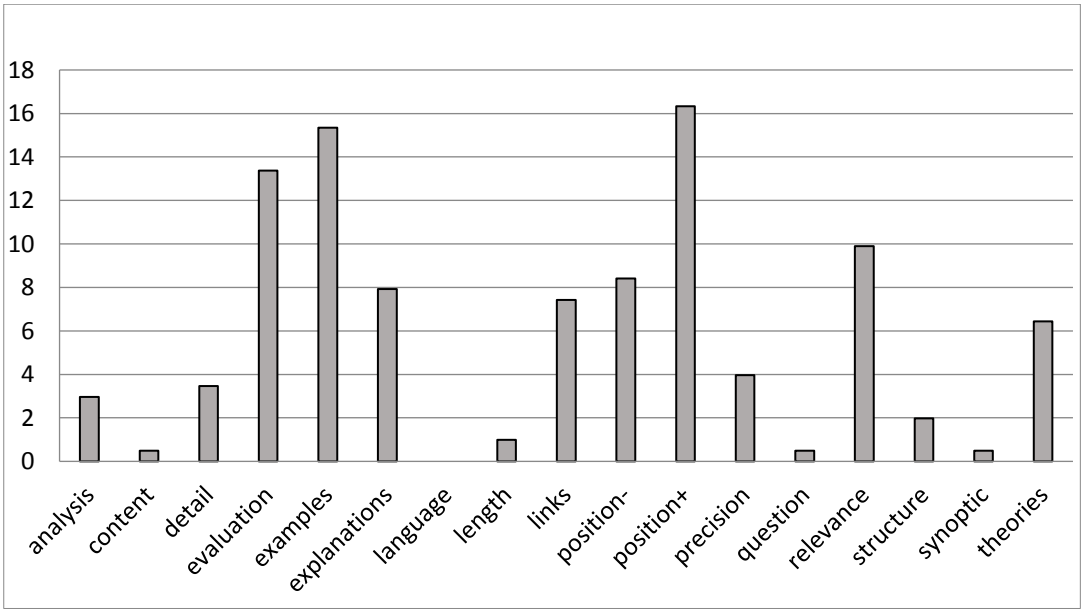


Figure 4.2: Frequency of Errors from Marking – Summative Feedback



As the bulk of common errors involved using material correctly and critically rather than mere inclusion of material, Sarah produced a sheet demonstrating differences between students' work and suggested improvements (Image 4.18). Mary (SRQ.3.4) found this helpful, but did not indicate how she used this to inform her essay writing. Only Lydia reported writing a list of errors that could be applied to future essays (SRQ.4.1). She stated, 'I put it in front of me when I'm writing the next essay, and I think, just try to … not do this' (SIQ.5.2). At interview, John said that he relied on

marking feedback to inform him of common errors in his work, saying he 'hoped' highlighted mistakes would 'get drilled' into his head, but he had 'never written on a piece of paper … make sure you do this' (SIQ.5.2). Ruth did not give any responses concerning common errors.

Image 4.18: Help Sheet – Year 13 Feedback on Common Errors

Year 13 essay feedback
Common errors

Examples

How they are being used:

- An example of Ethical egoism in practice can be seen through the case of the mad axe-murderer. The statement 'It is good to be dishonest to mad axe-murderers' is true if by being dishonest you avoid being killed and false if he never intended to kill you but instead planned to give you all his lottery winnings (which he now will not do due to being lied to).

How they should be used:

- An example of Ethical egoism in practice can be seen through the case of the mad axe-murderer. The statement 'It is good to be dishonest to mad axe-murderers' as a proposition can be either true or false depending upon whether or not it helps us to pursue our own self-interest. The statement is true if by being dishonest you avoid being killed and false if he never intended to kill you but instead planned to give you all his lottery winnings (which he now will not do due to being lied to). The ethical egoist believes our desire to look out for ourselves is a natural fact proven by evidence. Therefore, what is right is what helps us to pursue our own self-interest. In any moral dilemma an ethical egoist simply has to ask 'what will be best for me?' and this helps them to determine whether or not a chosen course of action is right or wrong. However, what the example shows is that the decision over whether an action is right or wrong is dependent upon knowledge of a situation, and in many instances we do not have this. From a practical point of view, it seems as though naturalism in the form of ethical egoism, can give us moral truth but only once we are aware of all the facts of a situation. Theoretically, however, it would seem that using evidence from human behaviour our moral judgements can express certain beliefs about the world and because they refer to some sort of fact, they are capable of being true or false

A Word Cloud of feedback off A2-Level examination scripts was generated in order to compare frequently occurring problems still evident in students' written argumentation at the end of the course (Image 4.19). Fewer comments mentioned examples or responses, but 'juxtaposed, 'implicit', 'narrow' and 'limited' remained prominent with evaluation identified as limited or partial. Only Ruth's script identified her responses as 'descriptive'. Comparing these against teachers' feedback on class essays, I saw that Sarah and I had made no comments concerning juxtaposition. This may have been because students' post-marking re-drafts afforded opportunities for students to amend this error. Alternately, it may be that the time pressures in the examination, together with limited planning, resulted in less explanation of relevance and fewer links.

Image 4.19: Word Cloud – Errors Highlighted in A2-Level Examination (June 2014)

Although the findings were limited, links to other finding on redrafting of essays and students' independent work strategies supported conclusions that students' reliance on teachers' feedback may have contributed to limited progress in their ability to avoid common errors. The same errors continued through to the final examination, possibly resulting from lack of student initiative in addressing and avoiding these. Where improvements were evidenced, such as in the inclusion of examples, the data showed that written feedback had been augmented with frequent signposting through lessons and verbal feedback. The most effective reduction of common errors was evident in redrafted work, but no strategies were found effective in helping students avoid these during examinations where review and redrafting of work is limited or impossible. A tentative recommendation would be to teach students from the beginning of the A-Level course to create and use their own lists of common errors based on teachers' written and verbal feedback.

4.B3 Students' Independent Work Strategies

Table 4.15: Research Questions Addressed – Independent Work Strategies

Research Questions	**Own Work**	**Self-Review**	**Exams**	**Time Concerns**
RQ. 5.7 Helping students develop precision and sophistication in written argumentation: - What strategies do teachers find more or less useful?	X			
RQ. 3.3 Reviewing and redrafting written argumentation: - What do students find more or less problematic?				X
RQ. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 Independent reading and research: - How do students perceive independent study?	X		X	
- How much independent study do students do?	X		X	
- What do students find more or less problematic?	X	X		
- What strategies do students find more or less useful?	X	X		X
- What strategies do teachers find more or less useful?	X	X		
RQ. 5.4, 5.6, 5.8 Preparing for formal examinations: - What do students find more or less problematic?			X	X
- What strategies do students find more or less useful?	X		X	X

- What strategies do teachers find more or less useful?	X			

Independent Reading

Several textbooks advocated developing students independent reading skills to mitigate time limits in lessons (Burns & Law, 2004; Martinich, 2005: Vaughn, 2006; Warburton, 2006; Lacewing, 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Butler *et al*., 2008, 2009; Baron & Poxon, 2012; Hayward, Jones & Cardinal, 2014). Analysis of essays and students' reflections identified lack of independent reading, including students' reluctance to invest time to develop philosophical vocabulary (Cahn, 2004a; Vaughn, 2006) or analyse complex arguments (McDonough, 2000; Figdor, 2004; Morrissey & Palghat, 2014). Lack of engagement limited development of reading skills (Adler, 2004; McGhee, 2009) and background knowledge (Cahn, 2004b). Strategies identified in the literature included demonstration and modelling of reading and annotation (Andrews, 1995, Morrissey & Palghat, 2014), pre-training through a graduated approach (Garver 2004) and collaborative reading (Bosley & Jacobs, 1992). Analysis of students' reflections confirmed their reluctance to engage with these but also highlighted reasons for this, including comparisons with other subjects and reading limiting to what they felt necessary.

From first lessons students were encouraged to read and complete extra work outside lessons to extend their thinking (Cahn, 2004a; Gosnell, 2012). Students' annotated notes and self-reported reading were scrutinised for evidence of reading completed and reflection on the passages. Their written work was analysed against textbooks and set texts to identify examples of reading included in their written argumentation. For this exercise, textbooks were included as extra reading because our teaching was not directly from these. Students' reflections were scrutinised to assess their perceptions of the quality and quantity of independent reading completed and more generally their opinions of the value of independent reading. Sarah advocated matching each hour in lessons with at least one hour's independent work, but reported students 'struggle to understand what is required of them – plus the material is more technical than anything … they have ever discussed before' (SAS.Reflect.1). When marking work, my

reflection was that ‘students go with what they know … [without] extra work to check their understanding or clarify points where they are less sure’ (KAS.Reflect.2). In phases 1 and 2, students agreed to meet weekly to work through set articles. These were chosen from books such as *‘Introducing Philosophy through Pop Culture: From Socrates to South Park, Hume to House*’ (Irwin & Johnson, 2010) to ensure language and argumentation were accessible and centred on topics to which students could relate. Due to timetabling restrictions students completed these readings on their own. Directed reading in lessons included modelling methods of reading and annotation as well as set pieces for essays or discussions.

In phase 2, students reported spending 4-8 hours per week on extra reading (SIQ.2.1; SRQ.2.3). However, closer questioning in later phases introduced concerns about quality of reading completed. John admitted he had either done none (SRQ.3.5), or that small amounts of extra reading were ‘not specifically for the essay’ (SIQ.3.5). In phase 5 he said ‘it's usually easier to go … back through the PowerPoint … [used] in the lesson’ (SIQ.5.2). Feedback from other students showed extra reading was mostly limited to ‘podcasts, student room’ (Lydia.SRQ.3.1), going back over class notes (Mary.SRQ.3.5) and Googling theories (Ruth.SRQ.3.1; 3.5). Ruth summed up our general perception when stating, ‘I don't know if you'd call it actual reading... It's just like notes other people have prepared for the same exam’ (SIQ.5.2)**.**

Attempts at setting specific, relevant excerpts for homework had limited success. In phase 4, Sarah set a small section of reading, started in lesson and completed at home, but nothing from the material was included in their essays (SAS.Reflect.4). A second reading was completed in lesson and emailed to students absent from lesson but the next lesson showed nothing had been done. In phase 5 I set a piece of reading to be annotated and prepared for discussion. Lydia had read the article and asked the meaning of one word. Mary had skimmed it and Ruth admitted having not yet printed it. Students were given 15 minutes in lesson to read some of the article. Lydia added 11 annotations, John 6, but Ruth stated she did not know how to annotate readings. One reason given for lack of reading was that it was ‘easier to just have it short and more concise’ (Ruth.SIQ.5.2).

To try and hold students accountable, Sarah's preparation sheets (SAS.Essay.5.4), asked students to list additional reading and time spent on their essays (Table 4.16). Apart from Lydia, very limited extra reading was completed.

Table 4.16: Additional Work and Reading – SAS.Essay.5.4

	List of additional reading (Title/ Author).	**Time Spent on Essay**		
		Reading	**Planning**	**Writing**
John	'*Principa Ethica* (Moore)'	5 mins	10 mins	1 ½ hrs
Lydia	'Moral Philosophy (text book); Philosophy for Dummies; Rachels; Internet'	1 hr (?)	1 hr	3 hrs-ish
Mary	Planning sheet was not returned.			
Ruth	'Used the internet to find arguments why they do describe reality. Read my emotivism printouts'	All in 1 hour		

To assess students' claims about reading in History and English, teachers were asked, 'Do you expect extra reading outside of the lesson?' Analysis of feedback from teachers and our students (Table 4.17) revealed different perceptions on this point. Ruth's response was not included because she did not study History or English, but she reported doing no extra reading for other subjects (SRQ.4.1).

Table 4.17: Comparison of Teachers' and Students' Feedback on Extra Reading

	Students' Responses (SRQ.4.1)	**Teachers' Responses**
Questions	Do other subjects expect extra reading?	'Do you expect extra reading outside of the lesson?'

John	‘Occasionally, but not often.’	History Teacher 1 – ‘Additional reading helps the more able develop the depth of sophistication … required for the top grades (A*-C)’. Teacher 2 – ‘In year 13 we do expect them to use the library … also provide numerous articles from journals etc.’	English Teacher 1 – ‘Yes, independent study is encouraged throughout all Key Stages. Creative Writing at KS5 is heavily focused on wider reading … ‘ Teacher 2 – ‘They are encouraged to read … wider reading is particularly desirable for coursework …’
Lydia	‘… suggestions for History but not for English.’		
Mary	‘Sometimes but they are voluntary.’		

Advice in the History Handbook also showed other teachers clearly expecting extra reading (a reading list is provided). However, Teacher 2 commented, ‘I’m dubious if this actually happens!’

Further analysis of students’ interview responses attempted to ascertain reasons for students’ lack of reading. John’s reading was limited to what he needed to get the grades. Referring to History he said, ‘it's not like philosophy where you might need to read a bit more just to understand it … so I don't ever need to go any further’ (SIQ.5.2). In phase 4 Lydia stated that she did ‘a lot of extra reading in all … subjects’ (SRQ.4.1), but closer questioning in phase 5 clarified she had read 10 books for philosophy at the beginning of Year 12, only revisiting them to ‘pick out … specific points’ (SIQ.5.2). Mary’s responses showed reading was limited to her interests. She stated, ‘I do quite a lot of extra reading for history because I find it engaging’ compared with Philosophy where she admitted she ‘found [AS-Level] content slightly more interesting so … did more extra reading and work on it’ (SIQ.5.2). Ruth also stated that,’ it's hard to … motivate yourself to do all the extra reading for something that doesn't interest you’ (SIQ.5.2).

John's perception of the self-directed reading group (SRQ.1.1) was that opportunities to develop discussion skills and read examples of philosophy essays were helpful. However, because sessions were not teacher led, attendance was low with discussion often '[descending] into a God debate'. He also felt 'some of the readings are long and convoluted'. When questioned more closely it emerged most students were not reading materials before sessions (KAS.Reflect.2).

This analysis confirmed our perception that additional reading remained limited despite intervention strategies aimed at improving this. Although reading in lessons ensured this happened, there was no evidence that this developed their own interest in or frequency of reading. Teachers' inputs helped where students struggled to understand the texts; however, even when texts were read in lesson, there remained limited evidence of this reading being included in written work. Although students' reported reasons for limited reading were viewed as valid, analysis of their interview responses revealed concerns with time constraints (outlined below). Links back to extra-curricular activities outlined in students' profiles (Table 3.2) supported this view. Students' comparisons of reading requirements against other subjects again seemed to limit their willingness to engage with set tasks. For these students, they either needed to learn to enjoy philosophical reading or be convinced of its value to their grades to encourage engage with the intervention. Lack of full engagement made it difficult to judge the effect of extra reading on the development of their written argumentation.

Self-Assessment and Pre-Marking Review

While the literature review advocates reviewing and redrafting as essential to developing quality in argumentation (Baron & Poxon, 2012), students' reflections revealed difficulties noticing errors (White, 2002) and good and poor argumentation (Beach, 1979; Covill, 2010; Butler & Britt, 2011; Thomas, 2011). As noted above, students failed to revise work at levels that allowed review of their arguments (Butler & Britt, 2011; Thomas, 2011). Strategies trialled included the provision of marking criteria to develop awareness of expectations (Farmer, 2003), peer- and self-assessment exercises (Rieber, 2006; Harvey, 2008; Possin, 2008) and redrafting exercises to develop evaluative aspects of students' work (Johns, 1986; Vaughn, 2006).

Data on pre-marking reviews relied on self-reporting and self-assessment, augmented by teachers' reflections on marked work. Analyses of students' reflection logs and questionnaires, interview responses and observed lessons were used to identify and assess comments relating to self-assessment and pre-marking review. Most of these were in response to direct questions from teachers. A few students provided copies of first and second drafts, affording the opportunity to make comparisons and identify changes, but very few samples were provided. Questions centred on whether students reviewed work before submission and whether they could competently assess and revise their essays. John reported in phases 2, 3 and 5 that pre-marking review and redrafts of written work was limited to paragraph level, if he remembered (SRQ.3.5). In phase 2 he acknowledged that 'maybe [he] should ... read it all' (SIQ.2.1), but in phase 5 he still reported he had 'only just ever rewritten the paragraph' to see if it made sense (SIQ.5.2). This was apparent in essay KAS.Essay.3.2 where paragraph one of his redrafted essay remained incomplete: 'As such it becomes clear that our human nature is such that the guidance of a state is a necessity, in order to…' When pointed out, he appeared shocked that the sentence was unfinished. Lydia and Ruth reported reading back over their work (SRQ.3.5), but Lydia found it hard to redo her own writing (SIQ.5.2). In phases 2 and 3 Mary said once she looked back over her work she noticed problems (SRQ.2.2; SRQ 3.4), suggesting she had not done so previously. In phase 5, she said, 'I didn't really read through it again, so I'm not too sure' (SIQ.5.1).

Limits on time may have affected revision of work, especially if students failed to allow for this, but they also reported difficulties seeing errors. Mary could, with guidance, identify her introduction as 'vague and not explained in detail in terms of relevance to the question' while her conclusion included 'a point that [didn't] fit with the rest of the points' (SRQ.2.2). In phase 3 she noticed lack of detail and explanation (SRQ.3.4). When questioned about her review habits she stated, 'I still was precious about some of the things I said, so didn't completely rewrite it, which I should've done' (SRQ.3.5). Ruth said she could see her errors, and stated 'I … think if I went back over it I could do a better job' (SRQ.3.4). It was not clear why she had not done this. When asked to read a sample essay and pick out tangential and juxtaposed points, John reported he could not see these which could therefore be true for his own work (SRQ.2.2).

The limited samples provided made it difficult to judge whether students were redrafting their work before submitting it for marking. The analysis of students' reflection diaries and responses to interview questions suggested lack of ability in identifying problems in their writing, but also revealed an unwillingness to practise the skill. Interventions were limited to providing students with advice or setting self-assessment and review for homework, but relied on students completing the work. Their subsequent failure to hand in drafts might indicate lack of redrafted work, but this could not be confirmed. Analysis of other themes suggested contributing factors to limited self-assessment and pre-marking review, such as reliance on teacher-led review and time pressures (analysed below). Limited reading of argumentation may also have restricted opportunities to develop their ability to recognise errors in argumentation, which in turn affected their willingness and ability to read through and assess their own work.

Revision and Preparation for Examinations

Revision requires a multi-pronged approach, which includes learning main arguments, key terms and concepts, and practising technical aspects of constructing argumentation (Hutchinson & Loughlin, 2009). Strategies ranged from learning theory, keywords and examples to practising introductions and conclusions, constructing comparative notes and practising arguments for and against a range of positions (Lacewing 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Butler *et al*., 2008, 2009). Sarah and I emphasised the need for revision to be active and include reflection on and evaluation of arguments studied, mainly by practising past examination questions (Burns & Law, 2004; Vaughn, 2006; Lacewing, 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Butler et al., 2008, 2009; Hutchinson & Loughlin, 2009). In addition, at AS-Level students were provided with summaries of theories (Image 4.20) in order to allow time to practise utilising materials in response to past examination questions. A2-Level students were expected to construct their own notes to encourage more active learning and deeper understanding of interrelatedness between topics.

Analysis of examination scripts compared quantity and quality of descriptive text in students' examination scripts against the textbooks and revision notes provided. Students' reflective diaries and responses to interview questions were scrutinised for

evidence of their revision and learning strategies. Examination results were compared to assess students' claims that they found material on Sarah's side of the course easier to learn and reproduce.

Image 4.20: Sample of AS-Level Revision Materials

	STATE OF NATURE	SOCIAL CONTRACT
HOBBES	Every human is capable of killing any other—therefore no natural authority exists in the SON In the SON: · Humans will compete for basic necessities · We will fight/ challenge each other out of fear · We will seek reputation—show we are stronger than others Note: Hobbes does not assume that we are all selfish and violent, but in some situations it makes sense to behave this way The only law of nature is self-preservation from perceived evil, which includes the right to anything I need to continue surviving With lack of trust there is little change of sorting problems out peacefully The state of nature is 'nasty, brutish and short' Is Hobbes' view of humankind too pessimistic? Is it true that without a government, people do not recognise basic moral/ communal duties? Why would we recognise these in order to form a contract? Is it true that we lack the ability to trust/ negotiate?	As rational humans we recognise the need to seek peace and stability Humans seek peace by giving up part of their "right to all things", keeping only a right to defend their lives in case of immediate threat They mutually covenant to submit to the authority of a sovereign, who keeps the right to all things (i.e. The right to decide what everyone else should do) The agreement includes keeping the covenant we have made The underlying motivation is fear – of those around us or those who threaten us Prisoner's dilemma – it works only as long as all the participants play the game—which creates a very unstable society This is because the theory that is not based on moral obligation, but on self-interest

Despite repeated advice to revise materials through past examination questions, students' comments showed this was left till late in the revision period, if done at all. In SIQ.5.2 all students reported stripping materials down to bare minimums for memorisation, with past questions planned for a later stage. John said he did not 'go through [his] notes and … highlight [things]'; rather 'it happens more on exam day that I'll try and form an argument'. When asked why, he stated it was 'too much work in a way'. For the PHIL1 examination Mary 're-wrote … the whole course and answered every past question' (SRQ.4.1), yet for A2-Level she avoided doing past questions, despite having achieved some excellent results the year before. She said longer discussion questions made revision 'seem more of a task than before' (SRQ.4.1). Ruth said she would 'rather just learn what [she needed] to learn … than do extra things'. She sought pre-existent, concise online resources and said she needed 'to learn the stuff first' before being able to work through past examination questions (SIQ.5.2).

During revision sessions I repeatedly provided overviews of theories to help situate these within the context of the material. Analysis of the PHIL2 mark scheme showed a greater emphasis on drawing ideas from a range of interrelated theories. Deeper questioning sought to elicit from students techniques used to develop holistic overviews

of the course. Ruth reported finding the Epistemology and Moral philosophy easier because they '[feel] more straightforward … you can learn the topics just philosopher by philosopher'. John said, 'I always think it gets very messy in my head and I like to keep the subjects as separate as I can' (SIQ.5.2). He found the AS-Level revision grids useful for this reason. However, although I provided detailed grids for both modules in Year 12, most students did noticeably worse on my questions in the June 2013 PHIL2 paper (Table 4.18).

Table 4.18: Comparison of AS- and A2-Level Examination Results

	Karen's Questions			**Sarah's Questions**		
	Jan 2013	Jun 2013	Jun 2014	Jan 2013	Jun 2013	Jun 2014
John	80 %	40 %	72 %	60 %	66.7 %	66 %
Lydia	60 %	36.7 %	66 %	53.3 %	66.7 %	52 %
Mary	90 %	40 %	46 %	33.3 %	56.7 %	60 %
Ruth	56.7 %	56.7 %	42 %	60 %	50 %	62 %
Average %	71.68 %	43.35 %	56.5 %	51.65%	60.03 %	60 %

The data showed that these students preferred and used succinct summaries of revision material, therefore interventions designed to encourage engagement with the materials were resisted. For Lydia, Mary and Ruth their reflections hinted at time pressures (analysed below), but John's reflections suggested an approach limited to strategies that would get him the grades. As Head Boy he may have experienced time pressures, but this was not reported in his responses. Greater emphasis on revision throughout both years may have encouraged deeper revision, but limited time in lessons would require students completing this work at home. If they failed to see the benefit of the exercises it is likely they would again resist completing them, especially if they felt other methods were quicker and easier. Students' preconceptions of revision would need addressing to encourage engagement with a range of revision tasks in order for them to benefit from them.

Concerns with Time

The literature review did not identify concerns with time beyond acknowledging that philosophy cannot be rushed. White recommends 'patience in a condition of doubt' (2002, p. 84), requiring focused, slow and repeated reading of texts (Adler, 2004; Vaughn, 2006; Hayward, Jones & Cardinal 2014; Morrissey & Palghat, 2014). Sarah and I set essays at different times to mitigate time pressures and emphasised allowing sufficient time for reviewing and redrafts (Vaugh, 2006; Possin, 2008; Baron & Poxon, 2012).

While questioning students to explore reasons for limited independent work, Ruth repeatedly reported concerns with time. All comments referring to time restraints were analysed to identify types and frequency of concerns reported and possible reasons posited for this problem. Ruth found it 'hard juggling so many subjects' (SIQ.2.1), meaning she needed to 'find shortcuts … bullet pointing and a plan … shorter notes' (SIQ.5.2). In terms of revision, she said, 'I've got time to either learn my course or do extra stuff' (SIQ.5.2). Although other students did not explicitly state time concerns, there were hints in their feedback comments. Mary said at AS-Level she 'had more free time … as there was much less content in each course'. She added that 'near exams it becomes more like memorising everything and just trying to get good grades' (SIQ.5.2). In both years her attendance dropped off closer to the examination periods as she stayed home and concentrated on revision. John and Lydia asked for ways to quickly set up essays without losing marks (SIQ.2.1; SRQ.2.1). This links to concerns highlighted by Ruth, time available in examinations. In phase 4 and 5 we noticed Ruth was writing shorter essays than other students, and not completing all submitted work. During interviews she demonstrated increasing frustration, stating '... in the exam I don't physically have time to write enough' or 'sit and think about it and add bits in here and there' (SIQ.5.2). Closer analysis of her reflections identified two problems. In terms of physical writing time, Ruth reported writing consistently through the whole hour and that she felt her writing was concise (SIQ.5.2). To test this perception, I used a line count to roughly calculate the percentage by which students' responses increased from AS-Level to A2-Level (Table 4.19). Lydia's responses are not included because her A2-Level responses were completed on computer.

Table 4.19: Rough Calculation of Examination Response Length

Student	**AS-Level**			**A2-Level**			
	Q1	**Q2**	**Average**	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Average**	**Percentage Increase**
John	106	112	109	140	151	145.5	33.5%
Mary	67	74	70.5	80	92	86	22%
Ruth	105	119	112	130	152	141	26%

The rough calculation showed that doubled writing time did not result in essays that were doubled in length. Students did not create substantially better essay plans, which might have accounted for more time spent planning. They must, therefore, have written more slowly or spent more time thinking. This was important in informing our expectations and instructions during examination preparation periods.

To encourage Ruth, we pointed out improvements in her marks when work was redrafted. She stated, however, essays written 'under timed conditions [were] never normally very good' due to lack of preparation and review time (SIQ.5.2). When comparing this against time she reported spending on SAS.Essay.5.4 (1 hour for reading, planning and writing), we questioned whether time available in examinations was really to blame. Ruth acknowledged postmarking review doubled her essays in length (SIQ.5.2), but I questioned whether students' reliance on post-marking review hindered overall development.

Although data here was limited, analysis highlighted students' concerns and led to further understanding of the quantity of written work produced under timed conditions. Although students reported time pressures created by expectations from other subjects, the student profiles suggested additional pressures from extra-curricular activities. In terms of time pressures during examinations, students' requests for formulaic ways to quickly set up responses to examination questions supported reported concerns about time pressures in writing. However, the analysis of planning evident on thier examination scripts showed that this time was not spent producing essay plans. As most

of the concerns around time pressures surfaced during Phase 5, it was not possible to develop or trial interventions or support strategies to help students. This is an area requiring further study, especially as it relates to students studying Philosophy at A-Level.

4.C DEVELOPMENT OF ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

Written argumentation allows assessment and development of students' philosophical skills (Warburton, 2004, p. 49). This section reports analysis of students' work against the tick sheets developed (Appendices 5 and 6) to extract examples of elements of argumentation, and to measure progress and development over time. Analysis of students' reflection diaries and interview responses were used to try and understand reasons for greater or lesser progress. Students' work and teachers' written and verbal feedback were compared against interventions to identify and assess examples of students' responses to advice received and subsequent progress.

4.C1 Introductions, Theses and Conclusions

Table 4.20: Research Questions Addressed – Introductions and Theses

Research Questions	**Introductions**	**Theses**	**Conclusions**
RQ. 1.5 Producing written argumentation: - What have students found more or less problematic?		X	X
RQ. 3.1, 3.6 Structuring written argumentation: - What progress have students made? - What classroom strategies do teachers find more or less useful?	X X	X	X X

RQ. 5.3 Producing precision and sophistication in written argumentation: - What do students find more or less problematic?		X	
RQ. 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 Using language to improve flow and connectivity of ideas in written argumentation: - What do students find more or less problematic? - What strategies do students find more or less useful? - What strategies do teachers find more or less useful?	X	X X X	X
RQ. 2.1 Producing written argumentation in examination essays : - What progress have students made?	X		X

Introductions

Time limits in the AS-Level examination required succinct introductions (Warburton, 2006), allowing as much time as possible for argumentation. Longer introductions were found to include unnecessary descriptive material repeated in later paragraphs. The literature review did not identify specific problems encountered by students, but advice on what to include provided guidance on writing strong introductions (Johns, 1986; Vaughn, 2006; Baron & Poxon, 2012):

- Show understanding of questions:
    - define key terms;
    - explain their relevance to questions;
    - set out plan for essay;
    - background information for thesis - indicate which philosophers/ theories you will be using;
- State thesis – sum up main point of arguments.

Samples of introductions were provided (Farmer, 2003) to guide students' efforts along with explicit instructions and written feedback. Analysis of students' work showed they quickly learnt to include some or most of the above elements, reducing unnecessary content and stating their proposed theses. It also highlighted some difficulties encountered. Although 4% of all teachers' feedback comments acknowledged students had identified targeted arguments, use of materials to demonstrate understanding of questions remained erratic. Written feedback in SAS.Essay.5.4 included:

- 'Be clear what you mean by this?'
- 'Make sure you explain key words e.g. cognitivism.'
- 'What is your position? What are you arguing for?'
- 'Does this need to be in an introduction?'
- 'What is the reason for this?'
- 'Why use this here? Does it have to be meaningful to describe reality?'

These problems were still evident in phase 5, and analysis of final examination scripts (Table 4.21) showed students had included elements required to formulate crisp, informative introductions, but identified difficulties arising from how material was used.

Table 4.21: Analysis of Introductions – Final Examination Scripts

Elements of Introductions	**John**		**Lydia**		**Mary**		**Ruth**	
	KAS	SAS	KAS	SAS	KAS	SAS	KAS	SAS
Show that you understand what the questions is asking for:								
- Define key terms;		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
- Explain their relevance to the questions;	**T**	**T**			✓			
- Set out plan for essay	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
- Background information for thesis - indicate which philosophers/ theories you will be using;	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
State your position – sum up the main point of your argument.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The grey boxes indicate instances where 'background information' or 'plan for essay' included implicit or vague links to questions. In Lydia's KAS question, the introduction stated, 'the essay will discuss Rawls and Nozick as these are conflicting theories on the topic' and 'I will discuss the key issues brought up by the distribution of goods'. On both questions the examiner commented that argumentation was sometimes unclear. Lack of clarity in students' minds may result in vague introductions, or lack of clarity in introductions may lead to unclear argumentation in their essays. Ruth's thesis for her second question stated, 'There are many issues with using teleological theories' and 'deontological theories are a more acceptable approach'. The examiner wrote that

argumentation was simple and limited. John's theses are labelled 'T' because they were marked by the examiner as being tangential. Similarity between his introductions suggested a formulaic approach.

> Question 1: 'From each according to his ability, and to each according to his need.' Assess whether social goods should be distributed according to need alone.
>
> John's thesis: Focusing on Marx and Nozick, '… it can be argued that Nozick is more successful at providing an explanation of how his system is fair, and indeed how his system is more realistic …'

Instead of assessing whether the Marxist approach, focused narrowly on needs, was sufficient, he gave a generalised assessment of Marxist theory against Nozick's theory.

> Question 2: ''The morality of an action does not depend on its consequences.' Discuss.
>
> John's thesis: Focusing on Kant, 'This essay will show that, for these reasons, Kant fails to offer a convincing theory as to why 'the morality of an action does not depend on its consequences' is a valid view on morality.'

Instead of assessing how morality of actions should be measured, he provides general assessment of Kant's theory.

Interventions providing clear guidance produced progress in students' essay introductions, supporting their view that explicit instructions were helpful. However, further analysis of essays, outlined below, showed that clearly developed introductions did not necessarily overcome other difficulties in argumentative writing. Analysis of theses and conclusions revealed problems with managing and utilising larger sections of writing required to present and support argumentation.

Theses

The literature identified defending a thesis as taking a view on the question (Vaughn, 2006). It revealed a range of reasons for difficulties encountered:

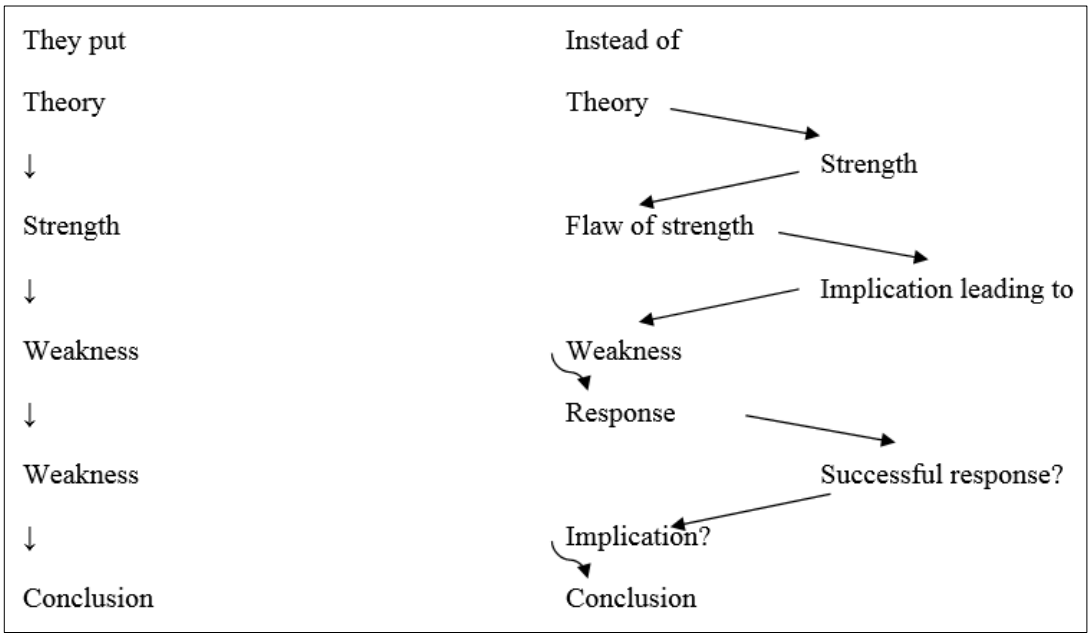
a) engaging with parts of questions, losing sight of others (Kuhn & Udell, 2003);
b) struggling to defend positions conflicting with prior beliefs or opinions (Dewey, 2016);
c) struggling to transitions from explaining and critiquing others' views to defending and justifying own views (Mitchell, 1994);
d) struggling to allow the moulding of views through evaluative engagement with others' views (Plato, cited in Flew, 2007).

Analysis of students' work and teachers' written feedback were analysed to identify and quantify examples of each, comparing vaguely worded theses against the difficulties listed above and assess students' progress over time. The analysis revealed examples of each of these but point (c) was the most prevalent, linking to students' preference for writing 'Philosopher-Strengths-Weaknesses' style essays, discussed in section 4.B1. The analysis also showed that many theses remained vague or confused because students either did not have a view or did not utilise parts of their essays as premises to defend their views.

Strategies used included giving students explicit theses to follow (Johns, 1986), appealing to students' beliefs and views (Andrews, 1995; Adler's, 2004) and generating students' opinions through freewriting (Fishman, 1989). Sarah and I also modelled good practice when setting essays. To help students force their positions throughout their essays I asked them to write mini-conclusions after each paragraph explaining how these related back to questions and their theses.

An analysis of students' reflections revealed several requests for 'structure', while analysis of teachers' reflections showed their perception that by phase 2 essay structures had improved. However, while 4% of teachers' feedback acknowledged students had stated a thesis, 13% reminded them to force positions throughout their essays, commented that theses had changed from introduction to conclusion, or questioned whether conclusions were supported by preceding argumentation (Baron & Poxon, 2012). Image 4.21 shows that students 'see evaluation as a presentation of strengths and weaknesses … failing to see it as a discussion' (SAS.Reflect.5). They struggled to link ideas or points back to questions or theses to construct threads of discussion running through their arguments.

Image 4.21: Sample from Sarah's Diary – Students' Essay Structures



In presenting material linearly, students concentrated on paragraphs, losing track of their thesis (Kuhn & Udell, 2003). Efforts to develop discussion were met with resistance from students, as shown in John's diary: 'I like the format where you just… almost in this simplistic way… list criticisms or strengths' (SIQ.5.2). To encourage evaluation, written feedback repeatedly reminded students to link points back (Table 4.22).

Table 4.22: Teachers' Feedback Comments – Theses

Essay	**Student**	**Teachers' Feedback Comments**
SAS.5.3	John	Have you really shown what you have claimed?
SAS.5.4	Lydia	What is your position? What are you arguing for?
SAS.5.4	Lydia	Are you going to show this?
SAS.5.4	Mary	Ensure your position is clear and you argue for it throughout.
SAS.5.4	Ruth	Force your position throughout.
KAS.5.5	John	What are you arguing for?

KAS.5.5	John	… you have not given enough discussion to really support the view you are trying to argue for.

After verbal feedback with students I reflected: 'they seem to understand the links but don't explain them. It's like Maths where they have not shown their workings' (Reflect.4).

Students also confused 'their opinion' with 'forcing a position'. In SRQ.3.1, Lydia, Mary and Ruth reported difficulties with including their own opinions. John stated not being conscious of where he was trying to go in essays, but also said his aim was 'to get a good grade rather than wanting to be a philosopher' (SIQ.2.1). In phase 3 students were given a set position to force (Johns, 1986) in an attempt to focus their argumentation. Mary found this helped direct her response (SRQ.3.4). Ruth agreed but only because the position concurred with her opinion. John and Lydia found the exercise uncomfortable. John stated, 'Part of me would think one thing, but then I would contradict myself' (SRQ.3.2), which may have resulted from arguing for a position contrary to his own view, or from lack of clarity in his understanding of different ideologies. Lydia reported 'I was … losing confidence in my ability to argue for the Conservative viewpoint, or for any viewpoint … I was looking at it and … going, I don't really think that's the case' (SIQ.3.2).

By phase 5 students' reflections (SIQ.5.2) revealed a range of strategies to overcome these difficulties, but also continuing difficulties encountered. John reported arguing for whichever position would earn him the most marks, but he also stated, 'I don't think I've ever [worried] about making an argument in the exam'. Lydia either argued for her own opinion or selected a position she thought was easier to support, but found the former easier. Mary's reflection diary mentioned ensuring she forced theses throughout essays but did not indicate how successful this was. Ruth stated, 'none of us are really coming up with anything ourselves'. The clearest evidence of progress came from Lydia's interview response which demonstrated some progress in confidence:

> 'I found specific quotes … then I timed myself for two minutes to write out what I thought about it … When I went back to write the essay … I'd see what I thought about it in the immediate aftermath of reading it … it's more

> my ideas and it surprised me … how much I pulled from my subconscious … So it started to link things a bit more.'

It was unclear the extent to which difficulties with theses linked to under-developed opinions on topics studied or lack of time spent developing and reviewing their arguments' structures. The data showed students could identify and state theses, but their skills in forcing sustained argumentation remained partial. This may link back to limited independent reading and thought, with students demonstrating progress where explicit instructions could be given but less where intervention strategies aimed at developing thinking rather than directing writing. However, a contradiction was noted between John's requests for clearer instructions on what to write and his reluctance to force a given position. In the analysis on requests for structure, students stated they wanted an outline into which they could drop selected material. These preconceptions could explain why strategies aimed at helping students develop their argumentation around their theses had limited success. These would need to be addressed and the differences between essays in philosophy and other subjects at A-Level made clear to enable students to fully engage with strategies aimed at improving argumentation rather than essay structuring skills.

Essay Conclusions

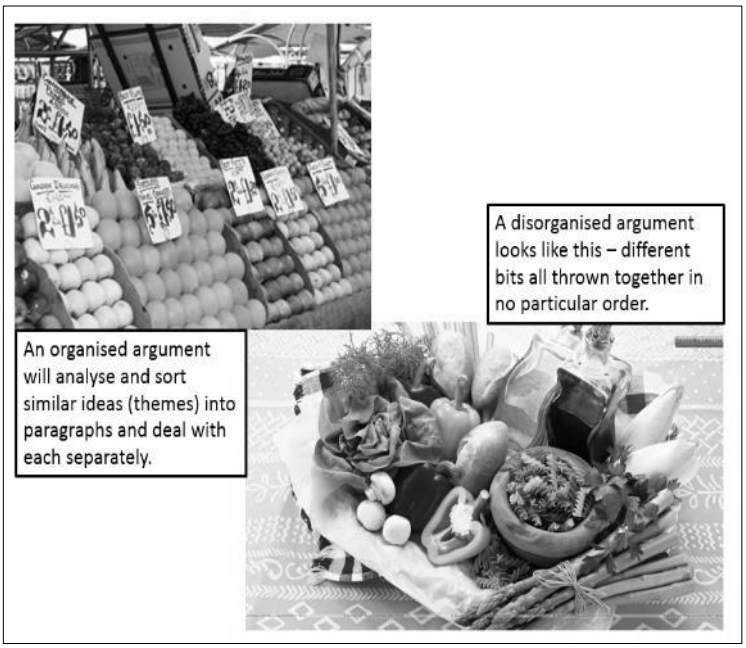
While introductions identify targeted arguments, concluding paragraphs must sum up and make clear how these have been defended and supported. Stronger conclusions include elements of analysis and clarification rather than mere summary (Baron & Poxon, 2012). Analysis of students' essays identified problems with conclusions that were tangential to original questions, sometimes resulting from unclear or weak theses. Students can reach conclusions without fully understanding or developing connections to support argumentation (Wason & Johnson-Laird, 1972; Dewey, 2016). Strategies found to develop conclusions were limited to providing a range of possible conclusions with reminders that these should not include any new material (Saunders *et al*., 2007).

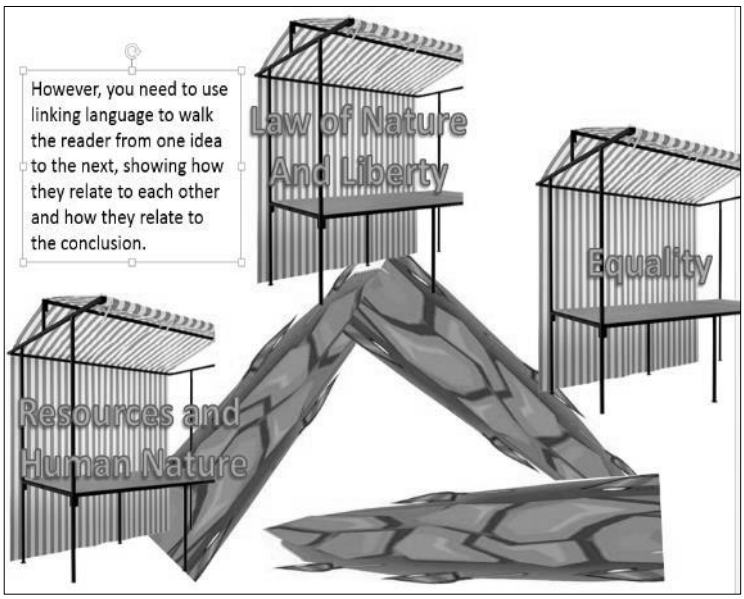
Students' work and teachers' feedback were analysed to identify and assess examples good essay conclusions indicating progress over time. Intervention strategies included

the modelling of examples and providing guidance through written feedback and exercises aimed at tying students' conclusions to their theses. In phase 3 I used metaphor to demonstrate using links between thesis, paragraphs and conclusions (Image 4.22). The first part of the image illustrated the need to sort and gather similar information into paragraphs to deal with one idea at a time. The second part of the image demonstrated, a) linking paragraphs together, and b) 'walking' readers through ideas, leading them towards conclusions. The material and teaching provided in the intervention strategies were compared with subsequent essays to assess the success of the strategies. Students' reflection logs and responses to interview questions were analysed to compare their progress with their reported perceptions of their progress.

At interview, John reported that he understood each sentence should draw readers closer to conclusions (SIQ.2.1), and that the lesson 'helped explain how an essay can be structured as an argument (premise + premise = conclusion)' (SRQ.3.3). However, while John could verbalise intended conclusions, he acknowledged in his reflections on KAS.Essay.3.2 that he 'should have concluded that [both Conservatives and Liberals] still think there should be some kind of political authority' (SIQ.3.2). By phase 5 John said it was 'easier, and [he would] get better marks' if he just arrived at conclusions that would hit more AOs (SIQ.5.2). On several occasions Mary reported looking back at her essays and identified that her conclusions did not fit her arguments. In phase 3 she stated, 'I know in my head I was thinking, this is the conclusion I want … but then when I read it back … I hadn't explicitly said it' (SIQ.3.2). This raised questions about whether she had allowed time for rest and review and whether she regularly reviewed her conclusions, discussed in section 4.B3.

Image 4:22: Explaining the Structure of the Argument (Phase 3)





One of Ruth's essays was handed in without thesis or conclusion. When asked why, she stated she 'didn't know what [she] was going to conclude' (SIQ.3.1). She said, 'I find [conclusions] … difficult … you have to word it [carefully]… I don't know… if there's time to actually come up with anything that works' (SIQ.5.2). This linked to concerns about time, discussed in section 4.B3, but also highlighted problems with language used to make argumentation clear, discussed in section 4.C3. Lydia reported finding it 'useful to go through and find [her] own argument (point 1, 2 and 3) and conclusion' (SRQ.2.3) referencing teacher led review rather than self-review of work. During pre-writing instructions students were provided with a range of possible conclusions from

which to choose. Analysis of essays showed students struggled to select material to support pre-chosen conclusions, and although they used confident language in their conclusions, we questioned whether students showed what they claimed (Table 4.23).

Table 4.23: Teachers' Feedback Comments – Conclusions

Essay	**Student**	**Students' Conclusions**	**Teachers' Feedback Comments**
SAS.5.3	John	What we are left with is not only a much better guide, it is also the very system we have in place today in modern, democratic Britain.	Have you shown this? You've considered Rule U., but have you shown it to be successful?
SAS.5.4	Lydia	The link between morality and emotions is something that cannot be disputed, thus suggesting that the emotivist account is accurate in its attempt to argue that moral statements do not describe reality.	A strong word to use. Did you show this?
SAS.5.4	Mary	…the link between morality and emotions is something that cannot be disputed.	Have you shown this?
SAS.5.4	Ruth	…our moral judgements are merely expressions of our emotion towards a certain act or situation; they do not link to anything in reality.	Have you really shown this?

John's conclusion matches his stated thesis, but interim argumentation did not convince. Lydia failed to lay out a clear thesis in her introduction which weakened her essay. Mary's introduction and conclusion matched, but she failed to explain why moral statements do not describe reality. Ruth's introduction and conclusion also matched, but she, again, did not explain the argument she was making.

The analysis of students' work showed ongoing problems with students' theses and argumentation resulting in sweeping, asserted conclusions. Even when argumentation was more precise, students' conclusions seldom surpassed summarisations of their paragraphs. Lack of revision and students' reliance on teachers' feedback to 'finish' their work perhaps contributed to limited progress in this area. However, linking back to the analysis of students' theses, it seemed more probable that their failure to develop consistent lines of argumentation made the writing of compelling conclusions difficult.

4.C2 Knowledge and Understanding of Theories

Table 4.24: Research Questions Addressed – Knowledge and Understanding of Theories

Research Questions	**Philosophers' Themes**	**Depth/ Detail**	**Synoptic**
RQ. 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 5.7 Precision and sophistication in written argumentation:			
- What do students understand by precision and sophistication in written argumentation?		X	
- What progress have students made?	X	X	X
- What do students find more or less problematic?		X	
- What strategies do students find more or less useful?		X	
- What strategies do teachers find more or less useful?		X	
RQ. 2.1 Producing written argumentation in examination essays:			

- What progress have students made?	X	X	X
RQ. 3.1 Structuring written argumentation: - What progress have students made?	X	X	X

Philosophers and Themes

Explication of philosophers' theories requires accurate rephrasing of arguments with close reference to text (Baron & Poxon, 2012; Digiovanna, 2014) and demonstrating how premises relate to claims (Digiovanna, 2014). Where our students struggled to accurately identify components of arguments, their accounts become vague and blurred (Finocchiaro, 1980), a problem identified in their examination scripts. Good grasp and understanding of arguments demonstrated in notes did not automatically translate into detailed explanations in essays (Vassilopoulou, 2009).

Teaching strategies trialled included diagrams and argument maps to help clarify premises and themes (Horn, 2000; Macagno *et al.*, 2006; Harrell, 2008; Hutchinson & Loughlin, 2009), analogies to represent and explicate core ideas (Cassidy, 2007) and a gradualist writing approach (Malone-France, 2008). Examples of explication in students' essays were isolated and compared with guidance provided and compared against students' reported perceptions of how useful they found the strategies. Lesson observations and students' interview responses were analysed for examples of their understanding of explication. Interventions included shorter pre-questions to encourage detailed yet concise outlines of theory before application and argumentation. Other exercises included writing frames (section 4.B1) and reading exercises (section 4.B3) to encourage deeper engagement with theory and elicit more detail in descriptions.

John reflected that the lack of 15-mark questions at A2-Level made it 'less clear … you need to still have ... very specific knowledge' (SIQ.5.2). Lydia, however struggled with the exercise, saying she 'couldn't figure out what … was irrelevant, or what [to] use' (SIQ.5.2). Despite the difference in these comments, analysis of teachers' feedback on essays revealed continued requests for further detail on all students' essays through to phase 5 (Table 4.25).

Table 4.25: Sample of Feedback Comments – Philosophers and Themes

Essay	**Student**	**Feedback Comments**
KAS.3.2	John	Here you would need to clarify the Liberals' perspective on the good life and on progress.
SAS,4.2	Mary	You need to be a bit more detailed to draw out the truth.
SAS.5.4	Ruth	Arguments need detail and precision - e.g. key philosophers.
KAS.5.5	Lydia	There needs to be more detail in the theory that you have used. Make sure you learn the detail.

Analysis of examiners' comments showed some progress where students included clearer explanations of theory. Attempts to measure progress across the main examinations (January 2013; June 2013; June 2014) utilised a range of analytical strategies (outlined below). Scores were calculated as percentages of total marks and separated for the three assessment objectives, Knowledge and Understanding (AO1), Analysis and Application (AO2), and Assessment and Evaluation (AO3). At AS-Level these had to be calculated as percentages of total score but at A2-Level separate scores were allocated to each AO. With examinations carrying different weightings and rubrics, the exercise could only give an impression, not an accurate scoring.

Table 4.26: Scores Achieved for Knowledge and Understanding (AO1)

Students	**Karen's Questions**			**Sarah's Questions**		
	Jan 2013	Jun 2013	Jun 2014	Jan 2013	Jun 2013	Jun 2014
John	24	20	20	18	12	20
Lydia	18	11	24	16	20	18
Mary	27	12	16	10	17	20
Ruth	17	17	14	18	15	20
Average	**21.5**	**15**	**17.5**	**15.5**	**16**	**19.5**

Students' reflection diaries and interview responses reported finding Sarah's material easier than mine. An analysis of their essay scores, however, showed that in 19 out of 24 questions students scored higher on my side of the course for AO1 (Table 4.26). Students reported finding her essays easier because they could structure them according to the views of different philosophers, whereas my essays required the identification and discussion of themes. The difference in scores could suggest that the more difficult essays, while requiring more work, forced them to analyse the texts studied, resulting in better understanding and more detailed explication. However, there is no consistent pattern to the scores suggesting students perhaps did better based on topics they found easier, not on essay structures. I further analysed students' achievements using level descriptors from rubrics across the 3 examination periods (Image 4.23).

Image 4.23: Sample of Analysis of Progress in Examination Essays (John.Exam.Jun.2014)

John	Jan-13		Jun-13		Jun-14	
	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2
AO1	explain some relevant material; knowledge of issues will be present but may lack depth and/or precision L4	Relevant philosophical issues explained but there may be some imprecision; knowledge and understanding of the issues will be apparent but not always fully exploited. L5	explain some relevant material; knowledge of issues will be present but may lack depth and/or precision L4	narrow focus on one aspect or a range of issues may be referred to with limited understanding; Some knowledge will be present but it is likely to either lack detail and precision. L3	relatively narrow range of positions and arguments relevant to the question so that, while the response is clearly focused, detailed and precise, it is not comprehensive and some avenues remain unexplored. L4	Either provide a clear, detailed and precise account of a relatively narrow range of positions and arguments; Understanding, while good, may not always be precise. L4
AO2	analysis of some material but positions might be juxtaposed rather than critically compared; examples are likely to be used descriptively; occasional tangents at the lower end of the level. L4	Examples will be deployed effectively but their implications may not be made fully apparent L5	analysis of some material but positions might be juxtaposed rather than critically compared; examples are likely to be used descriptively; occasional tangents at the lower end of the level. L4	narrow focus; limited analysis L3	narrow range of relevant points and examples; without fully exploiting it, so that some points are not analysed in detail or with precision and some implications are not explored. L4	Critical discussion is focused and generally sustained although some points may not be clearly directed. L4
AO3	Evaluative points are likely to be underdeveloped or applied to a limited range of material and may not be convincing. L4	Evaluation must be present but may lack philosophical impact, or it may be penetrating over a limited range of material. L5	Evaluative points are likely to be underdeveloped or applied to a limited range of material and may not be convincing. L4	Evaluation may be replaced by assertion or counter-assertion. Sporadic insights may be present but they would lack development; no evaluation at the lower end L3	The critical appreciation of points raised is employed to advance a reasoned judgement although this may require further support. L4	conclusions might acknowledge some key strengths and weaknesses of relevant positions. L4

AO1 – Improvement in terms of precision / detail → over a limited range of material (narrow focus).
AO2 – Improvement in focus of analysis + examples → detail + full exploration lacking.
AO3 – Some improvement in evaluation → still needs further depth and support (KEC's essay – lists S+W → link to this comment that this is what he "prefers").

As the level descriptors are generic, this produced a general perception of progress (Table 4.27).

Table 4.27: Development of Argumentation (AO1)

	AO1 – Knowledge & Understanding
John	Improved precision and detail; narrow focus/ limited range of material used.
Lydia	Improved depth and detail of explanations; range of material used more limited.
Mary	Some improved detail; range and expositions remained limited.
Ruth	Improvement in terms of clarity; over a limited range.

Examiner's comments on the January 2014 scripts provided more detailed and specific accounts of students' achievements under each AO, supporting these impressions.

John: 'clear description', 'clear overview', 'relevant positions explained', 'arguments clear', 'detail in description', 'detailed explanation'
Lydia: 'detailed and precise', 'clear over a narrow range'
Mary: 'detailed over narrow range', 'good not precise'
Ruth: 'general account', 'accurate statement of one aspect'

This suggests accurate knowledge and understanding of theories, with lower marks resulting from lack of detail or narrow selection of material. Students all achieved between Levels 3 and 4 for AO1. Image 4:24 shows differences between these levels, with Level 5 requiring comprehensive, detailed and precise accounts of material selected.

Image 4.24: Level Descriptors – Knowledge and Understanding: PHIL3 (AQA, 2010b)

AO1: Knowledge and understanding	
Level 5	**13–15 marks**
Answers in this level provide a comprehensive, detailed and precise account of philosophical arguments, positions and concepts relevant to the question, demonstrating a full understanding of the issues raised.	
Level 4	**10–12 marks**
Answers in this level: **Either** provide a clear, detailed and precise account of a relatively narrow range of positions and arguments relevant to the question so that, while the response is clearly focused, detailed and precise, it is not comprehensive and some avenues remain unexplored. **Or** the range of points selected and applied may be quite full but descriptions of philosophical positions, arguments and concepts may lack some detail. Understanding, while good, may not always be precise.	
Level 3	**7–9 marks**
Answers in this level: **Either** present a range of knowledge generally so that relevant positions are identified and explained but specific arguments will be rare and those given will lack detail and precision (this type of response may be quite lengthy but lacking philosophical impact). **Or** relevant positions, concepts and arguments are introduced and accurately stated but exposition fails to develop beyond a bare outline.	

Analysis of students' work identified a distinction between accurate and detailed exposition of theory. The interventions helped students understand what was required but did not elicit these levels of detail in their written work. Towards phase 5, everything students produced was correct, but lack of detail referred to a narrow selection of material or theories summarised instead of fully explained. Analysis of examination scripts showed all students improved their explication of material under examination conditions, with limitations remaining in terms of range of material used. This may be linked to revision strategies rather than interventions trialled, where students concentrated on memorisation of material provided which included explication. Although revision notes provided in this format may result in students including more detail in their descriptions of theory, it is not certain that they will have grasped the concept of elucidating the steps of argumentation described.

Depth and Detail

The examination rubrics require depth, detail, precision and sophistication to access the highest AO1 levels on the A2-Level mark scheme (86-100% of the total mark). Students can, therefore, access relatively high grades (66-85% at AS-Level; 73-85% at A2-Level) with knowledge and understanding limited to a 'narrow range of arguments' or arguments 'not always fully exploited' and/or lacking some detail/ precision (AQA,

2011, 2014b). However, providing detailed knowledge and understanding of theories can take time and focus away from argumentation which must be equally detailed and precise (Bosley & Jacobs, 1992). Lack of detail in argumentation can result from limited content in terms of justifying opinions (Crowhurst, 1990) and short conversational turns (Freedman & Pringle, 1984). Interventions included explicit feedback with students expected to redraft and improve their work. Samples of good depth and detail were shared and discussed, with verbal and written feedback affording students' opportunities to discuss their thinking and suggested improvements.

34 % of written feedback directed students to add more explanation and precision such as 'How does he argue for this?' and 'Why is this needed?' (SAS.3.1). Feedback frequently highlighted material where students stated conclusions reached by philosophers without explaining how philosophers reached these points. For example, Mary stated, 'Hume's Law implies that one cannot derive an 'ought' from an 'is', as moral judgements need to be based upon a combination of natural facts and moral standards …' (SAS.Essay.3.1). She then stated that Hume's Law demonstrates 'the need to make hidden, moral assumptions explicit'. After giving an example of Hume's Law applied to the issue of abortion, she reached the conclusion that Hume's Law does not 'create an issue for naturalism' because Hume was a naturalist; his argument 'fits well' with existing theory and his argument improves existing theory. Lack of detail in the original explanation of theory resulted in sweeping evaluative statements that lacked backing.

Another problem was partial explanation of points made. Lydia wrote, 'Liberals emphasise the maximisation of Negative Freedom as this involves less control over choice and little interference, especially in the private sphere.' The word 'as' implies the second part of the sentence will explain reasons for this emphasis, but by not explaining here or in previous sentences why liberals would emphasise this type of freedom, it becomes a definition rather than an explanation.

Students' interview responses revealed awareness that more detail was needed, but it was unclear if they were conflating volume with detail which may also have contributed towards problems. For example, Ruth said 'I tried to make each paragraph a bit more bulkier [*sic.*] with … what I put in it' (SIQ.5.2). In the AS-Level examination, John realised he had attempted too much in one of his essays, resulting in him being

‘reserved with … how many different theories’ to include (SIQ.5.2). In terms of depth, he felt he didn’t ‘say anything of particular depth’ if he tried to include too much in essays (SIQ.5.2). On KAS.5.5 he reported using support material provided and was confused why written feedback marked his content as inaccurate. In his essay he wrote:

> ‘Rawls is desperately trying to combat nature, by seeking equality, but this seems to happen only at the beginning. He is able to present an ‘immaculate conception’ where everyone is made equal…’

A search of reading material provided and Rawls’ book (1999) failed to find the phrase ‘immaculate conception’. By attempting to summarise Rawls’ theory in a few sentences, John missed the point of the theory, presenting vague statements. The sentence ‘this seems to happen only at the beginning’ may refer to Rawls’ ‘veil of ignorance’ (Rawls, 1999, p. 11), and ‘everyone is made equal’ may refer to Rawls’ justice in distribution, where unequal distribution ‘must be to everyone’s advantage’ (*ibid.*, p. 53). John’s account, however, leaves readers making these connections.

For Lydia, lack of detail was traced to her rush to include as much as possible, and she admitted she ‘kind of just regurgitated the information’ (SIQ.5.2). Mary and Ruth both acknowledged needing to read more, with Ruth stating she preferred resorting to bullet pointed notes rather than reading ‘chunky paragraphs of text’ (SIQ.5.2). This links back to problems with independent reading and study and to problems discussed around revision techniques (section 4.B3). Analysis of her responses in the examination (Image 4:21) demonstrates this lack of explication.

Image 4:25: Sample of Response – Exam.Jun.2014

Explained earlier in essay

'Whilst Rawls draws upon nature to conclude that 'all humans are equal' we can also draw on nature to in fact prove the opposite. Many natural heirachys [*sic.*] and inequalities exist naturally between people, that is just the way things naturally are, for example some people are much stronger or more intelligent than others. It would be injust [*sic.*] to take money from someone that they earned because of a natural advantage they can't help, to give to those with a natural disadvantage in society. Therefore, he concludes that distribution should be by desert, not need …' (Ruth.Exam.Jun.2014)

What does the example show in relation to justice?

Why would it be unjust?

The literature identified two strategies to develop depth and detail: small group assignments to encourage collaborative working through material (Bosley & Jacobs, 1992), supporting AQA suggestions that students should complete detailed reading of texts rather than relying on notes (2010), and in-class exercises (Harrelson, 2012). Due to problems identified with independent work (section 4.B3), lesson time was used to help students think through theory and draw out implications, strengths and weaknesses.

> 'When we have looked at strengths we have considered whether there are any potential flaws to the strength or whether or not it is a strong point of the theory. Essentially asking the question → how strong is this strength? When we looked at weaknesses we considered how it could respond to the challenges, whether or not the response would be adequate, where that then leaves the theory. I was trying to get them to map out a discussion' (SAS.Reflect.5).

Analysis of essays and Sarah's feedback showed, however, students had not used sheets generated in lesson to add depth to essays. Feedback comments highlighted lack of exploration of issues with some students again listing strengths and weaknesses. In my reflections I noted while 'comments demonstrated insight into problems [explored] … counterviews [remained] stated, with some implications left unstated' (KAS.Reflect.4).

The analysis again supported teachers' claims that students understood materials studied in lesson but experienced difficulties explaining steps in their analysis and evaluation

(discussed further in section 4.C3). This may link to difficulties with time and space in essays but may also link to students' condensing and summarising material with losses to depth and precision. Students remained convinced that explicit instruction on what to write was required, limiting their willingness and ability to redraft their work. This meant efforts to improve depth and detail through feedback had limited effect and could not be fully assessed.

Synoptic Element

The literature review found little discussion on teaching synoptic elements in their writing beyond the AQA specification (2007) and textbooks (Lacewing 2010a, 2010b) emphasising this as a requirement. The course's modular structure allowed a graduated approach to students' progress, but detracted from this requirement at A2-Level. Argumentation maps, diagrams (Horn, 2000) and explicit instructions in lessons were used to emphasise these links. Students' essays were analysed to identify examples of synoptic links and interview questions aimed to elicit from them their understanding of these.

Although Political Philosophy continued over both years, analysis of data showed students still struggled to grasp and utilise links across modules. In phase 3, students were asked what they did to remind themselves of work studied in Year 12 (SRQ.3.5). Lydia and Ruth both replied, 'I didn't'. John stated, 'Being honest … I just went by what I remembered. I didn't go back over last year's notes'. Only Mary reported reviewing her notes on Mill and the state of nature.

Distinctions created by students were revealed when analysing the Jacobsen sessions assigned to help students with essay planning. The essay title chosen was 'To what extent is any state an instrument of oppression?' (AQA, 2012b). The group included both Year 12 and 13 students; both groups had covered similar material but Year 13 work included more depth.

Points emphasised by the tutor included:

- Essays must have a target answer or line of argument.
- Make sure that all parts of the essay are answering the question.

Discussions in the session elicited the following points:

- Target answer: all states are oppressive to some degree.
- The meaning of the 'oppression' would need to be clarified.
- Starting with ideologies almost diametrically opposed to the target conclusion, students should work through the ideologies towards the one most closely supporting their argument.
- E.g. Anarchism → Marxism → Liberalism → Conservatism

The session was recorded, allowing observation of student participation. For much of the discussion, John was looking at the floor or checking his phone. Lydia was looking away from the board. Mary and Ruth were watching but were mostly silent. Towards the end of the session some contributions were offered. When questioned about their lack of engagement (SIQ.5.2), John commented that the session 'got a little bit messy' because Year 12's mentioned Hobbes and Locke's views on human nature to argue that both philosophers agreed that societies needed some form of control. Lydia found 'some minor parts [of the session] useful but not a lot … because it was mostly … Year 12 centred'. For example they had mentioned Anarchism. This puzzled me because the first topic and essay covered in Year 13 was a detailed treatment of Anarchism followed by an essay. She commented further that Year 13 students were 'trying to distance [themselves] from the year 12's … because it's a completely different essay'. This demonstrated lack of understanding that material from both years should be utilised to answer questions and showed distinctions students had created between units. This remained an area where we struggled to find strategies to help students develop depth and breadth in their written argumentation.

Although brief, the session showed efforts to draw students' attention to synoptic links failed to overcome distinction created by students. Where they held strong beliefs about their learning, efforts to change working practices had limited success. This was similar to beliefs held about essay structures and explicit feedback provided in other subjects, with efforts to encourage independent work strategies having limited success.

4.C3 Analysis, Application, Assessment and Evaluation

Table 4.28: Research Questions Addressed – Analysis, Application, Assessment and Evaluation

Research Questions	**Examples**	**Analysis**	**Links**
RQ. 2.1 Producing written argumentation in examination essays:			
- What progress have students made?	X	X	X
RQ. 3.1 Structuring written argumentation:			
- What progress have students made?	X	X	X
RQ. 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 Developing quality of language to improve flow and connectivity of ideas in written argumentation:			
- What do students find more or less problematic?			X
- What strategies do students find more or less useful?			X
- What strategies do teachers find more or less useful?			X
RQ. 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5 Precision and sophistication in written argumentation:			
- What do students understand by precision and sophistication in written argumentation?	X	X	
- What progress have students made?	X	X	X
- What do students find more or less problematic?	X	X	
- What strategies do students find more or less useful?	X	X	

- What strategies do teachers find more or less useful?	X	X	

Analysis and Application

Insufficiently detailed analysis of points selected was highlighted in examiners' reports (AQA, 2013a), with analysis and evaluation identified as 'philosophically more demanding skills' (AQA, 2014c, p. 6). Students experienced difficulties using claims to develop reasoning, following implications to produce new claims (Digiovanna, 2014), and asking questions to deconstruct and analyse text and oral discussion (Mitchell 1994). They struggled to engage with content (Lacewing (2010a, 2010b), identify fallacies (Baron & Poxon, 2012) or use analysis and discussion to support or refute argumentation (Vassilopoulou, 2009). The literature on teaching analysis and evaluation focused on eliciting these through discussion. Analytical reading (Gosnell, 2012; Hayward, Jones & Cardinal, 2014), questioning students during discussions (Baron & Poxon, 2012) and use of kinaesthetic exercises to deconstruct ideas (Twardy, 2004; Rowe, *et al*, 2006; Harrell, 2005, 2008; Baron & Poxon, 2012) encourage verbal analysis without addressing difficulties encountered in written argumentation. White and Chern (2004) provide some guidance on written work, advocating graduated approaches to written assignments, separating the development of exposition and analysis, but they do not outline specific writing problems resulting from lack of analysis. By separating out elements of argumentation, my study aimed to show how problems in one area affected others.

Analysis of students' written work identified links between lack of detail (section 4.C2) and immature analysis. This was compared with analysis of teacher's written feedback which revealed three ways in which students failed to include analytical detail (Table 4.29). Insufficient detail in Mary's explanation of theories resulted in too little material with which to examine differences between theories. In John's essay, he proposed solutions to problems raised, but failed to explain why these were better than original solutions proposed. Feedback on Ruth's essay identified a problem frequently encountered, where students described positions or theories without explaining how definitions or use of concepts produced different conclusions.

Table 4:29: Feedback Comments – Analysis and Application

Essay	**Student**	**Feedback Comments**
KAS.3.2	Mary	You need more detail in order to make your analysis more specific and accurate.
KAS.3.1	John	An agency is paid to resolve disputes – that is their proposal. How is this different from having a state?
KAS5.5	Ruth	You need to explore how the 2 philosophers are using the concept of fairness, and what problems arise with their particular use of the word.

Section 4.C2 discussed attempts at utilising White and Chern's graduated approach (2004) using short questions to develop exposition. Sections B2 and B3 discuss efforts to develop detail through redrafting of work and teachers' written feedback. Although students' post-marking redrafts achieved greater precision, improvements may have reflected teachers' thinking more than students' understanding. Analysis of examination results (Table 4.30), where students were denied teacher input, showed some development in AO2 at A2-Level (marks for PHIL1 and PHIL2 were percentages). Again, in 19 out of 24 instances students scored higher on my questions, but overall marks lacked consistency. In the June 2014 examination, two students achieved higher on my question despite all students reporting Sarah's questions as easier.

Table 4.30: Scores Achieved for Analysis and Application (AO2)

	Karen's Questions			**Sarah's Questions**		
Exams	Jan 2013	Jun 2013	Jun 2014	Jan 2013	Jun 2013	Jan 2014
John	24	20	22	18	12	20
Lydia	18	11	22	16	20	18
Mary	27	12	16	10	17	20
Ruth	17	17	14	18	15	18
Average	21.5	15	17.5	15.5	16	19

Looking at level descriptors, John's 18% in January 2013 achieved level 4, but Lydia's 18% in January 2014 achieved level 3, showing increased expectations. Although percentage scores showed progress on some questions, the change in expectations produced less progress in terms of AO Levels. For example, Mary's average percentage score in January 2013 was 21.5%, dropping to 18% in January 2014. However, her AOs across the examinations (January, 2013; June, 2013; June 2014) show a different picture:

Karen's questions

- Level 6, Level 3, Level 3

Sarah's questions

- Level 3, Level 4, Level 4

This shows her work settling around Levels 3 and 4, with one question in January 2013 as an exception.

Comparison of students' grades against the rubrics showed development for most students (Table 4.31), but with insufficient detail and depth (John, Ruth) and analysis limited to a narrow range (Lydia and Mary) remaining problematic. Despite Mary's improvement in explicating theories, her analysis remained brief and limited, showing improvement in one element does not guarantee corresponding improvement in another. She had added more detail, as recommended in written feedback, but had not worked with that material.

Table 4.31: Development of Argumentation (AO2)

	AO2 – Interpretation, Analysis & Application
John	Analysis more focused; examples deployed more successfully; detail and depth in explanation limited.
Lydia	Some improvement in detail and focus of analysis; limited to a narrow range.
Mary	Analysis remained brief and limited to a narrow range.
Ruth	Improvement in clarity of analysis; over a limited range, not fully explored.

Examiner's comments on individual scripts (Exam.Jan.2014) also suggest links between problems encountered in AO1 (description of content) and AO2 (analysis of content).

John: 'some relevant points', 'narrow and partial', 'critical discussion is generally sustained, but not always clearly directed'.
Lydia: 'focused and clear', 'analysis of some issues is detailed'.
Mary: 'relevant and precise over a narrow range'.
Ruth: 'narrow and partial', 'one point'.

Lydia, who achieved the highest score for analysis on my question, demonstrated focused and clear analysis on some of the material. For John and Ruth, partial knowledge and understanding demonstrated in AO1 showed corresponding narrow and partial achievement for AO2. It is not clear if there is a direct link, but where students included only one or two initial theories, analysis was subsequently limited to one analytical point. Students were limited to Levels 3 and 4 due to limited range of points explored or lack of detailed explanation of analytical points made (Image 4.26). Level 5 requires a range of points analysed in detail and employed in clear and directed ways to support theses. It also introduces the element of addressing nuances of the question, an aspect of discussion Mary found particularly problematic (SIQ.5.2).

Image 4.26: Level Descriptors – Analysis and Application: PHIL3 (AQA, 2010b)

AO2: Interpretation, analysis and application	
Level 5	**13–15 marks**
A range of points are selected to advance discussion. Points are made and examples used are pertinent and judiciously selected; the nuances of the question will be specifically addressed. Answers in this level critically analyse the range of points and examples selected for discussion to advance a clear, directed and analytical treatment of the issue. The implications of positions discussed are considered and explored.	
Level 4	**10–12 marks**
Answers in this level: **Either** critically analyse a relatively narrow range of relevant points and examples to provide a clear, detailed analysis of philosophical arguments and positions. **Or** consider a wide range of material without fully exploiting it, so that some points are not analysed in detail or with precision and some implications are not explored. Critical discussion is focused and generally sustained although some points may not be clearly directed.	
Level 3	**7–9 marks**
Answers in this level: **Either** select a range of relevant points and examples to provide a focused discussion of relevant philosophical positions, arguments and concepts in which analysis is brief, lacking in detail and precision. **Or** interpretation is very narrowly focused, and analysis centres on a partial appreciation of the issue.	

Analysis of teachers' written feedback identified students' use of examples as problematic in analysis and application. Discussion of this is included here and the next section because, although students quickly learnt to include examples, they struggled to use these analytically or critically. While some literature emphasised the need to include examples (Warburton, 2006; Vaughn, 2006), textbooks emphasised using them to explore, illustrate and support points made (Warburton, 2006; Lacewing, 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Butler et al., 2008, 2009; Baron & Poxon, 2012).

The data highlighted a difference between students' and teachers' perspectives on the use of examples. Students' reflections showed concerns with thinking up examples to include, requesting 'examples to use with each theory/ philosopher' (Lydia,SRQ.2.4). Lydia said examples were difficult for her to include (SIQ.3.2), and Ruth reported difficulties with thinking up examples 'on the spot' (SRQ.4.1). Only Ruth mentioned using examples to demonstrate understanding of points made (SRQ.2.1). Mary said other teachers provided examples (SRQ.4.1) but Sarah and I were puzzled why students did not use examples provided through teaching, textbooks or on PowerPoints, e.g.:

> ‘Usually, if I have a right, someone else has a duty. For example, if I have the right to life, everyone has the duty not to kill me …’ (Lacewing, 2008, p. 49).

In the final examination scripts John included one example in each response, Lydia included 5 examples in her first essay and 2 in her second, Mary included one in her second essay and Ruth included one in her first essay and 4 in her second. The examination results were not sufficiently different to draw conclusions on how this affected argumentation, but it was noted that where students added more examples in one essay, the AO2 mark was better than in the second essay. Lydia’s first essay, with the highest number of examples, achieved the highest AO2 score.

However, teachers’ written feedback identified lack of analytical and critical application of examples as equally problematic. Teaching strategies found included provision and generation of examples at the teaching phase (Hutchinson & Loughlin, 2009; Harrelson, 2012), but did not address strategies to develop critical discussion of examples in written argumentation. Section 4.B2 explained the use of modelling to demonstrate how examples should be used (Image 4.18). Teachers’ written feedback reminding students to include or critique examples made up 11% of in-text comments. By phase 5 students more consistently included examples, but half the in-text feedback reminded them to use examples critically (Table 4.32).

Table 4:32: Feedback Comments – Analysis and Application

Essay	**Student**	**Feedback Comments**
SAS.4.2	Lydia	Do more with your examples.
SAS.4.2	Ruth	Follow examples through - consider how you can use them to help add depth to your explanations
SAS.4.2	John	What does this example show us? You could move to the idea that there are core values.
SAS.5.4	Ruth	Perhaps attempt to take an example through the calculus to demonstrate the problems.

The main problem identified in lessons was failure to explain how examples contributed to arguments or supported points made but in the examination students demonstrated some criticality in their use of examples. Ruth followed the description of an example with the question, 'Is this just?' She then went on to explain why some would agree or disagree. John, using the same example, explained why some would find the example fair while other would not. They applied the example in different ways, demonstrating understanding rather than regurgitation of learnt material. However, in both cases the description of the example and subsequent discussion took up a good portion of the total response. The examiners' report states, 'Students are advised of the importance of striking the right balance between demonstrating the breadth of their knowledge and the philosophically more demanding skills of analysis and evaluation' (AQA, 2014c). In both these responses, John and Ruth only used one example.

While analysis showed some progress, continual occurrences of similar problems through all stages raised questions around whether students failed to understand these problems or whether other causes were at play. Analysis of other sections highlighted concerns with students' failure to review work, relying on teacher feedback to direct revisions. Progress reflected in the final examination around the use of examples perhaps supports John's view that recommendations for improvement need to be constantly repeated, even though this raised concerns about students' dependence on teacher input. This could be augmented with other recommendations, such as including exercises from early on in the course to highlight common errors, as a constant reminder to students. The students in this study clearly demonstrated limited willingness to engage with strategies aimed at developing their independent study skills. These skills would need to be fostered alongside strategies designed to develop their cognitive abilities in argumentation.

Assessment and Evaluation

The literature identified links between lower AOs and synthesis and evaluation (Biggs, 2011), with evaluative judgements (Krathwohl, 2002) and predictive claims (Digiovanna, 2014) based on material selected and applied. Problems identified in students' written work included listing of statements without critical engagement

(Baron & Poxon, 2012), detailed exegesis lacking evaluation (Cho & Jonassen, 2002; Baron & Poxon, 2012) and stating views rather than defending them (Earl, 2015). Students frequently left implications implicit (AQA,2013a) or included examples without developing critical points, discussed above. Progress was identified in some essays but was not consistent.

Teaching strategies suggested in the literature included generating evaluation through debate and diagrammatic strategies (Bosley & Jacobs, 1992; Twardy, 2004; Harrell, 2005, 2008; Rowe, *et al*, 2006; Butler et al., 2008, 2009; Baron & Poxon, 2012). These help generate evaluative points, but do not address detailed evaluation within coherent written argumentation. We provided students with examples of strong and weak evaluation (Farmer, 2003; Hutchinson & Loughlin, 2009) but also attempted to apply debate and discussion strategies to marking and essay redrafting by including questioning and discussion in written feedback to challenge students' thinking and elicit clarity of thought (Byrd, 2017). This was not addressed in the literature.

Analysis of teachers' written feedback showed 35% of comments were questions or statements aimed at eliciting deeper thought. Some were short and direct, e.g. 'How does Mill's response challenge Moore?' (SAS.3.1) or, 'Is this guaranteed?' (KAS.2.3). Others sought more discussion, e.g. 'You need to discuss their ideas in light of this and reach a conclusion. Are they both right, but in different contexts? Can you think of examples where people have been in the contexts described but have not behaved in the way they have described?' (KAS.1.2). 11.5 % of feedback gave explicit instructions on what to include to improve, e.g. 'Make the acknowledgement that you move from descriptive to normative' (SAS.4.2) or, 'You need, however, to include the basis of his theory – right to property ownership and right to self-ownership' (KAS.5.5). In KAS.Essay.4.2 (Table 4:33) students' conclusions lacked conviction because they had failed to provide definitions for 'oppression'. In the Jacobsen session preceding this essay the tutor explicitly told students to include these definitions, yet none of the students did so. In SAS.Essay.4.2 students all reached conclusions about validity of the argument discussed without fully exploring what was needed for the argument to overcome this difficulty.

Table 4.33: Feedback Comments – Assessment and Evaluation

Essay	Student	Feedback Comments
KAS.4.2	John	Here, greater clarity on the source of the oppression would allow you to draw a stronger criticism from Hobbes ... how are you defining the word 'oppression'.
KAS.4.2	Lydia	The question says – to what extent – this leaves room to explore the difference between what theoretically should be and what actually does occur.
KAS.4.2	Mary	What do you mean here, and how are you defining the word 'oppression'?
KAS.4.2	Ruth	The implication here is that you are drawing a parallel between control and oppression … define and explain if this is what you mean and why.
SAS.4.2	John	Does not necessarily make the statement false - we simply need a valid argument.
SAS.4.2	Lydia	But does that make the conclusion wrong simply because it goes against moral common sense?
SAS.4.2	Mary	Why is it absurd? Explain your example!
SAS.4.2	Ruth	Would it? Do not be afraid to explore the possibility that we can go against our moral common sense?

Students' reflections showed that while marking feedback challenged deeper thinking, work and time pressures meant they preferred quick and easy fixes (SIQ.5.2). John stated, 'I think it's too much work … you'd spend hours picking out each theory and expanding it'. Mary reported more free time and less content at AS-Level, but at A2-Level she felt 'it becomes more like memorising everything and just trying to get good grades'. Ruth reported similar restrictions and said, 'you just have to find shortcuts'.

Students' lack of response to written feedback on redrafted work is discussed in section 4.B2.

Marks allocated to AO3 (Table 4.34) showed greater variance across students and questions. In 19 out of 24 questions students scored higher on my questions. This was true over all AOs and I wondered if students' perception that Sarah's side of the course was easier may have contributed to them giving her questions less focus. While they felt her questions allowed simplistic response structures, Sarah felt this missed depth of analysis and discussion required. In 5 out of 8 occasions students' percentage for assessment and evaluation dropped from January 2013 to June 2014. None of the students made progress over both sides of the course despite evidence of progress in some areas. A closer examination of Lydia's scripts showed evidence of discussion around examples, e.g., 'in this case. …' and 'The only problem with this …', demonstrating distinctions between cases and explaining out problems and implications. In John's essay, despite having fewer examples, he gained marks for detailed evaluation, despite focusing on a narrow range of material.

Table 4.34: Scores Achieved for Assessment and Evaluation (AO3)

	Karen's Questions			**Sarah's Questions**		
Exams	Jan 2013	Jun 2013	Jun 2014	Jan 2013	Jun 2013	Jun 2014
John	32	26.7	30	24	16	26
Lydia	24	14.7	20	21.3	27	16
Mary	36	16	14	13.3	23	20
Ruth	22.7	22.7	14	24	20	24
Average	28.67	20	18.5	20.67	21.33	21.5

Analysis of progress against level descriptors showed some improvement for all students except Ruth (Table 4.35). Lydia and Mary achieved progress in terms of evaluation, but for Lydia, Mary and Ruth lack of detail kept evaluation juxtaposed

and/or implicit. John improved his criticality and evaluation, but required further depth and support.

Table 4.35: Development of Argumentation under Examination Conditions

	AO3 – Assessment & Evaluation
John	Improved criticality and evaluation; requires further depth and support.
Lydia	Little improvement in evaluations; criticisms and counter-criticisms juxtaposed, asserted and implicit.
Mary	Some development on evaluation; focused but not fully convincing.
Ruth	Has remained descriptive and implicit.

Individual examiners' comments gave further insights into strengths and weaknesses.

John: 'conclusions acknowledge some key strengths and weaknesses', 'narrow piece turning heavily on one major alternative theory'

Lydia: 'evaluation brief', 'evaluation is not always clear or refined'

Mary: 'focused but doesn't fully convince'

Ruth: 'highly descriptive, ' limited attempt', 'very briefly', 'discussion is far from explored', 'simple and limited argument', 'conclusion not well supported', 'evaluation implicit in descriptions'

John's AO3 was hampered by his narrow approach through two main theories. Lydia included evaluation, but this lacked detail and refinement. Mary's appeared slightly stronger with evaluation focused, but lack of detail resulted in lack of conviction. Ruth's concerns with time and her conviction that she could not write enough were revealed in responses that were brief, limited and descriptive. However, on the stronger response she was able to include evaluation, even though this was implicit in her descriptive work.

Lydia, Mary and Ruth all scored Level 2 for Assessment and Evaluation (Image 4.27) on at least one of their June 2014 questions. Only John achieved Level 4, missing Level 5 on my question by 2 marks. Level 5 required effective and penetrating

argumentation, advancing clear judgements and ‘a balanced summary of the strengths and weaknesses’ (AQA, 2010b).

Image 4.27: Level Descriptors – Assessment and Evaluation: PHIL3 (AQA, 2010b)

Level 4	**13–16 marks**
The critical appreciation of points raised is employed to advance a reasoned judgement although this may require further support. Some material will be explicitly evaluated although the construction of argumentation may lack some insight or sophistication and positions reached may not convince completely. At the bottom of this level evaluative conclusions might acknowledge some key strengths and weaknesses of relevant positions. The response is legible, and technical language is employed with partial success. There may be occasional errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar and the response reads as a coherent whole.	
Level 3	**9–12 marks**
Answers in this level: **Either** evaluate some relevant points and argumentation but may not advance a position or reach a judgement in relation to the issue as a whole. **Or** positions are listed and juxtaposed so that evaluation is implicit in the order or number of points made and judgements may be made on the basis of limited argumentation. At the bottom of this level juxtapositions lack depth, detail, subtlety and precision. The response is legible, employing some technical language accurately, with possibly some errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.	
Level 2	**5–8 marks**
Answers in this level: **Either** exhibit a limited attempt to develop argumentation, rather they describe a view. **Or** argumentation is confused in places. Judgements may be reached which do not seem to be justified by the reasoning provided. The response may be legible, with a basic attempt to employ technical language, which may not be appropriate. There may be frequent errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.	

Comparisons of progress over the 3 AOs showed students making least progress on assessment and evaluation. Comparing analysis in previous sections and examiners’ comments, this seems to result more from lack of detailed explanations than lack of understanding. Attempts to develop detail through feedback and revisions of work had limited success, shown in sections above. John’s higher mark resulted from more detailed explanation of theory and evaluation through one example. However, this is less indicative of progress in argumentation than progress against the demands of the examination rubric. It was very difficult to assess whether this lack of progress resulted from lack of understanding or lack of engagement with exercises and interventions aimed at developing this skill. However, analysis of students’ reflections and interview responses highlighted their preferences for reporting material learnt rather than assessing and evaluating it.

Relevance, Language and Links

The Yorkshire and Humberside studies (Andrews, 1992; Andrews & Costello, 1992; Andrews, Costello & Clarke, 1993; Mitchell, 1994) showed tangential analysis and juxtaposed reporting of analysis and evaluation limiting students to lower grades. The wider literature review identified 2 main kinds of problem contributing towards lack of coherence and relevance.

a) At the language level:

Poorly structured or immature language (Crowhurst, 1990) leads to failures to explain internal structure of premises (Dewey, 2016; White, 2002) and demonstrate understanding of connections between lines of thought (Andrews, 2010). Johns (1986) distinguishes between lack of coherence (problems with ties between sentences) and lack of register (failure to explain relationships among propositions and to the argument). Signposting proves particularly problematic when showing links within arguments that are not linear (Andrews 1995).

b) At the understanding level:

Lack of explanation, stemming from insecure understanding of material or weak arguments, results in lack of detail and precision (White, 2002), subsequently affecting coherence. Students might begin sentences with, 'This shows that …' without evaluating relevance (Cahill & Bloch-Schulman, 2012).

For our students, an analysis of their essays showed that poorly structured or immature language did not feature beyond phase 1, but other problems were apparent. Analysis of examiners' reports (AQA, 2013a; AQA, 2014c) identified concerns with tangential argumentation and juxtaposition. However, January 2013 examination scripts did not mention tangential argumentation and one instance of juxtaposition. Their June 2014 scripts mentioned 'juxtaposition' 14 times and 'tangential' once. Other problems relating to language and links included 'blurring' (resulted from problems in understanding) and 'loss of focus', 'lack of clarity/ precision' and 'implicit' argumentation (linked to problems at language levels).

From the literature we trialled 4 intervention strategies:

- non-traditional reading (Garver, 2004);
- reviewing work with students (Johns, (1986);
- argument mapping (Cho & Jonassen, 2002);
- scaffolds (Cahill & Block-Schluman, 2012).

Section 4.B3 analysed students' independent reading and revision of work. Section 4.B1 showed their preferences for linear planning and problems with scaffolding and writing frames in developing students' understanding and global thinking. Beyond the literature we trialled an intervention of 4 lessons (phase 2) aimed at improving linking words and signposting within students' essays. Subsequent marking posed questions encouraging further thinking about grounds for premises and positions posited (Cho & Jonassen, 2002).

From the four day intervention (SRQ.2.1, 2.2) John said he realised tangential statements could result from poor use of language and therefore be linked 'back to the argument with a sentence or … further explanation' (SRQ.2.2). He stated, however, he 'couldn't often see the tangent/ juxtaposition'. This exacerbates problems with self-assessment and pre-marking review; if students cannot identify problems within their writing, self-review becomes difficult. Ruth stated she 'recognised juxtaposing' in some essays as she tried to 'cram too many points in' (SRQ.2.2). This highlighted the need to select relevant material, allowing space and time to explain out points made and using linking and signposting language to demonstrate how points relate to theses and questions.

Three students reported finding tangential and juxtaposed argumentation more problematic in Political Philosophy than Epistemology or Moral Philosophy (SIQ.5.2). John found moral easier because 'the link would be, this is bad … an alternative is this, which is better'. His paragraphs kept theories or philosophers separate, meaning they could be dealt with, then tied back to questions or theses in concluding sentences. In Political Philosophy he found 'there needs to be a little more discussion … more … interlinking between them'. This links to problems of explaining dialogic argumentation in linear formats (Andrews, 1995). Lydia agreed, saying that 'in politics you have to really think about the links'. Where paragraphs deal with several philosophers' views around topics or themes, paragraphs require more linking and signposting, with final sentences pulling together threads of conversation and linking

back to questions or theses. Sarah's written feedback demonstrated linking and signposting for relevance were equally problematic for both sides of the course (Table 4.36).

Table 4:36: Sample of Teacher's Essay Feedback – SAS (Phase5)

Essay	**Student**	**Feedback Comments**
SAS.5.4	John	Link all points to the question/ your position.
SAS.5.4	Lydia	How does this link to the question?
SAS.5.4	Mary	How does this link to the question/ your position?
SAS.5.4	Ruth	How does this link to your position?

Students continued to place ideas within paragraphs without explaining their significance within their argumentation (lack of register). Problems with lack of coherence were most often linked to lack of depth and detail, resulting from students summarising theories and ideas rather than explaining out premises and showing how premises supported conclusions. In the final examination, lack of comments around tangential use of material suggested increased efforts to link points back to questions. However, comments such as 'loss of focus' and 'evaluation implicit' showed discussion was not always linked back to students' theses.

In the final examination, John's examination scripts highlighted a form of juxtaposition not identified in the literature or noticed in class essays. His responses appeared to apply a pre-determined formula to his planning and approach. The examiner's comment, 'juxtaposed', did not refer to one part of his response being juxtaposed to another, but to his entire response being juxtaposed to the original question. His selection and use of material was all somewhat relevant but his juxtaposed start produced a response more relevant if questions had been slightly different.

Analysis here highlighted problems beyond the inclusion of language. Students learnt to include linking language, but conceptual links between ideas within their argumentation often remained implicit or absent. This links to students' use of

scaffolds as replacements for thinking and their revision strategies, where focus remained on what to include rather than how to use it. Here again, students' preconceptions about the effectiveness of the kinds of support offered in other subjects limited their engagement with the intervention strategies in Philosophy and this resulted in frustrations with limited progress.

4.3 Summary

The analysis reported in this chapter represents a portion of the total analysis completed. The quantity of data collected afforded in-depth insights into teachers' and students' experiences over the two years, but reporting required selection based on recurring themes. Matrixes were used to ensure all emergent research questions were considered.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

> ‘Philosophy is best seen as a kind of writing. It is delimited, as is any literary genre, not by form or matter, but by tradition – a family romance involving, e.g., Father Parmenides, honest old Uncle Kant, and bad brother Derrida.’
>
> (Rorty, 1978, p. 143)

5.1 Introduction

The iterative and longitudinal nature of the study (Seale, 1999; Ritchie *et al.*, 2014) provided a large, heterogeneous database, allowing for ‘rich dialogue with the evidence’ (Yin, 2014, loc. 2195). This was both a strength and a challenge, as the wealth of data threatened, at times, to overwhelm. The analysis chapter stripped back data relevant to each theme in an attempt to understand what was going on, but it is understood that the teachers’ and students’ experiences are holistic and complex. A difficulty for novice students of philosophy is learning to marshal a wide range of skills in concert, an experience they might find daunting. However, progress in philosophy requires students to embrace the challenge and submit to its ‘dizzying activity’ (Nagel, 1987, p. 5) until clarity emerges. In this chapter I discuss how choices around some teaching and learning strategies may have affected outcomes in other teaching and learning strategies and how this affected the outcomes of intervention strategies. I also discuss how my understanding around the research questions has developed through the course of the research project. No attempt is made to claim that the findings provide a ‘representative picture’ of A-Level Philosophy students, only ‘a rich understanding of the dynamics, tensions and motivations’ of these four students and two teachers (Thomas, 2016, loc. 242).

5.2 Demands of the Examination Rubrics

In this section I discuss the demands of the examination rubric and changes to the AQA syllabus and rubrics, the increased challenges introduced by these changes and their

effect on teaching and learning in A-Level Philosophy. This is relevant to the research questions relating to how written argumentation is defined because students' understanding will be, in part, informed by the demands of the examination. The rubric is also the standard against which they are assessed, making clear understanding of its demands important for students' progress.

Comparing the mark scheme to elements of argumentation discussed in the literature review, it is clear that A-Level Philosophy rubrics touch on all aspects of good argumentation. The level descriptors acknowledge hierarchical levels of argumentation (Andrews, 1995; Biggs, 2001) with top marks awarded to full-fledged, integrated arguments (Ennis, 1987; Fischer *et al.*, 2005). The rubrics' language (AQA, 2011) is not vague in terms of identifying elements of argumentation. Terms such as 'analysis', 'reasoning', 'juxtaposition', 'imprecision' may appear vague to the uninitiated, but teachers must induct students into the language of each subject. Vagueness is, however, apparent when denoting quality or quantity of argumentation. 'One relevant point' is clearer than 'some relevant material'. However, how much is 'some? How much is enough? A2-Level mark schemes distinguish between 3 AOs, but lack clarity on how many marks are apportioned to elements such as examples, reference to textual material, etc. The broad levels used in the rubrics call for high levels of judgement which are often beyond students' abilities creating difficulties for them when attempting self-assessment and review. The mix of elements, e.g. 'selection', 'analysis' and 'application' in one level, creates further difficulties for students assessing what specifically needs improvement in their writing. Rubrics that explicitly allocate marks to specific elements and skills of argumentation (Hafner & Hafner, 2003; Andrade, 2005; Harrell, 2005), giving clear explanations of these elements and skills, would allow students to more accurately measure and manage their own progress.

The reduction at AS-Level and removal at A2-Level of shorter questions, removing opportunities to generate more marks through knowledge and understanding, increased challenge as students needed to engage with full-fledged argumentation from the start in order to access the higher grades. Changes to expectations around using examples further complicated the rubrics. In PLY2 using examples to demonstrate full understanding of knowledge made their explanatory role clear. In both iterations of PHIL2 examples must explicate and analyse, requiring students to do more with them to

achieve similar marks as before. Although the 2009 specification aimed to introduce greater philosophical rigour into the subject, I question whether it expected too much too soon. Students starting undergraduate philosophy courses have two extra years of academic learning and cognitive development. Therefore, creating room in the specification for students to develop skills at a slower rate does not demean the subject but provides challenge that is equitable with other A-Level subjects.

The examiners' report (AQA, 2013a, pp. 3-5) confirmed the view that students struggle with higher AOs. 'Evaluation', 'analysis', 'discussion', 'implications' and 'connections' feature repeatedly in reports and marking, highlighting that many students find these difficult to master. Although it is generally accepted that studying philosophy is challenging, analysis of mark schemes suggested shifts in mark allocations created additional problems for students. Skelhorn & Lewis (no date) highlight teachers' concerns over course content and requirements, and report students finding the course difficult compared with other subjects. The content is challenging because students are expected to study the same material used by undergraduates or postgraduates. Texts could be made easier by providing summaries instead of original works, but this strips away richness and nuance from original arguments. Similarly, some elements of argumentation could be removed from mark schemes or given less weighting, but this risks diluting the essence of philosophical argumentation. However, if it is accepted that some elements of argumentation prove more challenging than others, and if more marks are allocated to these aspects of the writing process, this adds to the challenge of accessing higher grades. Additionally, if other subjects allocate more marks to easier elements of argumentation, this allows students to achieve higher grades with similar work strategies and writing styles, augmenting the impression that philosophy is more difficult than other subjects. As the final A-Level mark is calculated on the cumulative score of both AS- and A2-Level, the substantially smaller weighting given to elements such as Knowledge and Understanding (AO1) at AS-Level, as compared with other subjects, puts philosophy students at a disadvantage. They need to achieve much greater precision in argumentation half way through the course in order to maximise final results.

Adjustment to weightings of AOs at AS-level did, in my view, made the course more difficult for lower and middle ability students. Subsequent adjustments to the rubric,

explained in section 6.5, have mitigated this, but greater clarity of mark allocations would provide teachers and students of all abilities with clearer understanding. Furthermore, more specific rubrics would facilitate development of the full range of elements and skills and would help students measure and manage their own progress against particular criteria.

5.3 Development of Learning and Teaching Strategies

In this section I discuss teaching and learning strategies aimed at developing students' work habits, both independently and in response to teacher input. This is relevant to all the research questions as the learning and teaching strategies studied and trialled emanated from and attempted to respond to teachers' and students' understanding of philosophy and written arguments and those aspects that proved problematic and unproblematic. The discussion includes structuring argumentation essays, students' review of work in response to teachers' feedback and students' independent work strategies.

Structuring Argumentative Essays

Analysis of data lead me to conclude that while students remained concerned with specificity in writing frames provided, teachers' reflections centred on students' use of writing frames to inform planning. For this reason, Table 4.7 shows the question, 'What strategies do students find more or less useful in producing precision and sophistication?' addressed under writing frames while the question, 'What strategies do teachers find more or less useful in producing precision and sophistication?' is addressed under planning. Students and teachers therefore held different viewpoints about what would be more useful in developing structure, precision and sophistication in written argumentation. This disparity between expectations raised difficulties for the development and trial of pedagogic strategies, especially where students' preconceptions resulted in their disengagement from interventions and advice.

'Structure' can be defined as the 'quality of being organized [sic.]' (Oxford Living dictionary); writing frames appeared successful in providing this organisation.

However, structure is also defined as the 'arrangement of and relations between the parts or elements of something complex' (ibid.), which proved more problematic. Where students produced 'associational writing' (ibid., p. 76) using the 'Philosopher, Strengths, Weaknesses' format, they reported encountering fewer difficulties because this style of writing fit with their writing preferences and with the style of writing encountered in other subjects. More complex essays requiring thematic approaches proved more challenging. Students felt this was due to difficulties grasping 'themes', but analysis suggested more complex reasons. Despite making themes, concepts or points explicit through signposting in lesson notes and PowerPoints, students failed to incorporate these into their essays. Where themes were included, students exhibited problems, not in understanding themes within each theory, but in performing cross-analysis between theories (White, 2002). For example, they understood what Hobbes said about human nature, freedom and law of nature, but difficulties arose when comparing Hobbes' view against Locke's. Further problems occurred when explaining philosophers' interpretations of these and how these interpretations determined their overall conclusions. For both types of essay, however, students' use of linking language (discussed below), showing causal connections between ideas (White, 1987, cited in Andrews, 1995; Baron & Poxon, 2012) was shown to be more problematic than mere layout. However, students' focus on finding the right structure detracted from their need to engage with the ideas within the structure, meaning that efforts to develop their argumentation led to progress in organising the material but still failed to elicit deeper analysis and discussion of that material (Wason & Johnson-Laird, 1972).

Scaffolds or writing frames provided during the study were meant to help students develop planning skills, but again, divergent expectations led to frustrations on both sides. Sarah and I expected the frames to prompt and scaffold students' thinking and planning (Fische, 2001; Daud, 2012), help them organise their thoughts (Gravett, 2015) and develop their own beliefs (Ennis, 1987; Baron & Poxon, 2012). We expected students would return to notes and textbooks to think through their planning. Students' reflection showed, however, that they used the frames as substitutes for planning and their argumentation remained simplistic. More open frames, designed to stimulate thinking and independent planning, saw students struggling to select and apply material correctly because they had not developed the skill of thinking about the ideas rather than just the words containing the ideas. This reinforced my belief that argumentation

in Philosophy required the development of skills not encountered in other subjects at A-Level and that approaching the subject in the same way as they did other subjects would result in argumentation limited to the lower rubric levels.

The most coherent class essays produced (SAS.Essay.4.2) were in response to detailed and redrafted planning (Butler & Britt, 2011), but this only occurred in response to Sarah's direct intervention at the planning stage which included detailed written feedback. Although students produced mature and coherent essays under this supervision, we remained doubtful that it developed their argumentation skills, as they seemed unable to transfer these to later essays. Planning remained linear (Andrews, 1995), missing dialogic aspects of discussion (Gleason, 1999), with students actively resisting moves towards multi-level, non-linear planning required for more complex argumentation (Andrews 1995). Attempts at introducing mind-mapping (Clay, 2003; Baron & Poxon, 2012) or graphic organisation (Evmenova et al., 2016) had partial success due to this preference. Here again, students demonstrated a resistance to strategies designed to alter their ways of working. Responses during interviews revealed a strong determination to stick with learning and writing strategies that achieved higher grades in other subjects. Even when forced to work in different ways, their improved results did not convince them to adopt or try new working strategies in their independent work. Due to this resistance, it is difficult to judge whether lack of progress resulted purely from the usefulness of writing frames, or whether these may have been more effective if students had used them as intended to inform their planning.

Based on the data developed in this project, I would tentatively suggest that generic structures can remind students of the process of planning, but teaching should focus on thinking through materials and planning responses around chosen theses. Writing frames early on in the course may help students structure first essays and lay foundations to discuss expectations, but the use of frames should be quickly phased out in favour of detailed and redrafted planning. It is not possible to provide generic 'structure' that replaces planning because thinking around questions and problems must inform selection and application of materials (Martinich, 2005; Warburton, 2006; Wheeler, undated). Earlier work may need greater teacher input (Gravett, 2015) but students should be challenged to justify their opinions, an objective these students found challenging. At A-level, it also seems important that teachers are aware of teaching

strategies and students' expectations in other lessons so that these can be explicitly addressed.

Responses to Teachers' Feedback

Feedback on essays is designed to identify students' progress but also to encourage revision of work. Students continued to request specific feedback, but this raised questions around the usefulness of this type of feedback in philosophy. Analysis showed that Sarah and I both predominantly used reflective feedback, focusing on both ideas and structure (Hyland & Hyland, 2001; Butler & Britt, 2011). Through marking, redrafting and questioning we attempted to elicit further thought (Hyland, 1990) aimed at encouraging adjustments in students' thinking and honing writing towards coherent and substantiated positions (White 2002). However, students resisted engagements with this type of feedback, preferring direct instructions for explicit revision which they stated they received in other subjects. Students perceived revisions of work as a means of improving specific essay marks rather than a means of developing their ideas or writing skills (McDonough, 2000; Vaugh, 2006; Possin, 2008; Baron & Poxon, 2012). Although post-marking redrafts helped students improve language, precision and sophistication in individual essays, analysis of teacher-led redrafts against independent redrafting revealed a substantial difference. Where Sarah or I had worked through portions of writing with students, it highlighted that little or no redrafting occurred on sections receiving no explicit teacher feedback. Students were not transferring the advice within the same essay let alone from one essay to the next. This 'patchwork' approach to corrections meant students were not reading essays for coherence or quality of language and relevance (Gleason, 1999).

Interventions to encourage global redrafting that included moving and changing information had limited success (Perkins, 1987a; Eflin, 2004; Covill, 2010). Some of the findings suggested that detailed and explicit feedback resulted in maintaining dependence on teacher led review (McDonough, 2000). Lydia reported finding it helpful sending drafts to us for interim feedback (SIQ.2.1) reinforcing her dependence on teacher led review. This dependence was also seen in Ruth's essay KAS.Essay.3.1 where she handed in two incomplete drafts, relying on teacher input before completing

the essay. There seems a clear link between students' requests for specific feedback such as 'use this example here' (Mary.SIQ.5.2) and patchwork styles of revisions observed in their work. Mary's comment about being precious over words she had already written (SRQ.3.5) rang true as students remained reluctant to move or delete portions of writing that were less clear, but I also questioned whether global revisions required too much thought, work and time. In later phases John and Lydia showed some evidence of developing redrafting skills, but only in response to intensive marking and explicit supervision from Sarah or myself.

It was difficult to judge whether students struggled to know how to respond to feedback or whether the engagement and thought required was just too much work (Stump, undated). However, when viewed against other reflections where students sought quick and easy solutions (SIQ.2.1; SRQ.2.1) or voiced concerns about time constraints (Ruth.SIQ.5.2|), it seemed students sought feedback that allowed them to quickly drop corrections in their work. In phases 4 and 5, where students were preparing for examinations and experiencing more pressure on time, several instances were noticed where written feedback elicited no response, even when redrafts were handwritten, with errors copied over without change. This suggested that time constraints may have been a relevant factor with students electing how much additional work to complete, but it was difficult to assess whether students lacked ability to more substantially revise their work, or whether the lack of work was a choice.

Students' reflections and responses to interviews suggested, however, that their choices were strongly influenced by their preconceptions about how much work should be required to access the higher grades. These preconceptions were, again, based on their experiences in other subjects. This again highlighted the need to address students' approaches to their learning alongside or before implementing interventions designed to develop their cognitive abilities. Explicit training in redrafting (Butler & Britt, 2011) early on during AS-Level work, with gradual transference of teacher-led to student-led review and redraft, may have been more effective, but we would still have encountered problems with students making comparisons between philosophy and other subjects. As long as they approached philosophy as a content subject, missing the need to engage with the ideas, progress would remain limited. However, this was not tested because insights emerged gradually through interviews and questionnaires to explore students'

requests for explicit feedback and review of their responses to feedback. If this intervention were started from the beginning of the course, the use of a key (Byrd, 2017) could help flag up common errors and provide students with lists of mistakes or weaknesses to avoid. However, it is my view that success would against be determined by students' willingness to engage with and take ownership of their work.

Students' Independent Work Strategies

Discussion of students' independent work strategies includes their approach to independent reading, independent production and redrafting of work, and students' approaches to revision for examination. Independent reading should inform planning and production of essays and help students develop their understanding of how to structure argumentative essays. Similarly, drafts of essays are most often completed independently and include responses to teachers' feedback; if completed successfully, they should result in improved structuring of essays.

To develop argumentation students should read and study examples of argumentation; summaries and notes augment knowledge and understanding but do little to develop argumentation skills (Cahn, 2004a; Gosnell, 2012; Morrissey & Palghat, 2014). Analysis of students' reflections further confirmed our view that they found reading in philosophy more technical than in other subjects which went some way to explaining why they avoided it unless absolutely necessary. Attempts to gain insight into their study habits revealed disparities between their perception of their reading and what was actually undertaken. Reading was limited to clarifying understanding or reading around topics fitting students' interests (Cahn, 2004b) and there was limited evidence that this reading informed their written argumentation. Students perceived additional reading as a requirement unique to philosophy, again creating difficulties as students failed to engage with interventions designed to improve their independent reading. Although other teachers did expect independent reading, it remained a fact that these students achieved higher grades in other subjects with little or no additional reading. They therefore struggled with or resented additional reading that we required.

While students enjoyed discussing ideas presented in the set readings, lack of supervision during the independent reading sessions saw them relying on the few who

had read or skimmed the articles. The literature review showed college and university tutors constructing their own rubrics to include marks for additional independent or collaborative reading. Although A-Level teachers could create class rubrics allocating marks for reading, it is questionable whether this would produce the desired effect if students focus on end grades rather than the process of developing writing skills. Teachers should routinely include additional reading as part of essay preparation and production, but students will still make choices on where to allocate their time. Additional reading can be supervised, but limits on lesson time and timetables makes this an unsustainable option unless students are prepared to do extra independent work in other areas of the course. Reluctance to engage with reading and independent research (McGhee, 2009) creates a negative cycle because students resist tasks they find more difficult, resulting in slower progress and less interest in applying themselves further.

Inadequate independent work was also highlighted when analysing students' reflections of redrafting essays. Additional detail in reviewed work was limited to what students could remember, rather than returning to textbooks or further reading. This could have indicated work practices, i.e. completing first drafts too close to submission dates (Vaughn, 2006), an inability to see problems in their work (Beach, 1979; Covill, 2010; Butler & Britt, 2011; Thomas, 2011), or students' reluctance or inability to spend the time needed to develop substantial redrafts. John and Lydia admitted struggling to see problems in their work unless it was explicitly pointed out to them. However, John also indicated only reviewing paragraphs if he remembered, suggesting problems linked to study habits (SIQ.2.1; SIQ.5.2). Failure to actively revise work resulted in limited progress, which then perpetuated students' inability to identify and rectify problems in their work. The provision of marking criteria (Farmer, 2003) may have highlighted elements required in written argumentation, but this would only be valuable if students could match elements identified in the criteria with examples in their work. Peer assessment exercises, aimed at helping students develop their confidence in this area had limited success because students avoided these tasks.

In terms of revision for examination, these students again sought shortcuts and resisting intervention strategies designed to augment learning strategies. Effective revision requires learning theory and practising technical aspects (Burns & Law, 2004; Vaughn,

2006; Lacewing, 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Butler et al., 2008, 2009; Hutchinson & Loughlin, 2009). John's interview responses revealed a focus on applying fixed formats (Finocchiaro, 1980) and his efforts to keep arguments separated (SIQ.5.2), suggested problems beyond pressures of time. Analysis of his final examination scripts suggested he had either developed a fixed format (Andrews, 1995) or had tried to apply a learnt essay. Similarly, Lydia, Mary and Ruth all reported a preference for memorising blocks of material and attempts to introduce different strategies had limited success. Efforts to encourage more interactive revision through discussion questions had limited success due to this active resistance to engagement with webs of understanding required for more detailed and precise argumentation (Hayward, Jones & Cardinal 2014; Vaughn, 2006). Mary said for the first examination she had answered every past question she could find. When asked why she did not adopt the same approach in her A2-Level revision, she cited pressures of time. Memorising content produced some success, noted in examiners comments on AO1 levels, but lack of progress was seen in AOs 2 and 3 in terms of the critical and evaluative aspects of argumentation. Success in other subjects from memorising blocks of information cannot be replicated in philosophy, making it crucial to develop different work habits long before the final examination.

It was evident that these students limited their success through choices made around study habits. Some choices were based on experiences and perceptions in other subjects; others were reported to be due to limits on time. The inclusion of independent work as a requirement on bespoke rubrics could highlight the importance of independent study, but I think students would still make choices about where to invest time and effort, with efforts focused on the achievement of grades.

5.4 Development of Argumentative Writing

Here I discuss students' progress in utilising elements of argumentation. The discussion is focussed on students' written work but includes discussion of teaching and learning strategies trialled to improve these, as well as links to previous sections and research questions. Students' progress in producing these in examination essays is briefly considered.

Introductions and Theses

The discussion here considers the effect of strongly stated theses on argument structure, flow and connectivity of ideas, as well as precision and sophistication in argumentation. The time limitations in the AS-Level examinations forced students to develop crisp introductions (Warburton, 2006), briefly addressing questions and stating their target arguments (Johns, 1986; Vaughn, 2006; Baron & Poxon, 2012). At A2-Level, where they had more time to include additional introductory materials, students still kept introductions succinct. Analysis of these introductions showed explanations of materials included in introductions were not always clear or fully explained (SAS.Essay.5.4) and students sometimes included large amounts of material that would be better unpacked later in their essays. Introductions analysed on final examination scripts showed most essay introductions included the recommended elements, with few problems in terms of implicit or juxtaposed links to questions. However, connections were observed between limited introductions and subsequent limited ranges of material discussed. This suggested students' introductions successfully introduced intended discussions with problems related to material selected rather than structure of introductions.

Strategies to guide development of students' theses were less successful because students wanted guidance on what to say, while teachers sought ways to help them work through materials to inform and develop their own ideas. Students stated theses in all introductions, but failed to defend these, often losing sight of how parts of their discussions lead towards their conclusions (Kuhn & Udell, 2003). Students' reflections showed they distinguished between defended positions and their opinions, which was contrary to Vaughn's (2006) link between the two. Efforts to develop theses by tethering these to students' opinions failed due to these confusions. At some points they reported difficulties supporting positions because they did not concur with their views (John.SRQ.3.2; Lydia, SIQ.3.2), and at others they reported preferences for forcing a position rather than putting forward their own views (Ruth.SIQ.5.2). This confusion between positions and views limited attempts to draw from students their opinions prior to writing essays (Andrews 1995; Adler, 2004; Baron & Poxon, 2012) because they lost confidence in what they 'should' say. However, they also reported difficulties arguing for positions conflicting with their beliefs (Dewey, 2016). Lydia eventually found

starting with her view helpful, but this only occurred in phase 5. She reported it as a new strategy, yet I had explicitly used the strategy with students in earlier essays. Progress made, therefore, was limited to constructing essays, but concerns remained as to whether students were developing confidence in terms of thinking through and discussing issues critically. This was particularly evident in the Jacobsen session where students' approach, contributions and demeanour changed once they felt the session was more like a lesson. It was equally evidenct in written work where they failed to fully engage with theories and ideas (SAS.Reflect.5). This cohort of students showed reluctance or lack of skill in going beyond material explicitly provided in lessons, resulting in limited evidence of them attempting innovation. Ruth mentioned this, but it was unclear whether she stated this as a matter of fact or identified it as a problem.

Successful conclusions were less consistent, but students often restated their theses and showed some ability to draw together points from their arguments (Martinich, 2005; Vaugh, 2006). Very few conclusions included evaluative aspects, possibly because students actively avoided adding new materials into conclusions or because they were focussed on what to include rather than on concluding their arguments. This linked to recurrent problems with maintaining lines of argumentation and forcing theses throughout their essays. Students' verbal feedback demonstrated their ability to explain conclusions verbally, together with an awareness that written work lacked similar clarity. However, they also admitted being able to see problems when they read essays back, suggesting a lack of review prior to submission. Paragraphs were viewed in isolation with final sentences summarising the main point of each paragraph or, more often, making sweeping claims unsupported by preceding argumentation. Essay conclusions failed to pull together these points in support of students' theses.

In terms of introductions and conclusions, students quickly developed a range of techniques and vocabulary allowing them to top-and-tail essays with matching ideas. Advice in response to students' requests for generic guidance suggested types of elements to include in introductions and conclusions. Claims set out in introductions were most often accurately summed up in conclusions with few examples of conclusions failing to match stated theses. Analysis showed students either remembered to refer to target arguments throughout their essays but failed to actually show what they claimed to be showing, or they forgot to refer back to questions or their

theses through the bodies of their essays. Therefore, when conclusions claimed to have shown certain points, essay contents did not always support these claims. This showed students could learn techniques and jargon without fully developing and utilising argumentation to support target arguments.

Knowledge and Understanding of Theories

Precision and sophistication are linked to detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding because students must link their discussions accurately to specific premises and conclusions offered by philosophers, as well as utilising content to support their own points and discussion (Vassilopoulou, 2009). Ruth reported problems with writing speed and insufficient time to include more detail and argumentation in her essays. Lydia often included a large range of material to overcome lack of confidence over what to select, but this detracted from the depth and precision required. Much of their discussion read as sweeping statements because they failed to clearly identify what they were critiquing or how their discussions challenged or built on theories considered. They reported efforts to include more detail, but these invariable meant more information rather than clearer and deeper explanations of detail already selected. This again links to reading and study habits as students reported seeking summaries rather than returning to original texts and practising the skill of accurately rephrasing these theories (Digiovanna, 2014). Summaries either remove detail, omitting premises, explication, implications or illustrations from original arguments, or they reduce precision by utilising wording that subtly changed meanings from original theories.

The effectiveness of reintroducing graduated questions was partial as it was trialled later in the study after other attempts at improving depth and precision produced limited results. Although the 15-mark knowledge and understanding questions at AS-Level provided a graduated approach to longer questions, designed to emphasise this need for close reference to philosophers' words (AQA, 2010c; Lacewing, 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Baron & Poxon, 2012), the separation students made between Year 12 and Year 13 work meant they missed the significance of these questions. They did not understand links between detail in explication and detailed and precise explanations in analysis and evaluation, and here against students referred to summaries they found useful in other

subjects. Attempts to develop depth and precision through in-class exercises (Harrelson, 2012) were successful in drawing detail from students which they could explain verbally or summarise on exercise sheets. However, problems with transferability meant this detail often failed to make it into written argumentation (Crowhurst, 1990). Students continued to summarise detail into short conversational turns (Freedman & Pringle, 1984), leaving readers to make connections from sentences and phrases containing implied links rather than clear explanations. Interventions to encourage group or peer work also produced limited results because students either left work to the last minute or failed to complete it, hoping to catch up during lesson feedback.

Similarly, efforts to encourage the inclusion of synoptic elements (AQA, 2007) to demonstrate deeper knowledge and understanding faced numerous difficulties and seemed a step too far. Reference made to synoptic elements in lessons were not noticed or noted and links laid out in textbooks were ignored. It was difficult to judge whether this stemmed from essays being rushed, from students' conscious efforts to keep different theories apart, or from lack of understanding as to how theories worked, supported or built on each other (Howie, 2009). Insights received from the Jacobsen session showed students' perceptions strongly influence their engagement as they actively distanced themselves from discussions they felt were not relevant to their side of the course. This may be symptomatic of battles with time constraints leading to active choices in terms of what they were prepared to absorb.

In the final examination students showed improvements in expositions of theories and concepts, marked by examiners as detailed and precise. This was not only on Sarah's questions which students reported as a preference due to their structure allowing blocks of explanation of big theories (John.SIQ.2.1). However, students did not fully capitalise on this because the range of theories selected remained narrow, resulting in limited and narrow analysis. This perhaps links to their revision strategies where students focused on memorising theories yet resisted efforts to practise answering questions as part of their revision. This meant they could reproduce theories with detail and precision, but not always build levels of argumentation, discussed further in the section on analysis, application, assessment and evaluation.

Although class exercises were successful in helping students produce detailed notes, interventions aimed at developing this depth and detail remained limited because students remained focussed on memorising summarised material rather than fully understanding the argumentation steps proffered by the philosophers studied. Their preferences were again linked to the success of these methods in other subjects and efforts to change their study habits remained limited.

Analysis, Application, Assessment and Evaluation

Students still appeared at A2-Level to equate volume of words with detail, depth and precision. They remained convinced that progress would result from clearer instructions on what to include rather than developing evaluation of their own and others' claims (Cho & Jonassen, 2002; Baron & Poxon, 2012; Lone & Green, 2013). The data also showed discrepancies between Sarah's and students' perceptions of cohesion and links within written argumentation. While students felt they could include more links in her essays, Sarah identified differences between linear essays (Baron & Poxon, 2012) and essays that fully discussed and explored essay questions (Earl, 2015). Students' examination results also failed to support their perceptions as results varied across the two sides of the examination. On the Political Philosophy side, students had to think more carefully about themes and consider a range of philosophers' views, forcing more discussion. They still struggled to pick apart material selected and experienced difficulties synthesising their ideas into dialogic argumentation (Gleason, 1999; Krahwohl, 2002). This resulted in blurred or juxtaposed argumentation (Finocchiaro, 1980) as students failed to explain significances of different approaches to similar problems. This mismatch between students' and teachers' perspectives limited the success of interventions because students either remained unconvinced about their possible effectiveness or thought they were making progress where analysis of work showed that this was not the case. Final examination scripts demonstrated improvements on AO1 and AO2, but some loss of progress on AO3. However, analysis of grades and levels showed changes in marks did not accurately indicate changes in levels of argumentation. This perpetuated problems as students measured progress purely against marks, working to grades rather than focussing on development of skills.

Discussions with students (SIQ.3.2) revealed more precise understanding of analysis and assessment than seen in written work. This suggested fewer problems with understanding and articulating these, and more around transferring understanding into written forms. Most of the teaching strategies identified through the literature review addressed development of analysis and assessment through games and verbal discussions (Bosley & Jacobs, 1992; Hutchinson & Loughlin, 2009; Baron & Poxon, 2012) or through short exercises (Baron & Poxon, 2012; Earl, 2015). The first develops understanding but lacks transfer to written argumentation; the second can develop ideas in smaller pieces of writing or at paragraph levels, but often fails to develop skills in longer essays. Students' reflections did not reveal why, if they could explain their ideas verbally, they then experienced problems transferring these ideas onto paper. The only observed difference was that verbal explanations resulted from teachers' prompts directing students to areas where more detail was required. With essays written at home they would have to identify and respond to problems in their writing without these prompts.

Two areas identified through the project were lack of specificity and ending explication or discussion before problems or implications were fully explored. This could result from insecure knowledge of original texts (White & Chern, 2004; Vaughn, 2006) which links to students' actively resisting engagement with text. Limited general knowledge around topics studied and reliance on prior knowledge or ideas gained from other subjects would exacerbate this problem (Adler, 2004). Related problems with uncritical use of examples (Warburton, 2006; Lacewing, 2008, 2010a, 2010b) could be relevant to either of these areas. Students felt they could not think up examples, linking to limited general knowledge, but when mentioning examples they either failed to follow them through (Baron & Poxon, 20120), or included explanations of examples without critical development (Butler et al., 2008, 2009). Limited reading habits placed restrictions on kinds of strategies and interventions that could be trialled, such as more careful reading of texts (Baron & Poxon, 2012; Gosnell, 2012) or careful review of their own work.

Analysis of students' progress showed a 'see-saw' effect between including more information and explicating parts of their discussion, both of which are required to access Level 5. Improved depth and detail on AO3 resulted in loss of focus and detail on AO1 and AO2, and vice versa. Therefore, grades alone do not accurately evidence

improvement or lack thereof in the argumentative aspects of their work. Limited progress across the AOs may link to challenges with time and space, where students could include more depth and detail in one area or the other, but not both. However, it could equally link to problems encountered when working with larger quantities of material and harnessing more elements of argumentation within essays. Progress was mainly seen at paragraph level, where students added depth and detail around discussions of specific ideas. However, weaknesses occurred where they failed to explicate interconnections between two or more paragraphs (Andrews, 2010) or fully explore inter-relatedness of analysis and assessment (Bosley & Jacobs, 1992; Andrew, 1995). Their reluctance or inability to review work at global levels would have exacerbated this problem.

In the June 2014 examination I also noticed inconsistent correlation between AO1 and AO3. John achieved 20% for AO1 on both of his questions, yet on AO3 he achieved 30% on my question and 26% on Sarah's question. This showed that, despite having achieved similar levels of exegesis for both questions, he was able to develop his own view to a higher level on my question, which had close links to materials studied in History. Even though the examiner marked his analysis and assessment as turning heavily on one point, and even though his answers were juxtaposed to the original questions, he included sufficient discussion to access a high Level 4 on my question. Lydia, on both questions, scored lower on AO3 than on AO1, showing she scored better on exegesis than discussion and critique. Both Mary and Ruth produced the same percentage marks for AO1 and AO3 on one of their questions. For the second question, Mary dropped her percentage on AO3 while Ruth raised her AO3. This showed that, although there is some link between detail and precision at AO1, this does not guarantee success of failure on AO3. Under examination conditions students' use of examples was inconsistent and often limited. As precision and sophistication of explanation is often achieved through analysis and discussion of examples, this often affected their levels of discussion.

In terms of relevance and language links, the analysis showed few problems related directly to inappropriate or immature language, with problems more closely linked to handling and structuring materials (Johns, 1986; Crowhurst, 1990; White, 2002; Vaughn, 2006; Dewey, 2016). Strategies to improve relevance and language had some

success in improving connectivity in students' work with the four-lesson intervention in Phase 2 successfully highlighting signposting and linking words (Andrews, 1995). This produced some improved coherence, although it was not always clear that sentences following connective words achieved what the words promised. For example, students used 'however' frequently, but the following sentences did not always represent contrasting views. Students quickly learnt to structure arguments coherently, keeping discussions of ideas in separate paragraphs. This helped selection and application of materials but did not always affect analysis, assessment or evaluation. Written feedback improved language and flow in essays, but students' reluctance to engage with conversational feedback aimed at eliciting deeper thought meant this strategy had limited effect in developing evaluative and critical elements. Where progress was made, this tended to be piecemeal, with students amending work at the point of teachers' comments but failing to transfer skills to further essays. Also, essays were not reviewed to fully absorb amendments, resulting in disjointed writing. Where samples of deeper critical argumentation could be picked out, usually in a paragraph or two, the relevance of parts and general coherence of essays still lacked sophistication, precision or a line of sustained argumentation through the essays.

Therefore, although aspects of improvement were noted, the overall effect on grades was often limited. In previous sections I have highlighted limits to the success of interventions due to students' limited engagement with these and their reluctance to change working habits. While this is equally relevant here, it also became apparent that time constraints in the examination introduced restrictions, forcing students to make choices between depth and detail in exposition or evaluation. Similarly, in judging their progress, it is important to note that this may be evident in aspects of their argumentation, even if not in the overall essay or grade. This could point back to the need for more detailed rubrics, allowing students to identify smaller improvements and focus on areas needing more work.

5.5 Concluding Comments

The overwhelming realisation from this project was the effect of students' preconceptions and study preferences on the usefulness of interventions. Prior to the

study I had assumed that students engaged with teaching and learning strategies discussed through the course and that failure to progress highlighted problems with these strategies. In this cohort it became evident that these preconceptions would need to be explicitly addressed in order to develop students' ways of working, either alongside or before strategies aimed at developing cognitive skills. Problems with the rubric and practical barriers to progress, such as time limits, were identified, affording greater understanding of the challenges faced by teachers and students around teaching and learning in Philosophy at A-Level. Some recommendations have been made, but the limitations of this study mean that readers will need to make judgements about their appropriateness for their classes or make adjustments to suit the needs of their contexts. Within our own experiences, we were aware of previous students who had overcome some of the difficulties experienced by this small cohort. A larger sample may have afforded opportunities to compare approaches and study habits between students with a wider ability range, making this an area for further study. Several of the findings occurred late in my research project and would need further trial and investigation. Furthermore, subsequent changes to the examination syllabus and rubrics, discussed in Chapter 6, mean that the findings in this project would need to be judged against these changes.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

> 'One approach for improving students' comprehension of philosophy texts is, I expect, already embedded in the practices we all follow. But I think it valuable to have this practice explicitly and systematically presented to students.'
>
> (Adler, 2004)

The findings of the study were partially negative because some questions raised further questions rather than producing answers. They were also unexpected because they highlighted the need to address students' preconceptions around teaching and learning strategies at the same time as, if not before, addressing cognitive challenges inherent in learning the skills of argumentation in Philosophy at A-Level. However, where explicit answers were lacking, the study provided greater clarity of understanding and suggested ways forward for further study. It is hoped the findings will help A-Level Philosophy teachers and students understand the challenges of A-Level Philosophy, allowing them to adjust and develop learning and teaching strategies in their own classrooms and learning. The study started with four broad questions which were gradually developed and explored. In the chapter below I have summarised what I believe the study has added to existing knowledge and understanding, followed by a short discussion of what this means for A-Level Philosophy today.

6.1 How do students and teachers define doing philosophy, with a focus on written argumentation?

The literature review brought together a large range of literature clarifying elements of argumentation with suggested teaching strategies to develop these in philosophy. My study added to this by demonstrating the application of these to the AQA A-Level Philosophy syllabus and mark scheme. Examination of the AQA rubrics allowed clearer understanding of teachers' and students' difficulties with the level descriptions. Ways of including these in A-Level rubrics could be considered. Comparisons with AQA rubrics identified problems associated with broad level descriptions that

amalgamate a number of elements into a small number of levels, but also identified changes to the placing of elements such as examples, selection and analysis. This creates confusion not just for students but also for teachers. Further analysis of a range of taxonomies produced two tick sheets that could be used by teachers to help students identify areas for further focus and development. It also identified and discussed a small range of detailed rubrics, showing clear differentiation between elements of argumentation, making these specific and clear for students. University tutors have flexibility in setting their own rubrics, allowing them to factor in development of skills such as essay redrafting and independent reading, giving these a place in final grades.

Analysis of students' reflections afforded a unique insight into their experiences of philosophy over the two-year course. It showed their focus on writing essays and getting grades, rather than developing philosophical argumentation. Although all students could define 'doing philosophy', the longitudinal nature of the study afforded a clearer understanding of their actual approaches and perceptions. Philosophy was viewed as another essay based subject and students expected rules and strategies from other subjects to fit their work in philosophy. They expected to be able to produce 'Theory, Strengths, Weaknesses' style essays and experienced frustration when strategies employed in other subjects failed to achieve similar grades in philosophy. Sarah and I, aware of this danger, made clear from the beginning that doing philosophy is different from their other subjects as it involves students' views and a specific style of argumentation. However, analysis of the data showed students maintaining their perception that strategies utilised in other subjects should afford success in philosophy. Although there were hints of this in the literature review, this study showed that for some students the move to independent thinking in A-Level Philosophy is one they find very difficult, exacerbated by lack of confidence in their own points of view.

6.2 What aspects of written argumentation do students and teachers find problematic and unproblematic?

Many of the problems encountered in the study are addressed in the literature review. My study added to this by exploring these difficulties in the context of the A-Level Philosophy course and accessing and analysing problems from students' perspectives.

Vague and confusing rubrics place limits on students' abilities to self-assess and self-manage their progress, making them reliant on teacher input to point out errors. From students' reflections it was not clear that improved level descriptors would guarantee greater student independence as some of the problems were tracked to study habits rather than development of skills. However, lack of clarity causes uncertainty, resulting in students looking for easier ways of working. In terms of assessment, the easiest way is to rely on teachers' input.

The study showed that students can access the general theories studied in the A-Level Philosophy course. Where they experienced difficulties was in close study of original texts and subsequently in developing detail and precision. This was evident in their exegesis of theories as well as their subsequent ability to explain out analysis, assessment and evaluation. Although our students had the language skills required to access the texts, they lacked the patience needed to unpick these arguments and transfer philosophical writing styles to their own writing. As a result, students struggled to structure argumentation. All of these problems were identified in the literature but my study revealed additional problems created when students compared argumentation in philosophy with essay writing in other subjects. Attempts to provide supporting strategies often ended in frustration because the support provided had to take different formats to that received in other subjects. The study highlighted difficulties encountered by both teachers and students with the introduction of theses. Although other subjects also required students to argue for and substantiate points of view, the nature of discussion in philosophy is somehow more personal. By repeatedly revisiting frustrations experienced by both teachers and students, the study identified this as an area students found particularly difficult. It also showed how students' focus on grades hindered their engagement with the confronting nature of the subject, limiting development of their argumentation.

6.3 What range of strategies do more and less successful students employ around developing written argumentation?

Although most strategies trialled with and by students were seen in the literature, my study added to this by eliciting students' study habits and perceptions through repeated

interviews and questioning. These strategies and perceptions were measured against actual work, both during the course and under examination conditions, providing detailed understanding of students' actual progress against their perceived progress. In terms of learning and memorising theory, students found summarised material more useful. Sarah and I had concerns that summaries failed to develop students' understanding of theories together with concerns over their subsequent ability to explain theory out in greater detail in their written argumentation. Although marked work supported these concerns, students' reflections suggested the problem lay less with the use of summaries and more with their reliance on summaries provided by others, either teachers or other students. This missed the step where students explored and developed their understanding of materials through the process of creating their own summaries.

All students felt the provision and use of writing structures or frames helped develop their essay writing in other subjects, but this study showed problems with using these in philosophy. The longitudinal nature of the study allowed the testing of several iterations of writing frames with detailed feedback at each phase. Our efforts failed to produce and develop a generic frame that could be offered as a useful teaching tool, but work around these frames clarified students' expectations and revealed problems with their use in philosophy. Frames found in the literature review were too general to provide adequate guidance for our students. However, more specific frames provided in other subjects failed to develop students understanding of argumentation structure. They also hindered students' essay planning skills because they were used as plans rather than instructions for planning. This finding focused attention of students' planning.

Andrews (1995) found children tend to plan linearly while adults plan in multi-level, non-linear ways. Efforts to help our students develop their planning and essay structures showed their thinking and working habits were closer to those of children than those of adults. Efforts to move their planning and essay structuring towards non-linear models were robustly resisted or resulted in students becoming confused. This study was limited to four students, who ultimately achieved average to above-average results, but this finding is crucial to understanding thinking and working levels of students at A-Level. It is right that the top ends of rubrics provide stretch and challenge for higher ability students with more developed cognitive abilities, but it is just as

important that they remain accessible to the full range of students undertaking A-Level subjects. Failure to do this will result in students and teachers selecting other courses that allow them to access higher grades.

Another area that students found particular problematic was redrafting of essays. The literature review produced several lists of common errors, but this study showed these had limited use if students struggled to identify good and poor elements in their written argumentation. Detailed comparisons of drafts revealed the limited nature of students' redrafting. For me, this was particularly significant, as I explicitly utilised redrafting in an effort to help students produce detailed argumentation in their own words around their own ideas. Although students reported following all advice given, scrutiny of redrafted work showed they ignored areas of their work they found difficult or felt was too much work. This explained why they did not significantly improve their grades despite submitting second or third drafts. Efforts to give verbal feedback resulted in more detailed redrafts, but raised questions around the possibility of providing detailed verbal feedback on all work. This would clearly not be sustainable and tethered redrafting to teachers' feedback.

A particular concern highlighted through the study was that of time constraints. Although limited progress was made in helping students overcome these concerns, analysis of examination scripts showed that students did not substantially increase their essay lengths when given twice as much writing time. This is particularly important for teaching A-Level Philosophy as it helps inform teachers' expectations and guide students on what they can expect to achieve in their A2-Level essays.

6.4 What range of strategies do teachers consider more and less successful for supporting students around developing written argumentation?

Many of the strategies trialled in the study were taken or adapted from the literature. My study added to these by developing and trialling a range of writing frames (Appendix 12) and developments in planning. Strategies such as written and verbal feedback were also explored, providing greater insight into students' and teachers' experiences and perceptions.

The study of students' perception revealed their reliance on teacher input. Although this is to be expected at the beginning of new courses, the longitudinal nature of the study showed this reliance continuing through to A2-Level. Left to their own devices, students reverted to strategies that were less time consuming but not necessarily effective in developing argumentation skills. Strategies requiring more thought and time were successful if completed in lesson under teacher supervision or where evidence of work was collected and marked. This raised questions and discussions around the use and effectiveness of written feedback. Although students requested more detail in feedback, the study showed that this facilitated and supported reliance on teacher input, detracting from students' opportunities to develop their own reviewing skills. It was also evident that students did not utilise all feedback provided. I was not able to show whether this subsequently had a negative effect on peer support strategies, but it did seem that students preferred teacher feedback to peer review or teacher-led peer review. It reinforced the perception that they lacked confidence in their own abilities to identify weaknesses in their written argumentation.

Sarah and I have long suspected that students completed limited independent reading and study. Repeated returns to questions around this point led to clearer understanding of the type and quantity of reading and study completed by students in this cohort. It would be a stretch to generalise this to all students, but we were able to see progress where students were forced to do additional reading. The question remained on how to fit additional reading into an already full timetable if students will not read independently. Attempts to promote reading through an unsupervised reading group were unsuccessful and the nature of the study did not allow the testing of supervised reading groups. The Jacobsen sessions showed students enjoyed non-curricular discussion sessions, but their reluctance to grapple with reading associated with lessons raises questions about whether they would complete reading required to make supervised extra-curricular reading sessions productive. Without tethering reading to rubrics and final marks we remained doubtful that students would engage with the task if they felt it is too much work. This is an area that would benefit from further, targeted research.

An area where the study contributed to existing knowledge was around providing written feedback to A-Level Philosophy students. A small range of advice was

identified but this focused more around managing marking loads without diminishing quality of feedback. Advice taken from teachers of English as a Second Language provided new insights into types of marking and helped clarify what students meant by marking needing greater specificity. This allowed me to analyse the type of feedback we were providing. Students wanted to be told exactly what to add to improve their writing while we wanted our feedback to encourage further reflection and thought. Although the study failed to find the exact mix that would satisfy both parties, it did help provide suggestions for more detailed feedback that could guide without dictating. However, due to time limitations these ideas could not be fully explored, providing another area that would benefit from further targeted research.

Our aim to help students understand the examination rubrics meant work with rubrics stayed with AQA mark schemes. Explicit work with more detailed rubrics such as that used by Hafner and Hafner (2003) may have afforded greater opportunities for comparison of progress using generic or specific rubrics and may have more clearly identified specific progress of elements and skills in written argumentation. Post-analysis reflection has highlighted this as an area needing further study.

6.5 What This Means for A-Level Philosophy Today

At the start of the thesis I briefly mentioned the A-Level Philosophy course has seen further changes and adaptations. The 2175 Specification (AQA, 2014a, pp. 17-18) includes 2 AOs, which clearly separate understanding about concepts and methods of philosophy (AO1) from engagement in philosophical argumentation (AO2). The AS weighting (Image 5.1), giving 80% of the mark to AO1, brings it more in line with subjects like Religious Studies.

Image 5.1: Weighting of Assessment Objectives for A-Level (2175)

	Assessment Objective
AO1	Demonstrate understanding of the core concepts and methods of philosophy
AO2	Analyse and evaluate philosophical argument to form reasoned judgements

Assessment Objective for A-level	Unit Weighting (%)		Overall weighting of AOs (%)
	AS	**A2**	
AO1	80	60	70
AO2	20	40	30

The latest specifications (AQA, 2016b, 2016f) have kept the same AO descriptions and weightings. For both specifications, 8 of the 10 questions are marked against AO1 with the 2 longer discussion questions split between AO1 and AO2 (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Allocation of Marks on Discussion Questions – Specifications 2175, 7171, 7172 (AQA, 2016c, 2016d, 2016e, 2016f)

	AS-Level	**A2-Level**
AO1	46.67%	20%
AO2	53.33%	80%

Despite criticism from teachers that the latest changes have reduced philosophic rigour, I would argue they make the A-Level Philosophy course fairer against other subjects. Furthermore, as many students begin the course as complete novices, expectations of the new specifications allow lower to middle ability students to make encouraging progress on AO1 questions which are more easily accessed. However, the larger weighting of AO2 at A2-Level still allows stretch and challenge. The clearer split between AO1 and AO2 allows students to build a solid knowledge foundation to achieve AO1, from which they can then develop and extend their argumentation skills to achieve AO2.

Having said this, I still feel that the AQA Philosophy rubrics would benefit from more detail with specific marks allocated to different elements of argumentation. As noted above, our students demonstrated less mature learning and working strategies than would be expected at university or college level. The provision of detailed rubrics could bridge the gap, allowing them to develop their skills and providing greater understanding of the requirements for more advanced and mature argumentation. In our discussions, Sarah and I could recall previous students who had more easily grasped and embraced the challenge of independent study and learning, and who had made faster and greater progress. However, these students were in the minority. Making the philosophy content easier through summarised content could risk diluting the subject, but providing stepping stones to help students access argumentative writing in philosophy would not.

6.6 Adjustments to Teaching

Several points emerged from the research, such as the complexity of teaching and learning philosophy and the interconnectivity of elements of argumentation. Areas previously taken for granted, which I now realise need explicit attention, include strategies to encourage and/or guide independent reading and research with particular focus on how students review and redraft work before and after submission. Following changes to the syllabus in 2009, Sarah and I focused on teaching argumentation early in the course. As a result of this research project and further changes to the syllabus, this remains a focus but is accompanied by a returned focus to detailed and accurate analysis and understanding of set theories. In addition, I now provide students with more detailed guidance on structuring and planning argumentative essays, providing more scaffolding for lower ability students but still allowing latitude for higher ability students to explore their own ideas. This still proves difficult, requiring continual reiteration that scaffolds and plans are for guidance, but that a range of responses and layout can be explored where students feel confident to do so. Changes have also been made to my marking and feedback. I have realised the need to draw more attention to areas of students' argumentation that work well, explaining what has worked, and give greater guidance on how they can correct areas that need further development.

6.7 Assessment of the Research

The practitioner research and emergent, interventionist aspect of the research project included advantages and disadvantages. Working with and following students through the two-year period facilitated a close and continuous relationship with informants. Although the relationship of teacher-student did include some barriers, the frank and at times personal feedback allowed confidence that responses were mostly honest. The close working relationship with Sarah allowed for a united approach to the teaching and research, but allowed for differences in teaching, affording opportunities for a range of strategies to be explored. The continual collection of data provided a wide and varied data-set, allowing the emergence of insights not expected. The pace of teaching created pressures limiting the amount of initial analysis and reading that could be conducted at each stage. This, together with the quantity of data collected, created difficulties for final analysis. Careful sorting, storing and cataloguing of data helped mitigate this to some extent. However, as a practitioner researcher, an area I found difficult to keep separate was reflection on teaching and learning and reflection on on-going analysis. If I did a similar project in the future, I would try to allocate clear time periods for data collection and ongoing analysis in order to create periods of rest between data collection periods and create a clearer line between reflection as a practitioner and reflection as a researcher. It is acknowledged, however, that complete separation would not be possible.

6.7 Final Words

This study provided several insights into difficulties faced by students and teachers of philosophy at A-Level and reinforced the view that philosophy holds several similar and unique challenges when compared with other subjects. Several strategies were trialled and in many cases results raised more questions than answers. The late emergence of some of these results meant further study could not be completed, but it is hoped that this study will provide insights with which other teachers can identify and will raise questions for other researchers to explore. I end with an analogy provided by a History colleague whilst waiting for the photocopying machine. In most cases a class of students will select and use similar material to respond to a question and navigate

similar paths through that material. However, some students will demonstrate skill in producing nuance and sophistication in their discussions that allows them to access higher levels and grades. These are usually students who have embraced the challenges of study, often completing additional reading and research and grappling with materials until they reach that understanding. Perhaps the challenge for teachers at A-Level, and particularly for teachers of philosophy, is to encourage students to develop and move on from trusted strategies that saw them through GCSE Level and embrace the harder but rewarding strategies of higher level learning.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Sample of Philosophy Grading Rubric (Hafner & Hafner, 2003, pp. 7-13)

	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	Unacceptable
CONTENT	85 (total)			
Argument				
Thesis	5	4	3	0
Premises	15	12	9	0
Support	15	12	9	0
Counter-Arguments	10	8	6	0
Understanding				
Text	5	4	3	0
Ideas	5	4	3	0
Analysis	10	8	6	0
Synthesis	10	8	6	0
Creation				
Examples	5	4	3	0
Alternative Positions	5	4	3	0
STYLE	15 (total)			
Clarity	6	5	4	0
Organization				
Introduction	3	2	1	0
Body	3	2	1	0
Conclusion	3	2	1	0

	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	Unacceptable
CONTENT				
Argument				
Thesis	A clear statement of the main conclusion of the paper.	The thesis is obvious, but there is no single clear statement of it.	The thesis is present, but must be uncovered or reconstructed from the text of the paper.	There is no thesis.
Premises	Each reason for believing the thesis is made clear, and, as much as possible, presented in single statements. It is also clear which premises are to be taken as given, and which will be supported by sub-arguments. The paper provides sub-arguments for controversial premises. If there are sub-arguments, the premises for these are clear, and made in single statements. The premises that are taken as given are at least plausibly true.	The premises are all clear, although each may not be presented in a single statement. It is also pretty clear which premises are to be taken as given, and which will be supported by sub-arguments. The paper provides sub-arguments for controversial premises. If there are sub-arguments, the premises for these are clear. The premises that are taken as given are at least plausibly true.	The premises must be reconstructed from the text of the paper. It is not made clear which premises are to be taken as given, and which will be supported by sub-arguments. There are no sub-arguments, or, if there are sub-arguments, the premises for these are not made clear. The paper does not provide sub-arguments for controversial premises. The plausibility of the premises that are taken as given is questionable.	There are no premises—the paper merely restates the thesis. Or, if there are premises, they are much more likely to be false than true.

Appendix 2: Structure of a Philosophical Essay (Martinich, 2005, pp. 52-53)

The Structure of a Philosophical Essay
A Slightly More Complex One

I Beginning: State the proposition to be proved.
- (a) Orientation
  - (1) Specify what general topic will be discussed.
  - (2) Report what previous philosophers have thought about this topic.
- (b) State what is to be proved; state the thesis.
  - (1) Report who has held the same or a similar view.
  - (2) Report who has held the opposite or a different view.
- (c) Motivation: Explain why this thesis or topic is interesting or important.
- (d) State what you will assume in your essay without argument.

II Give the argument for the proposition to be proved.
- (a) Explain the general force of the argument.
- (b) Explain what the premises mean.

III Show that the argument is valid.
- (a) Explain those terms that are used in a technical sense, or which are ambiguous; resolve the ambiguity.
- (b) Explain how the conclusion follows from the premises.
  - (1) The inference to intermediate conclusions will have to be explained as part of the complete explanation.
  - (2) Sometimes one can explain the inferences by citing rules from a natural deduction system, e.g. *modus ponens* or *modus tollens*. More often the explanation concerns explaining the conceptual relations between the concepts expressed in the premises.
- (c) Give the rules that justify the inferences that are not apparent from the initial statement of the argument.

IV Show that the premises are true.
- (a) Give the evidence for the premises.
  - (1) Explain the premises; and explain the meaning of those terms that might be misunderstood and which bear upon the truth of your premises.
  - (2) Adduce the intuitions of the audience; supply examples and subsidiary arguments that lend support to the truth of your premises.

(b) Raise objections.

(1) Raise objections that have actually been raised against your position.

(i) Raise the objections that historically significant philosophers have already raised to that problem.

(ii) Raise the objections that your professor or fellow students have raised.

(2) Raise objections that no one else has raised and which, when answered, further explicate and shore up your thesis.

(c) Answer the objections.

V Conclusion:

(a) State the upshot of what you have proven.

(b) Indicate further results that one might try to get.

Appendix 3: A Philosopher's Key to Grading Papers Quickly (Byrd, 2017)

Symbol	What it means...
😀	This part is well-written. It was a delight to read. Thanks!
✓	This is right! Well done.
+	Partially correct. Missing key parts.
≈	Not quite, but sort of. Either you're misunderstanding this or you understand it, but you're not writing clearly enough. Protip: test out your understanding of the material in class or office hours (when your grade isn't on the line). E.g., "Does so-and-so's argument for _____ rely on the claim that _____?"
X	This is not correct.
≠	(Disconnect). It seems like you think these things are related in a way that they are not. If I am wrong, then this means that you need to make your point more clearly (see also "?").
∞	It's not clear how these thoughts are related, so this hard to follow. Explain the connection between each point you make.
?	Confusing or Awkward. I've read this multiple times in order to try to figure out what you mean and I still don't know. It should be difficult for me to misunderstand you. Proofreading test: Have someone read your paper and then tell you what they think you're saying. If they misunderstand you at all, then look for ways to be more clear.
→←	This claim contradicts a claim you made earlier. That means either this claim or the earlier claim must be false. So you will have to figure out which claim is false, remove it from your argument, and then figure out whether and how you can make the argument work without that claim.
^	Add text here. If I wrote something above the ^, that's my suggested text.
!	This claim (or its implication) is too strong. Strong claims do not always make for strong arguments. The stronger a claim (or its implication), the *harder* it is to defend. So don't make a claim so strong that you cannot defend it.
↑	(upshot). You've starting making a point, but you haven't finished. What's the upshot? Once you figure it out, signpost the upshot: "This means that ..."
–	(as in "subtract") Try being more concise. If it's (1) a quotation: use verbatim quotes only if you need to draw attention to the original wording. Most of the time, you do not need a direct quote. Rather, you should summarize the author in your own words (and then cite it, of course). If it's (2) your own writing: this could be said with fewer words. See also "F" (for Fluff).
⊘	Don't do this. Common issues: "In my opinion...," "The dictionary defines X as...," "Science proves/disproves...," "Since the beginning of...," "[So-and-so] was born in such-and-such...," etc.

Symbol	What it means...
Arg	(Problem with argument). This error was discussed in the reading or in class.
C	(Cite) This needs to be cited. Use in-text parenthetical citations or footnoted citations. Accompany these with a works cited list. Use one format throughout.
Calc	(Calculation) Show the calculation for this or change to non-quantitative claim.
D	(Develop). Ooo! This might have potential! Alas, not enough is said about it. Provide more detail, offer more support, consider objections, etc.
df	(Definition). Given the nature of this assignment, you should define this. Don't appeal to a dictionary. Define it based on how the word is used in our class.
E	(Error) writing error. Common errors: missing word, repeated word, spelling, grammar, run-on sentence, incomplete sentence, gratuitous punctuation, etc.
F	(Fluff). If you're not (1) describing a premise/conclusion, (2) explaining how premises lead to a conclusion, (3) supporting a premise, (4) objecting to a premise/conclusion, (5) explaining the upshot of your objection, or (6) responding to an objection, then you're adding fluff. Please (please!): no fluff.
HW	(Handwriting). I can't read this. If I can't read it, I can't give credit for it.
I/E	(Implicit vs. Explicit). This merely implies a point. It is better to make the point explicitly. Examples: "How could we know?!" vs. "We cannot know." "There is something to be said for X." vs. "Here is what we should say about X."
L	List. This might be easier for the reader to digest in list form.
¶	New paragraph here. Including multiple conclusions in a paragraph makes for gratuitously difficult reading. Paragraph breaks (and signposts, transitions, etc.) help your reader transition between each part of your thought process.
S	(Support) This claim is not well-supported. Try showing (1) how the opposite of your claim is impossible or implausible, (2) how your claim is supported by the preponderance of evidence, (3) how the claim follows from some intuitively plausible (e.g., uncontroversial) principle(s), and/or (4) how your claim best jibes with the accepted meaning of the relevant concept(s). Note: if your interlocutor objected to this claim, then you need to respond to their objection.
T	(Thesis) This seems to be your thesis. The thesis should be the conclusion of your argument(s). Every part of your paper should be dedicated to presenting and supporting the premises of this argument, explaining how your conclusion follows from those premises, and responding to objections to the premises and/or thesis. Tip: limit yourself to one thesis and make sure you articulate it clearly in (at least) the introduction and conclusion of your paper.
WC	(Word Choice). That probably isn't the best word or phrase for this.

Appendix 4: 'Essay Rescue Remedy' (Baron & Poxon, 2012, p. 91)

1. If the thesis does not clearly state your argument in a simple and straightforward way, rewrite it.

2. Read the whole essay – can you identify the reasons you have given to support your thesis/ conclusions?

3. Read each paragraph – identify and write down the main idea of the paragraph – explain how it supports your thesis. If it doesn't do this, rewrite it to make it more focused/ organised.

4. Is the argument well-presented and explained – how can it be improved?

5. Are objections in the essay answered? Could responses be improved?

6. What questions does the thesis raise? Would anything confuse the reader? Look at signposting and organisation. Are the replies to the objections strong?

7. Is the question referred to in the opening paragraph? Is it discussed in each subsequent paragraph?

8. Check spelling and grammar.

9. Does the conclusion relate to the introduction and is it strong? If not, rewrite it.

10. Identify and remove all needless sentences and words. Get rid of the passive voice. Cut out anything that is not relevant.

Appendix 5: Tick Sheet – Elements of Argumentation

Student_____ Essay_____ Mark_____

Introduction
• Briefly explain the question
• State a clear thesis/ aim for the essay
  ○ Criticize that argument; or show that certain arguments for the thesis are no good
  ○ Defend the argument or thesis against someone else's criticism
  ○ Offer reasons to believe the thesis
  ○ Offer counter-examples to the thesis
  ○ Contrast the strengths and weaknesses of two opposing views about the thesis
  ○ Give examples which help explain the thesis, or which help to make the thesis more plausible
  ○ Argue that certain philosophers are committed to the thesis by their other views, though they do not come out and explicitly endorse the thesis
  ○ Discuss what consequences the thesis would have, if it were true
  ○ Revise the thesis, in the light of some objection
• Outline steps of the argument/ indicate how argument will proceed
Conclusion
• Solve the problem
• Conclusion ties up loose ends
  ○ points that could not be discussed
  ○ implications of accepting the conclusion
  ○ further work that needs to be done
• Clearly and directly answer the question
• Question is not over-simplified
• Shows philosophical opinion
Depth/ detail
• Arguments/ points not over-simplified
• Explain why points used are significant
• Arguments for and against – showing why question is an issue
• All key aspects of a concept/ position explained
• Thought processes explained clearly
• Make clear what is important/ significant
• Use relevant/ interesting examples to strengthen points made
		Argument and counter-argument
		• Make premises/ sub-premises clear
		• Each premise/ sub-premise in its own paragraph
		• Issue discussed with reference to philosophers
		• Each paragraph a convincing argument
		• Points linked – either supporting or challenging each other
		• Anticipate and answer objections (to your own view)
		Evaluation
		• Explain what is at stake/ why issues is important
		• Make points that solve the problem/ answer the question
		• Explain why a philosopher is right or wrong their assessment
		• Suggest better approaches
		• Take a side and be consistent in approach
		Style
		• Simple prose
		• Make own words/ philosophers' words clear
		• Signposting
		  ○ I will begin by...
		  ○ Before I say what is wrong with this argument, I want to...
		  ○ These passages suggest that...
		  ○ I will now defend this claim...
		  ○ Further support for this claim comes from...
		  ○ For example...
		  ○ Others
		• Connective words
		  ○ because, since, given this argument
		  ○ thus, therefore, hence, it follows that, consequently
		  ○ nevertheless, however, but
		  ○ in the first case, on the other hand
		  ○ Others ...	

Appendix 6: Tick Sheet – Evaluation of Elements of Argumentation

- Description of philosophical arguments positions concepts
  - POSITIVES
    - a range selected
    - clear, detailed, precise
    - relevant
  - NEGATIVES
    - QUANTITY
      - narrow range of positions or arguments selected
      - specific arguments rare
      - detail omitted
      - bare outlines
      - fragments of knowledge
    - QUALITY
      - descriptions inaccurate and confused in places
      - explanations narrow and partially address the questions
      - K&U not fully exploited or underdeveloped
      - blurring, conflation of issues
- Illustrations and examples demonstrate understanding
  - POSITIVES
    - clearly explained
    - relevance apparent
    - have precise bearing on issues being explained
    - examples & illustrations critically analysed
  - NEGATIVES
    - Quantity
      - Illustrations absent - all or some points not illustrated
    - Quality
      - Points blurred or explained briefly
      - Illustrations confused or vague
      - Relevance to explanation not apparent
      - Examples used descriptively not critically
- Critical Analysis
  - POSITIVES
    - analyse a range of points
    - analysis clearly and precisely explained
    - nuances of question specifically addressed
  - NEGATIVES
    - Quantity
      - interpretation and analysis basic, sketchy, vague,
      - narrow range of points, examples explored
      - narrow focus on one aspect, issue
      - partial appreciation of issue
    - Quality
      - lack of depth, detail and precision
      - not address relevant issues, implications
      - imprecision - some points not clearly directed
      - positions juxtaposed rather than critically compared
      - tangential account with some points coinciding
      - not focused on the question
- Evaluation
  - POSITIVES
    - sophisticated and direct engagement of the issues
    - clear, directed, analytical
    - implications of positions discussed, considered and explored
  - NEGATIVES
    - Quantity
      - evaluation absent
    - Quality
      - assertion, counter assertion
      - underdeveloped, not convincing
      - lacks philosophical impact (not penetrating)
      - penetrating over a limited range of material
- Arguments leading to conclusion
  - POSITIVES
    - advance a clear, evaluative judgement
    - response reads as a coherent whole
    - reasoning is effective, penetrating
    - reasoning expressed with insight and sophistication
    - construction of argumentation is relevant and sustained
    - relation between argument and conclusion clear
  - NEGATIVES
    - No Argument
      - a view is described
      - lack of purpose, position in the argument
      - positions listed, juxtaposed - evaluation implied
    - Poor Argument
      - construction of argument lacks insight, sophistication
      - relevance not always clear - tangents in logic
      - justifications, judgements not convincing
        - asserted
        - confused, misdirected, poorly expressed
        - not justified
        - require further support
        - errors in reasoning
      - juxtapositions lack depth, detail, subtlety, precision
      - response disjointed
- Style
  - POSITIVES
    - fluent and sophisticated
    - technical language used correctly
  - NEGATVIES
    - errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar
    - technical language employed inappropriately
    - 'Fanfare'_ verbose language

Appendix 7: Schedule of Class Essays Analysed

Date	Essay	Title of Essay	Marks
PHASE 1			
20/10/2012	KAS.1.2	Is any account of the condition of mankind in the state of nature convincing?	30
29/11/2012	KAS.1.4	We have consented to be governed, so we are obliged to obey the government.	30
14/09/2012	SAS.1.1	At birth the mind is a tabula rasa. Discuss.	30
06/12/2012	SAS.1.4	Critically assess the claim that our knowledge of the world is grounded in and justified by sense experience.	30
PHASE 2			
23/04/2013	KAS.2.3	Consider the view that in tolerant societies no particular way of life should be promoted as superior.	30
25/02/2013	SAS.2.3	The world is exactly as it appears. Discuss.	30
06/03/2013	SAS.2.4	Evaluate the claim that all forms of perception are mediated.	30
PHASE 3			
17/10/2013	KAS.3.1	Explain and assess anarchism as a political ideology	50
05/11/2013	KAS.3.2	Human nature is such that political authority is necessary.	50
28/10/2013	SAS.3.1	Naturalist theories argue successfully for moral truth. Discuss	50
PHASE 4			
19/12/2013	KAS.4.1	To what extent is any state an instrument of oppression?	50

24/01/2014	KAS.4.2	Is any account of the condition of mankind in the state of nature convincing?	50
12/12/2013	SAS.4.1	Moral judgements do not describe reality. Assess this claim with reference to either presciptivism or emotivism.	50
19/01/2014	SAS.4.2	Cultures make different judgements about what is right and what is wrong, and so there can be no moral truth. Discuss	50
PHASE 5			
17/02/2014	KAS.5.1	Q3 - 'Too much freedom is a dangerous thing'. Discuss what limits, if any, the state should place on individual liberty.	50
17/02/2014	KAS.5.2	Q1 - Outline Plato's simile of the large and powerful animal (beast) and two of its purposes.	15
17/02/2014	KAS.5.3	Q2 - Assess Plato's Distinction between knowledge and belief.	45
17/02/2014	KAS.5.4	Q3 - Democracy provides the most just and efficient form of political rule.' Assess whether Plato has shown this calim to be false.	45
16/04/2014	KAS.5.5	Evaluate the libertarian view that redistribution of property by the state can never be justified.	50
29/05/2014	KAS.5.6	Q3 - 'Too much freedom is a dangerous thing'. Discuss what limits, if any, the state should place on individual liberty.	50
17/02/2014	SAS.5.1	Q1 - Evaluate the claim that moral values cannot be derived from facts.	50
17/02/2014	SAS.5.2	Q2 - 'A definition of right and wrong has never been accurately provided'. Discuss.	50
26/03/2014	SAS.5.3	Using a practic al problem of your choice, discuss whether utilitarianism provides an effective guide to action.	50

21/05/2014	SAS.5.4	Moral Judgements do not describe reality'. Assess this claim.	50

Appendix 8: Schedule of Interview and Reflection Questions

Where questions are not given, interviews and reflection objections remained open.

Students' Reflection Questions – Diaries and Questionnaires

Code	**Period**	**Questions**
PHASE 1		
SRQ.1.1	Initial Ideas	Free reflection on what they found difficult/ easy or more/less useful in lessons.
SRQ.1.2	Post- January 2012 examination (group interview)	1. What progress do you think you have made? 2. What aspects of argumentation do you find more or less difficult? 3. What strategies or resources have you found helpful? 4. What extra reading, podcasts or study groups have you accessed.
PHASE 2		
SRQ.2.1	Lesson 1 29/4/13	1. What do you find difficult about writing 30 Mark essays? 2. What help would you like? 3. Has this exercise been useful? 4. Is there anything else that could have helped you?
SRQ.2.2	Lesson 2 1/5/13	1. Have you realised anything new about argumentation today?

		2. As we went through the examples, did examples from your own work come to mind? 3. What have you found useful in today's lesson? 4. Why do you think it was useful/not useful? 5. Have you made a mental note of anything you think you would like to work on? If so, what? If not, why do you think this is? 6. What would you like to see more of? 7. What would you like to see instead?
SRQ.2.3	Lesson 3 3/5/13	Free reflection on the usefulness of the lesson.
SRQ.2.4	Lesson 4 8/5/13	1. What have you found useful? 2. What would you change as a result of this process? 3. How would you change this? 4. What other help would you like?
PHASE 3		
SRQ.3.1	Essay 2.1 (KAS) 25/9/13	1. What did you find more or less helpful with using a frame as a guideline/ writing from a perspective? 2. Did you feel that the lessons leading up to the essay helped prepare you?

		3. What in these lessons did you find more or less helpful? 4. Which did you find more difficult, and why: i. Analysing the arguments before discussing them ii. Putting your ideas into an argument of your own iii. Writing down/ structuring the analysis iv. Writing down/ structuring your argument and conclusions 5. What extra reading or preparation did you do while writing the essay? (podcasts, student room, library) 6. If you did extra preparation, did you find it more or less helpful and why?
SRQ.3.2	Filmed lesson 27/9/13	Free reflection on the usefulness of the lesson.
SRQ.3.3	Lesson – outline of essay 11/10/13	Free reflection on the usefulness of the lesson.
SRQ.3.4	Essay 2.2 (SAS)	1. Are you pleased with the essay you have produced? 2. Did you find the plan useful? 3. Did you spend as much time planning this essay given that you were handed a plan?

		4. How did you find being told what position to force? 5. How did the plan you were given differ from one you might produce? 6. How did the mark I gave you compare with what you gave yourself? Why do you think this? 7. Has using the plan helped to improve your essay writing-skills? 8. What further help/support would you want when writing an essay? 9. Targets:
RQ.3.5	Questionnaire (KAS & SAS) 15/11/13	1. How do you think you did on this essay? 2. What did you find useful in the support/ outline you were given? 3. What did you find difficult with the support/ outline you were given? 4. What were your 2 or 3 themes that you focused on to answer the question? 5. What did you do to try and make sure you were answering the question? 6. What extra reading did you do? 7. What did you do to remind yourself of work done in Year 12? 8. What did you do to add depth of knowledge to your understanding of the Philosophers you used?

		9. What did you do to incorporate ideas from the feedback sessions into your essays? 10. How did you review your work? 11. How do you make sure that each paragraph represents a mini- arguments – i.e. is valid and coherent? 12. How have you used the mark scheme to help you write your essay?
PHASE 4		
SRQ.4.1	Questionnaire 10/3/2014	1. Thinking about the difference between the January 2013 exam, the Summer 2013 exam, and the mock exam, what differences do you think there were: a) How much revision did you do for each exam? b) What did you do to prepare for each exam? c) How did you feel while sitting each exam? d) What did you expect your result to be? How did that compare with the result that you actually received? e) What strategies did you devise to respond to the result that you received – i.e. what did you do to maintain/ improve your performance? f) How well do you think you have done on the rewrite of your essay?

		2. Thinking about the structure of the exam papers, what differences do you think there are and has this changed the way you are approaching the work – i.e. note making/ reading/ revision? 3. Feedback that has been given a) What do you find more or less useful? b) What do you do with the feedback? c) What do you do to help you fill in areas where you are still struggling to understand the theories and/ or criticisms? d) Do you see any difference between a 'criticism' and a 'counter-theory'? What do you think that difference is? e) How do you <u>look for</u> similarities and differences between different philosophers? f) How do you review work after feedback? g) How do you check to see that your essay is still coherent? 4. In what ways do you think the guidance/ advice between philosophy and other subjects is different? a) Do they give essay outlines? If yes, how are these different? b) Do they expect extra reading outside of the lesson? c) Do they give reading lists?

		d) What sort of feedback do they give to essays/ work? e) How do you go about responding to that feedback? 5. Jacobsen Program: During the Jacobsen program, students were able to focus and give their views in a sustained and coherent manner. The one session where Isabel was trying to direct the discussion around an exam question, the focus and attention was at a much lower level, and it felt like Isabel was having to do a lot more of the 'work'. a) What do you think might account for this difference? b) What did you incorporate from the session into your essay? c) Is it more than a psychological difference (this is work/ that was fun)? 6. Do you think there is any difference between the 3 topics you have studied on the course – Epistemology, Political Philosophy AS, Political Philosophy A2, Moral Philosophy? a) Is there a difference in the way it is taught? b) Has the subject content made any difference to engagement with the topic?

		c) Has the subject content made any difference to you understanding of the topic? d) Did you feel that you had more prior knowledge (in terms of examples, etc.) that you could bring to the subject? e) If yes, do you think this has made a difference to your achievement in this subject?
PHASE 5		
SRQ.5.1	Essay 25/4/14	Free reflection on progress made on essay.

Students' Interview Questions

Code	Period	Questions
PHASE 1		
SIQ.1.1	Post- January 2012 examination (group interview) *(Questions in italics were not pre-planned).*	1. How did you find the examination? 2. What did you find difficult? a) How many of you think you have produced a knowledge and understanding essay rather than an analysis essay? 3. When we returned your essays, highlighting sections on the mark scheme to indicate the level at which you were working, how helpful do you find that? 4. Apart from teaching different topics, have you noticed that [Teacher B] and I teach differently? 5. What is your perception of that? 6. What have you found generally more or less helpful in teaching you argument? a) What would be your response if I told you that, when [Teacher B] and I discuss your work, we indicate the same areas requiring improvement?
PHASE 2		
SIQ.2.1	Post lesson (group interview) 10/5/13	1. Were the comments on the essay returned to you more or less what you expected? 2. In what way was it different?

		a) Do you give your essays resting time, go back and review your own work in light of what we have told you in the last essay? b) When we say to you, 'juxtaposition', can you now see this? c) Have you in any way started to catch yourself juxtaposing ideas while you are doing it, or is that the problem? d) Where do you think you are doing better, and where do you think you are doing less well? e) Have you spent time reading an article very slowly, not to say, 'What are they saying and do I agree with it?', but to say, 'How have they put this together, and how can I imitate that?' f) While you are revising, how many of you revise through past questions? 3. What have you in the last week, or even since the beginning of the year, realised about argumentation? 4. How much do you think you have developed over the last year? 5. Unless you are set work, how much time do you spend on this subject outside of lessons? 6. The work we did last week, do you think you would have understood it, or benefited from it, if we did it earlier on in the year? 7. In reference to teaching argumentation through immersion, or through explicit instruction, which do you think is better?

		8. Does what we did last week in any way gel with what we feel we've been saying to you all year? 9. What do you think would help you for us to do next?
PHASE 3		
SIQ.3.1	Essay feedback 1 4/11/13	No set questions – feedback individual to each student.
SIQ.3.2	Essay feedback 2 11/11/13	No set questions – feedback individual to each student.
PHASE 5		
SIQ.5.1	Feedback Mock	No set questions – general feedback between students and teacher.
SIQ.5.2	Follow-up Interview	Questions set for each student – see separate schedule.

Phase 5 Follow-up Interviews

Original Questions	**Follow-Up Questions**
John	
a) How much revision did you do for each exam?	How are you planning to manage your revision for the final exams?
b) What did you do to prepare for each exam?	Have you started doing this for the final exam? Have you tried any other methods suggested - i.e. Learning the work and then planning out responses to exam questions? Are you thinking about how the information works together or are you just learning the work and hoping the 'how' happens in the exam?
c) How did you feel while sitting each exam?	Which 'second exam' do you mean?
d) What did you expect your result to be? How did that compare with the result that you actually received?	All students - has this affected how you intend to approach the revision for your final exam? If yes, how?
2. Thinking about the structure of the exam papers, what differences do you think there are and has this changed the way you are approaching the work – i.e. note making/ reading/ revision?	How will you do this?
a) What do you find more or less useful?	Why do you think this is different from the written comments?

	Do you look at the final, overarching comment that is given on the mark scheme?
b) What do you do with the feedback?	How do you do this?
c) What do you do to help you fill in areas where you are still struggling to understand the theories and/ or criticisms?	How useful/ successful has this been?
d) Do you see any difference between a 'criticism' and a 'counter-theory'? What do you think that difference is?	Do you think your essays should be producing criticisms, counter theories or both?
e) How do you <u>look for</u> similarities and differences between different philosophers?	How?
f) How do you review work after feedback?	How do you make sure that you incorporate this feedback into the next essay?
g) How do you check to see that your essay is still coherent?	Have you ever tried trying to plot out the shape of YOUR argument in the essay?
a) Do they give essay outlines? If yes, how are these different?	What do you think is inconsistent in the philosophy essays? What do you think is consistent in the essays of other subjects?
b) Do they expect extra reading outside of the lesson?	How much extra reading do you do?
e) How do you go about responding to that feedback?	How do you do this?

a) What do you think might account for this difference?	Can you see a mismatch between what you are saying here and what you think your essay should be about? You want us to tell you what to write in the essay - but you prefer the discussion because it is about what you think. Can you see how the essay is meant to be YOUR ARGUMENT around the material we have studied?
b) What did you incorporate from the session into your essay?	Why not?
c) Is it more than a psychological difference (this is work/ that was fun)?	What do you think would be Plato's response to your comment? What have you done to ENGAGE with the material in the philosophy lessons?
a) Is there a difference in the way it is taught?	Why do you think PP does not teach and critique each theory?
b) Has the subject content made any difference to engagement with the topic?	Why is this? What difference do you think it makes to your engagement with/ understanding of the topic?
c) Has the subject content made any difference to you understanding of the topic?	Has it made a difference to how you approach the essays? Nb. When analysing the essays, I have noticed [Sarah] keeps writing - 'How did he get to this'? This means that she is looking for the content and an analysis of the theory, not just an RS describe the theory, strengths

	and weaknesses. Do you realise this? Have you picked this up from the marking?
d) Did you feel that you had more prior knowledge (in terms of examples, etc.) that you could bring to the subject?	Why?
e) If yes, do you think this has made a difference to your achievement in this subject?	Why?
Lydia	
a) How much revision did you do for each exam?	Why not?
c) How did you feel while sitting each exam?	What do you think is the source of your 'panic'? Do you get to a point where you forget how you are feeling and just concentrate on what you are writing?
e) What strategies did you devise to respond to the result that you received – i.e. what did you do to maintain/ improve your performance?	How do you feel this is going?
2. Thinking about the structure of the exam papers, what differences do you think there are and has this changed the way you are approaching the work – i.e. note making/ reading/ revision?	How is this going?

a) What do you find more or less useful?	Do you not think that the comments and questions given constitute detailed feedback? Why?
b) What do you do with the feedback?	How do you do this?
a) Do they give essay outlines? If yes, how are these different?	Why do you think that we do not give you a clear structure? What do you think is different about theories/ facts?
a) What do you think might account for this difference?	Can you clarify the first bit - I do not understand what you were trying to say.
b) What did you incorporate from the session into your essay?	Why do you think they were different? Would it surprise you to hear that the advice Isabel gave you was closer to the response I would expect from you than from the Year 12s? Do you think you approached this with a pre-conceived assumption? If so, what do you think that was? Do you think this affected how you used the advice?
c) Is it more than a psychological difference (this is work/ that was fun)?	Review this question
a) Is there a difference in the way it is taught?	Why do you think PP does not teach and critique each theory?

b) Has the subject content made any difference to engagement with the topic?	Does this mean that you talk/ contribute more in the discussions? Does this mean that you read more and think about the issues more outside of the lesson? How does it make a difference in how you work?
c) Has the subject content made any difference to you understanding of the topic?	Does this link to the content? Do you feel the same across both the subjects?
Mary	
a) How much revision did you do for each exam?	Why is this?
c) How did you feel while sitting each exam?	What do you think is the source of your confidence/ lack of confidence?
f) How well do you think you have done on the rewrite of your essay?	Do you think you will be able to use that advice to prepare for the actual exam - I.e. In the first exam you planned out essays for every question you could find - if you did this again, would you be able to look at the kind of advice I gave you and use it to assess your practice responses?
2. Thinking about the structure of the exam papers, what differences do you think there are and has this changed the way you are approaching the work – i.e. note making/ reading/ revision?	Why do you think it feels more like a task?

a) What do you find more or less useful?	Do you think that we do this? Why? Are you wanting us to tell you what to write? If so, can you see why that is a problem in philosophy?
b) What do you do with the feedback?	How do you do this?
a) Do they give essay outlines? If yes, how are these different?	What do you mean by 'the whole structure'? Why do you think that this is not given to you in Philosophy? Why do you think that the feedback you get in philosophy is not 'clear'? Are you wanting us to tell you what the answer should be? Can you see that in philosophy this would mean that we would have to tell you what to think?
d) What sort of feedback do they give to essays/ work?	Why do you think this is different from what you get in philosophy?
b) What did you incorporate from the session into your essay?	In what way did you use it to structure your essay?
c) Is it more than a psychological difference (this is work/ that was fun)?	Why do you think this makes a difference? What kind of difference do you think this makes?
a) Is there a difference in the way it is taught?	Why do you think this is?

b) Has the subject content made any difference to engagement with the topic?	Which do you find more interesting? What extra work, and how much, do you actually do?
c) Has the subject content made any difference to you understanding of the topic?	Have you found the moral easier because you are more familiar with moral ideas, or the pp easier because you listen to the news?
d) Did you feel that you had more prior knowledge (in terms of examples, etc.) that you could bring to the subject?	What did you know before?
Ruth	
a) How much revision did you do for each exam?	How long before the mock did you start revising?
b) What did you do to prepare for each exam?	Are you leaving the extra reading to the last minute? Is this because you have not done the extra reading as you have gone along? Are you looking for 'quick fix' ideas or are you trying to get your head around the information? Do you use past exam questions to help you think through the theories in each section?
c) How did you feel while sitting each exam?	Have you practices doing this as part of your revision?
f) How well do you think you have done on the rewrite of your essay?	Do you plan your essay in the exam?

	Have you analysed how you write in the exam - i.e. could you write more succinctly?
a) What do you find more or less useful?	Is this more or less useful? Why?
b) What do you do with the feedback?	Do you rewrite the essay, or rewrite parts of it? If not, what do you do?
a) Do they give essay outlines? If yes, how are these different?	How is the instruction given different?
a) What do you think might account for this difference?	Why do you think this makes a difference?
c) Is it more than a psychological difference (this is work/ that was fun)?	Why? Can you expand on this?
a) Is there a difference in the way it is taught?	Why do you think [Sarah's] side does not deal with 'themes'? We do topic by topic/ ideology by ideology - why do you think this is different from philosopher by philosopher? Why do you think you cannot 'just learn' what each philosopher/ ideology says about each topic?
b) Has the subject content made any difference to engagement with the topic?	Which do you find more interesting? Why? What difference does it make in terms of what you ACTUALLY DO in the subject?
c) Has the subject content made any difference to you understanding of the topic?	Can you comment further, making a comparison between the two sides of the course?

d) Did you feel that you had more prior knowledge (in terms of examples, etc.) that you could bring to the subject?	Does your prior knowledge of specific examples differ between the two topics?

Teachers' Reflection Questions – Diaries and Analysis of Work

Code	Period	Questions
TRQ.1.1	**PHASE 1** Post-January 2012 examination	1. Do students respond to feedback comments? 2. Do students <u>only</u> respond to feedback comments? 3. Is there evidence that students make notes during class feedback? 4. Is there evidence that students incorporate ideas from feedback into new work? 5. Is there evidence that students change their work in the light of class feedback?
TRQ.2.1	**PHASE 2**	Free reflection on teaching and students' learning and progress.

Appendix 9: Tool to Analyse Teachers' Written Feedback (Hyland, 1990; Hyland & Hyland, 2001; Concepción, 2014; Stump, undated)

Code	Type of feedback
	In-text Comments:
	ASSESSMENT OF ARGUMENT:
M1	Acknowledge thesis – state what expectations follow
M2	Comment if there is too much in the thesis
M3	Comment if the introductory paragraph contains too much beyond the thesis
M4	Identify main premises that student has used to support thesis. Comment on 'key moves'.
M5	Do the premises entail the thesis?
M6	Comment on whether the conclusion pulls together the argument?
	ASSESSMENT OF CONTENT:
	Comments that give information:
M7	Praise – attribute credit (more than agreement)
	Criticism – identify fault (more than disagreement)
M8	- Clear suggestion for revision
M9	- Contains criticism and suggestion
M10	- Demonstrates good argumentation.
M11	- Explicate implications that follow from errors.
M12	- Contains revision relative to the current essay
M13	- Contains revision relative to future essays
M14	Comments that give suggestions/ instructions

	Comments that ask for information:
M15	Directed questions asking for known information.
M16	Directed questions to challenge thinking.
	Summative Comments:
M17	Identify strengths
	Identify one major mistake:
M18	- Argument is not compelling
M19	- writing is too muddled
M20	- student has not understood the assignment
	Give a suggestion for improvement:
M21	- Is everything necessary for the argument? (relevance)
M22	- Next time plan argument in detail before writing
M23	*Summary of suggestions/ instructions*
M23.1	- analysis
M23.2	- detail
M23.3	- evaluation
M23.4	- examples critiqued
M23.5	- examples included
M23.6	- implications
M23.7	- keywords
M23.8	- links
M23.9	- precision
M23.10	- relevance
M23.11	- synoptic

Appendix 10: Informed Consent

EdD RESEARCH PROJECT

Identifying Problems with Argumentation: An Interventionist Case Study Aimed at Improving the Teaching and Learning of Argumentation in Philosophy at Advanced Level.

Information sheet for Students

Who is doing the research?
Mrs K Stephens is undertaking research into the development of argumentation skills in Philosophy at Advanced Level as part of an EdD Thesis at the University of Leicester.

What is the purpose of the research?
Over the last 4 years the department has worked diligently in Philosophy to improve results and help students develop their argumentation skills in Philosophy. This has been particularly important with the implementation of a new AQA Syllabus which has emphasised the need for students to demonstrate this skill in order to access the higher grades. To date very little research has been carried out into the teaching and learning of argumentation in Philosophy at Advanced Level. This study aims to provide further insight into the effectiveness of different teaching and learning methods, with an emphasis on what the students find more or less helpful in this subject and the possibility of developing new teaching and learning methods, thereby assisting the current students as well as contributing to further research and the development of the subject in the future.

Who is being invited to participate?
As students of the current Year 12 cohort, you are being asked to participate in a case study that will track your progress through to the final examination in Year 13. Mrs Stephens, with the help of [Sarah], will conduct the research as participant observers, meaning that data will be collected through discussions with students in semi-structured and non-structured interviews, some of which may be recorded in order to assist in the collection and analysis of observed lessons and interviews. Your work will be analysed and your development recorded and discussed with you. This may include requesting copies of your examination scripts (at no cost to you) for the purpose of analysis and to track progress.

While the research will not make any direct difference to how students are taught, as the use of a range of teaching and learning methods is automatically part of the teaching and learning process, it is anticipated that the research project will encourage you as students to reflect on your learning, leading to improved performance and results. The

research intends to involve the students in all aspects of the research by employing a participatory approach.

Obtaining consent

You are asked to indicate your consent to be part of this research, but you can choose how long you wish to take part, with the option to withdraw from participation at any point. You may also choose whether to participate in the group discussions or in individual interviews and feedback sessions. Not participating in the research will in no way influence the standard of teaching received and you may withdraw from the research at any time without it having any effect on your continued learning.

Confidentiality

Although the school has agreed to be named in the final thesis, all information that is collected during the research will be anonymised in any reports or publications arising from the research. Any video recordings will only be viewed by Mrs Stephens and [Sarah], and will be kept in a secure location. However, it is recognised that as participant subjects in this study you may wish to make reference to your involvement in your UCAS statements or university interviews. Therefore, continued anonymity cannot be ensured. To compensate for this, all students and other relevant parties will have the opportunity to comment on any conclusions prior to publication as part of the participatory nature of the research.

The Data Protection Act will be adhered to with all material stored in a locked filing cabinet or safe. A child protection policy is in place that will be followed as standard procedure during the research.

The project has the full support and consent of the Headmaster and the Senior Leadership Team.

Contact Information

If you would like more information about the research project please contact;

Mrs K Stephens

Consent Form

Identifying Problems with Argumentation: An Interventionist Case Study Aimed at Improving the Teaching and Learning of Argumentation in Philosophy at Advanced Level.

Name of Researcher Mrs K Stephens

	Please initial
1. I…….. confirm that I have read and understood the information sheets enclosed and had any questions about the research answered to my satisfaction **(participant)**	
2. I give my consent to take part in the study and understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time without it affecting my participation in the research **(participant)**	

Name of person participating in study …….. (Print name)

Signature ……..……
Date…….

Appendix 11: Matrix – Research Questions against Data Analysis

Themes	How do students and teachers define doing philosophy?									What aspects of doing philosophy do students and teachers find problematic and unproblematic?							What range of strategies do students find more or less successful around doing philosophy?								What range of strategies do teachers consider more or less successful for supporting students around doing philosophy?							TOTALS
	1.1.	1.2	1.3	1.4	2.1	3.1	4.1	5.1	5.2	1.5	2.2	3.2	3.3	4.2	5.3	5.4	1.6	2.3	3.4	3.5	4.3	4.4	5.5	5.6	1.7	2.4	3.6	3.7	4.5	5.7	5.8	
A. DEMANDS OF THE EXAMINATION RUBRIC																																
	x	x	x	x																												**4**
B. DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGIES																																
B1. STRUCTURING ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS																																
Request for Structure										x		x							x													**3**
Writing Frames						x											x		x				x		x		x					**6**
Planning						x						x							x						x		x			x		**6**
B2. RESPONSE TO TEACHERS' FEEDBACK																																
Teachers' Feedback													x				x			x					x			x				**5**
Post Marking Review													x				x	x		x			x		x			x		x		**8**
Common Errors													x				x			x												**3**
B3. STUDENTS' INDEPENDENT WORK STRATEGIES																																
Independent Reading/ Work							x							x							x	x		x					x	x	x	**8**
Self-Assessment/ Review														x								x							x			**3**
Revision/ Prep for Exams							x									x								x							x	**4**
Concerns with Time													x			x					x	x		x								**5**
C. DEVELOPMENT OF ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING																																
C1. INTRODUCTIONS AND THESIS																																
Introductions					x	x																				x	x					**4**
Thesis										x	x				x			x								x	x					**6**
Conclusions					x	x				x																x	x					**5**
C2. KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THEORIES																																
Philosophers and Themes					x	x			x																							**3**
Depth and Detail					x	x		x	x						x								x							x		**7**
Synoptic Element					x	x			x																							**3**
C3. ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION																																
Examples					x	x		x	x						x								x							x		**7**
Analysis/ Assessment/ Criticality					x	x		x	x						x								x							x		**7**
Relevance/ Language/ Links					x	x			x		x							x								x						**6**
TOTALS	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**8**	**10**	**2**	**3**	**6**	**3**	**2**	**2**	**4**	**2**	**4**	**2**	**4**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**3**	**5**	**3**	**4**	**4**	**5**	**2**	**2**	**6**	**2**	

Appendix 12: Writing Frames

Phase 3

KAS.Frame.3.1

Explain and assess anarchism as a political Ideology.

Possible outline

Introduction

Explain why ideological ideas are essentially contestable, and why these contests exist between versions of the same ideology (i.e. why do we have 3 types of anarchism).

Explain briefly the main ideas or concepts of anarchism, and pick out those that are contested.

Lay out which contested concepts you are going to discuss in this essay (i.e. pick your themes).

Force your position:

- Anarchism as an ideology does not work
- Anarchism as an ideology has problems but one or more of the versions puts forward a better argument
- Anarchism as an ideology can work, but only under certain conditions
- Parts of anarchism are valid, but as ideology has problems
- One or more of the versions of anarchism could work but the others have problems

[You cannot know what this position is going to be until you have assessed the different ideas!]

Paragraph 1 **Paragraph 2** **Paragraph 3**	See the notes on the next page for ideas and layout for each of the paragraphs.

Conclusion

Pull together the mini conclusions from the paragraphs above. Make sure that you have not deviated from what you said in your introduction (if, in the process of doing the analysis, you have realised new or different things about the introduction, CHANGE THE INTRODUCTION). The final statement of your conclusion should reach the same conclusion as the position that you laid out in the final statement of your introduction.

Step one — look at the general notes and the individual versions of anarchism and try to pick out themes:

For example:

Anarchism generally states that the power and control of the states violates individual liberty.

For each theme:

- Discuss this idea in general from the first section of notes
- Look at the different versions and see WHAT EXACTLY they say about THIS THEME:
    - Philosophical anarchism — Godwin emphasises the idea of private judgement, reaching the conclusion that only we can decide what is best for ourselves and only we can impose duties upon ourselves. Through the idea of Act Utilitarianism (synoptic link), moral and political improvement will occur.
    - Individualist anarchism — emphasise individual sovereignty, but without the supporting idea of individual judgement. This version seems to be based on a mix of self-interest and respect for the autonomy of others, but does not explain how clashes between these ideas might be resolved.
    - Communist anarchism — emphasises solidarity between individuals rather than the competition that results from capitalism. The idea of individual sovereignty is rejected (as a product of the state), and liberty is interpreted as a condition where everyone has the opportunity to have their needs and desires met.
- For each of these, discuss (through examples from daily life, news, books, psychology, history, etc.) the merit of the ideas.
    - Look at the general arguments against and counter-arguments for anarchism for ideas
    - Is there evidence to support or reject the ideas — i.e. Is it our experience that people can work out what is best for their lives? Is there a difference between paying agencies or voting in governments to resolve conflicts?
    - Do the parts of the ideology work — i.e. Does self-interest and respect for others' autonomy work together? Does the idea of solidarity without centralised rule work?
    - Look for assumptions, assertions, circular reasoning. Can you think of counter-examples? Is their argument time-bound (i.e. it may be true for some periods in history, but not all - necessary/ contingent arguments).
- Reach a conclusion on the THEME. Looking at the different versions of the theme, and weighing up the strengths and weaknesses:
    - Does the idea work?
    - Does the idea in one of the versions work better than another?
    - Would a combination of two or more of the versions be better?
    - Would one version, with some modifications, work better?

SAS.Frame.3.2

'Naturalist theories argue successfully for moral truth' Discuss	
Position to force:	Naturalist theories are able to overcome the two key challenges brought against them by showing that their arguments do not fall prey to the criticisms
Arguments to use:	Examples of naturalist theories: Hedonism (Mill); Ethical Egoism Moore's Naturalistic Fallacy & Intuitionism Hume's Law
Introduction:	Use this to set out the tone of the essay and explain the demands of the question What do we mean (briefly) by a naturalist theory? What does the concept of 'moral truth' apply to? Link this to the cognitivist/non-cognitivist debate (realism/anti-realism) Introduce your position - what are you going to argue for? What can we expect your essay to do?
Introduction of the naturalist theories:	Explain how naturalism attempts to argue for moral truth. This needs to be a detailed look at what naturalism is - the theory and the theory in practice. To inject greater detail include more than one example of a naturalist theory.
The main body of your argument:	This becomes the point at which you start to use your material to argue for your position. There are two implications of naturalism: 1. It is autonomous, therefore we can use facts about the world to make moral judgements 2. It allows us to define 'good' Use examples to demonstrate both of these implications
The two implications:	In turn look at the two implications and evaluate them - in what state is naturalism left as a result of these implications? Do they leave the theory vulnerable or are they a strength of the theory?
Implication 1	Moore's response An evaluation of Moore's response Where does your argument leave naturalism?
Implication 2	Hume's Law What is the issue for naturalism? An evaluation of Hume's Law Where does your argument leave naturalism?
Conclusion:	What have you shown? What is your answer to the question you have been asked? Where ultimately does this leave naturalism?

KAS.Frame.3.3

'Human Nature is such that Political Authority is Necessary.'

Introduction

Explain how you have interpreted the question and which philosophers or ideologies you are going to use to answer the question. It should make clear what the 3 main parts of our essay are going to be about.

NOTE: I have told you to answer this from a conservative perspective, which will tend to limit what you will use. However, you can state which ideologies or philosophers you will use to respond. Try to make it sound natural, though.

Stilted	Better
I am going to show that humans are self-seeking which results in chaos and violence. I will use Hobbes' theory of the state of nature to show this. Liberals might argue that humans are rational and cooperative but I will counter this with arguments from Hobbes, Burke and Hume.	Humans are self-seeking with a potential for violence and chaos. Hobbes argues that life in a stateless society would be 'nasty, brutish and short', making a strong and stable state essential. Arguments from Burke and Hume, although emphasising different perspectives, support this view, highlighting the flaws in the Liberal view which emphasises social cooperation.

This is just a sample of what you may want to say in your essay – it is demonstrating a way of writing.

Themes to discuss:

Human Nature

Concentrate on the arguments made by the different philosophers for human nature (based on the state of nature). You can use Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau. You can contrast this with modern ideologies such as conservatism, Hume, Nietzsche and what they say about human nature. If possible, include something from Plato.

Notice – you could agree that the state of nature thought experiments have problems BUT looking at modern humans the conservatives seem to have the right idea. You don't have to agree with everything that these philosophers said, but:

- Look carefully at how they differ and discuss their strengths and weaknesses
- come up with reasons from these philosophers and conservative ideology to reach the conclusion that humans are self-interested and grasping and that left to their own devices they would end in chaos and violence

The group

Locke and Mill emphasise the individual over the group. As a conservative you need to argue that the individual will only flourish when part of a cohesive group. You will emphasise Hobbes' view, but bring in support from Hume, Burke, Nietzsche. Again, draw out what is different or similar in what they are saying, assess these differences, and draw together a conclusion from the bits that support a conservative argument.

Note, when contrasting with Locke, Mill, Rousseau, they all acknowledge the importance of the group but assume that the group will be better served when individuality is emphasised. As a conservative you will not agree with that – go through the notes and work out why this is.

Make sure your conclusions link back to what you said about human nature. The reasons why the individual does better in a cohesive group must match what you have said about the individual.

Political Authority

Based on what you have said, what kind of political authority are you arguing for? Contrast this with the kind of political authority that the liberals or Rousseau would want, explaining why it is not just political authority that is required, but a strong political authority.

You could also contrast with the anarchists who are not against authority in itself, but against political authority. What is the difference, and why would a conservative argue that it must be political authority? Bring out the necessity, linking to Hobbes' view that a bad leader is better than no leader, of Nietzsche's view that without a strong leader the 'herd' would have no direction, or Plato or Hume's arguments. Give reasons why this is necessary not just desirable.

Linking your argument to the conclusions that you made about human nature and the group in the previous paragraphs creates the link to the previous points and to the question. Your reasons in each paragraph need to match each other.

Conclusion

In the introduction you will have stated what you are going to show. In the conclusion draw together the mini-conclusions from the previous sections to make it clear that you have demonstrated that you set out to do.

Phase 4

KAS.Frame.4.1

To what extent is any state an instrument of oppression?	
General outline to consider when doing your reading and research	Notes from Reading
Position to force: Liberal view: Purpose of state; types of liberty; types of social progress	
Arguments to use: Locke → Mill: Hobbes → Burke: Anarchist: Plato: Berlin (liberty):	
Introduction: Use this to set out the tone of the essay and explain the demands of the question	
Introduction of the main theories/ themes: What do each of the philosophers say? Why? How do they justify their arguments?	
The main body of your argument: When looking at the notes on the different philosophers and theories, what themes/ ideas keep coming up? Remember these may not be expressed in the same words: Mill talks about self-actualisation of the individual and role of geniuses in driving forward progress/ Plato talks about justice in society – the common theme here is the place of the individual and definitions of individual/ social progress. You have to look at everything they say in order to be able to spot and pull out these common themes.	
The themes and their implications: In what way do the different conceptualizations (interpretations) of the ideas and the way they work together affect the conclusions that the philosophers are able to reach? Look for similarities and differences, and how they affect the overall argument of each philosopher.	
Theme → Implication 1	

To what extent is any state an instrument of oppression?	
Theme → Implication 2	
Conclusion: What have you shown? What is your answer to the question you have been asked? What does this ultimately say about the purpose of the state?	

What extra reading have you done? (This could include listening to podcasts, etc.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Questions to discuss in lesson:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What examples have you taken from the news that will be used to help explore these ideas?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Phase 5

KAS.Frame.5.1

Evaluate the libertarian view that redistribution of property by the state can never be justified

STEP 1: Introduction:

- Introduce the main ideas that are contained in the section
- Position the view contained in the question within those ideas
- Tentatively decide what I think I am going to argue for

STEP 2: The main theory of the essay

Using the title, what is the bulk of the theory that needs to be discussed? In this case it is Nozick. However, at each point, I stopped to look back at the question and make sure that I was **WORDING** the theory in such a way as to respond to the question – i.e. not just summarise Nozick, but summarise why he thinks that the redistribution of property by the state can never be justified.

Using a table, I outlined the main steps of his argument. (I used a table as that is the easiest way I can think of to insert discussion **NEXT TO** the points where it is relevant.

STEP 3: Checked that I have gone in the direction that I thought I was going, and write the conclusion. This is not a restatement of what has been said. It is an attempt to clarify what exactly is wrong with the theory.

a) It has ignored some important points.
b) It is relying on moral or theoretical ideas to support some of its points, but these same moral and theoretical ideas are ignored in other areas of the theory – it is incoherent.

STEP 4:

Have I really argued for the points that I have put into my conclusion, or are some of them a bit thin? Extra reading, extra examples, extra explanation can add more support to those areas, but at this point I probably do not want to be adding too many NEW things to the argument.

SAS.Frame.5.2

'Always act so as to produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number.'
Using a practical moral problem of your choice, discuss whether utilitarianism provides an effective guide to action.
(50 marks)

Act Utilitarianism

Identify one strength of Act Utilitarianism. In the box below do the following:

- Explain the strength – use technical language.
- Explain (using an illustration of abortion) why this enables the theory to be seen as an effective guide to action – you need to be able to illustrate why this is a strength when making this particular decision
- Evaluate whether or not there could be any potential weaknesses to this 'strength', i.e. is it reliant upon something else which is flawed? Where does this leave the theory?

abortion →

① strength → it is teleological meaning the consequences are what determines an action to be right or wrong. This is a strength because abortion is very situationalist.

② woman A is 30 and pregnant because she was too lazy to buy contraception. Woman B is 16 and pregnant because she was raped and if she continues the pregnancy she may die. These are very different situations, and using a theory that considers consequences will help to choose the best outcome in each situation rather than treat all situations the same.

③ we can't always predict the consequences, so we can't ever know for certain how much happiness a certain action may bring.

Rule Utilitarianism

Identify one weakness of Rule Utilitarianism. In the box below do the following:

- Explain the weakness – again ensure you use technical language
- Explain (using an illustration) whether or not this hinders a person trying to make a moral decision
- Can the weakness be overcome in anyway? i.e. is there a response to this weakness? Can the theory be adjusted in anyway?
- Where does this weakness leave the theory in terms of its usefulness for effective decision making?

① weakness → by applying the same moral rule to all situations the theory almost becomes deontological, and it raises the question of what to do if we have a situation where the rule does not work/apply.

② it can hinder making a moral decision. e.g. if the rule was that abortion is okay in cases of rape, that may not be a useful rule to help a woman who was not raped, but whose life is threatened by the pregnancy.

③ we could respond to it by making up as many rules as necessary to cover all/most situations.

④ even with this weakness the theory stays strong, because having rules makes decision making easier, and as for 'exceptions to the rule' we could just have more than one rule to encompass these people.

SAS.Frame.5.3

'Always act so as to produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number.'
Using a practical moral problem of your choice, discuss whether utilitarianism provides an effective guide to action.

(50 marks)

Position:	Utilitarianism is an ineffective guide to action because its recommendations are not always moral
Introduction:	The theory may be described as teleological and hedonistic. The quotation is to be identified with the utility principle and/or act utilitarianism, and the view that the moral worth of each action is to be determined by its contribution to the sum total of human happiness. It can also, however, be identified with Rule and Preference utilitarianism.
A strength of AU is:	Act Utilitarianism is teleological in nature – an action is determined to be right or wrong depending upon the consequences it brings. It is sensitive to the demands of particular situations since it requires consideration of the real life consequence of our actions which are objective and measurable .Allows for an individualistic approach which is a strength for abortion – a situation where no two cases are likely to be similar. Give an example to demonstrate this. Feminists – allows a woman to truly consider her options and those of the people involved, e.g. career over a child – thereby giving rights to women in an area where previously many have felt their rights have been denied.
However, whilst we can accept the benefits there are certain flaws:	However, this raises two key problems. (1) How do you predict the consequences of an unborn child's life? Give example to demonstrate this. Act utilitarianism demands of us that we predict the greatest possible happiness for the greatest number – how is this possible in an issue as complex as abortion. Removes certainty from the decision. The Hedonic Calculus attempts to ease this problem – and yet its practical application is seriously flawed. Example of abortion to be used here to demonstrate the impracticality of the calculus – e.g. how do I know for how long I am going to be happy if I choose to have an abortion? In what quantity do I measure this? The use of a calculus is also likely to be challenge by Pro-Life groups – can we really discuss the future life of a child by reducing it to numbers? Does this reduce the value we place on life?
In addition to this we also see the problem of:	(2) Means-ends reasoning can be used to justify committing immoral acts. Some actions are always wrong regardless of the good that may come of them (e.g. using abortion as contraception). Act utilitarianism seems to allow 'immoral' acts to be classified as moral due to the desirable outcome they bring. Use example to demonstrate. Does this violate moral common sense? The fact that many political systems seem to adopt the utilitarian approach suggests when used correctly it does work. Perhaps this is when used by a government as opposed to individuals. What implications are there for accepting that 'immoral' acts are moral?

Perhaps the issue of means-end reasoning can be addressed with Rule Utilitarianism:	Rule utilitarianism is a form of utilitarianism that says an action is right as it conforms to a rule that leads to the greatest good. For rule utilitarians, the correctness of a rule is determined by the amount of good it brings about when followed. Perhaps rules can ensure that utilitarianism is followed correctly rather than leaving it to the interpretation of individuals, e.g. 'to only abort a child when it is the most loving thing to do for that child'.
And yet the concept of rules seems to go against the utilitarian principle:	If you insist the rules are followed even when it can be shown that breaking the rule would bring about the greatest good for the greatest number then you end up with a Deontological theory. Give an example to demonstrate this. You then lose the strength of utilitarianism – its flexibility. But if you break the rules to bring about the greatest good for the greatest number then you end up back at Act utilitarianism and nothing has been gained. Example to demonstrate.