Features of Mediated Learning Experience in the Values Education of Children in Quaker Children's Meetings and Their Significance

by

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Abstract

This thesis analyses approaches to the transmission of values in British Quaker Children's Meetings which are situated within the broader context of values education focusing particularly on points of contact with Reuven Feuerstein's Mediated Learning Experience theory. It attempts to answers the question of how far and, if so, why these approaches coincide with the principles of Mediated Learning Experience which is an approach to teaching based on similar values to those espoused by Quakerism.

The theoretical part of the thesis first discusses Feuerstein's approach to teaching in a general sense in the context of the cognitive theories of Jean Piaget, Lev S. Vygotsky, and Jerome S. Bruner, and then points out its relevance to the field of values education, examining its roots in Jewish culture and comparing it with the cognitive developmental approach, character education, and the sociocultural approach. The practical part presents the results of a qualitative research study conducted through semi-structured interviews with 28 leaders of Quaker Children's Meetings in Britain, which were analysed using the principles of thematic analysis and grounded theory.

Analysis of the interviews shows significant parallels between the reported approaches to teaching values identified in Quaker Children's Meetings and the principles of Mediated Learning Experience. In addition to elements of the Mediated Learning Experience, important emphases such as the mediation of silence, listening, and respect were identified in the Quaker Children's Meeting setting that have relevance in a range of non-Quaker settings.

The research, arguably, will provide insights into the work of Quaker Children's Meeting leaders, indicating an example of a context in which Mediated Learning Experience principles are implicitly enacted and their use in values education. The thesis seeks to make a contribution to the current debate concerning approaches to the teaching of values through an analysis of the various conceptions and a search for their points of contact.

Key words: values, values education, Quaker Children’s Meetings, Mediated Learning Experience, Feuerstein’s method

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Abbreviations

CoRT – Cognitive Research Trust

(F)IE – (Feuerstein's) Instrumental Enrichment

Int. - Interview

LPAD - Learning Propensity Assessment Device

MLE – Mediated Learning Experience

P4C – Philosophy for Children

SCM – Structural cognitive modifiability

ZPD – Zones of proximal development

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1 Introduction

Values education is a topic that has been addressed by humanity since ancient times. To this day, not only the values to pass on to the next generation but also the ways to do so are still being discussed. With this thesis, I want to contribute to this discussion, turning attention to Quakerism, a religious community based on Christian roots that can be characterised as significantly value-oriented, and also the Mediated Learning Experience according to Reuven Feuerstein, as a way of teaching used in various contexts, including teaching values.

In this chapter I explain the topic of the thesis, its background, context and significance. I outline the main points of the thesis, how they are related and how they will be further developed. I state the research questions, research objectives and potential significance of the research, and explain the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Research Background and Its Purpose

The focus of my research is to compare the values, principles and practices of Feuerstein's approach to education with the ways in which Quakers educate their children. In my experience as a teacher trained in the Feuerstein Method and as a leader of a Quaker Children's Meeting, I recognised that the core values of the Quakers are similar to the values behind Feuerstein's work, which led me to the fundamental question of whether, given the similarity of values, there is also a similarity of practices in the transmission of those values and whether the two traditions can learn from each other.

The first impetus for my research was a study by Shmuel Feuerstein (brother of Reuven), ˈBiblical and Talmudic Antecedents of Mediated Learning Experience Theoryˈ (2002), which presents R. Feuerstein's theories in the context of values education with reference to the Jewish culture on which Feuerstein's approach is based. In his study, Sh. Feuerstein presents Feuerstein's approach to teaching, the Mediated Learning Experience (MLE), as an integral part of cultural transmission and points out the criteria of mediation that apply to values education in all cultures. It was this idea that inspired my research. I decided to focus on a culture different from the Jewish one and to verify to what extent the criteria of MLE are spontaneously used in this culture. For my research, I chose the Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers,

which I recognized as an environment strongly oriented towards values perceived as “principles determining individual's actions and behaviour” (Dandelion, 2007). Moreover, Quakers strive to apply their principles not only in their personal lives but also in society as a whole. They have contributed, and are still contributing, to humanity in various ways, especially in the areas of peaceful conflict resolution and a responsible approach to life on Earth (Durham, 2013). They have also applied their values in the field of business and education (Newton, 2016; Read, 2019).

Specifically, I focus on Quaker Children's Meetings, programmes for children that run concurrently with the Quaker Worship for adults. This is an informal learning environment for children. I chose this setting for two reasons. The first and essential reason is that Quaker values are central to explicit and implicit teaching in this setting, so Quaker Children´s Meetings are an environment offering valuable insight into approaches to values education. The second reason is that Quaker Children's Meetings within Britain Yearly Meeting have so far been under-researched, although there is very significant work with children within them. A sub-goal of my work, then, is to make Quaker Children's Meetings more visible and to highlight their significance both within and beyond the context of Quakerism itself.

Having defined the target group of my research, I formulated the main research question: To what extent are the principles of MLE manifested in the transmission of values in Quaker Children's Meetings? Then, I formulated further sub-questions to help me in my search for answers to the main question:

- What approaches do Quakers use to teach values to children in Children's Meetings? Why do they use these approaches?
- How do they work to develop children's understanding of Quakerism and what it stands for?
- How do Quakers transmit their values to children so that the values become principles?
- Are there any features of MLE in their teaching and education approaches? If yes, which ones and why these in particular?
- How are these MLE features generally operationalised in practice – if there is any generality?

I have based my research on a detailed analysis of the principles of Mediated Learning Experience in the context of teaching values, and on an examination of the extent to which these principles coincide with the approaches to transmitting values to children in Quaker Children's Meetings.

In order to answer my research questions, I first analysed in detail the principles of Mediated Learning Experience in the context of values education (chapter 2 and 3). I then drew on the literature to analyse the Quaker approach to formal and informal learning (chapter 4). Subsequently, I prepared and implemented my practical research (chapter 5) and then I analysed the self-reported work of the leaders of Children's Meetings (chapter 6), which I gathered information about through semi-structured interviews, and finally I compared the results of both analyses (chapter 7). I then compared the findings of my research with the theoretical part and discussed the results (chapter 8). In the last chapter (chapter 9), I summarized my entire research.

1.2 Context of the Thesis

1.2.1 Mediated Learning Experience as a Means of Cultural Transmission

The concept of Mediated Learning Experience as expounded by Feuerstein is mainly encountered in the literature in the context of cognitive development when it is used in work with individuals with cognitive deficits. However, Feuerstein et al. characterize MLE principally as "the primary mechanism for cultural transmission" (Feuerstein et al., 2006, p. 88), whereby information is mediated to the individual that would otherwise be unavailable to them. They argue that mediation is an important characteristic of humanity determined by the fundamental need to transmit oneself both biologically and spiritually, which includes the transmission of values, morals and culturally determined ways of behaving:

> "The mediator attempts to transmit him/herself, in a parallel way to biological transmission, to the next generation. This is a basic human individual and cultural need, which takes two forms. The first is the awareness in the human being of his/her limited biological existence and the strong propensity to see oneself continued biologically. The second but equally strong need is to see oneself continued in a spiritual existence. This can be observed even in those people who do not show a highly spiritual side to their lives. The biological and genetic/chromosomal ontogeny may be limited, but human

> development can be enriched by the socio-cultural, or environmental ontogeny." (ibid., p. 62-63)

At the same time, the authors place very high demands on the mediator in the sense that they ask them

> "to give priority over intrinsic importance to strategic goals that transcend time and space, self and others, in order to create a mediated reality from which the learner themselves will benefit" (ibid., p. 76).

The aim is to mediate the *need* to create one's own value system rather than to convey the mediator's personal values, beliefs or convictions, which may not always be what the mediatee wants to follow in their own life. Therefore, the originality of MLE in the context of values education lies in the fact that it does not offer specific procedures or values that children should adopt, but principles that can lead individuals to think autonomously and create their own value system. I will argue that on this point the MLE has much common with Quakerism. This is because Quakerism is strongly value-oriented, with values being understood as principles that determine an individual's behaviour and actions, and it is up to each individual to decide which values to adopt and how specifically to put those values into practice.

1.2.2 History and Characteristics of Quakerism

Quakerism is a religious movement that originated as a Christian denomination in 17th century England. Its origins are closely associated with George Fox, who is often considered its founder, although his ambition was not to create a new sect but rather "to reform human hearts and eventually the church" (Taylor et al., 2000). On his spiritual journey, Fox experienced a moment when he realized that no mediator in the person of scholar or preacher or pastor was able to answer his questions about the spiritual life and that the only one who could give him satisfactory answers was Jesus Christ himself who could speak directly to him (Dandelion, 2007). The unmediated experience of the spiritual life has been expressed in terms such as 'that of God in everyone', 'the seed of Light' or eventually 'the seed of Christ' (Weening et al., 1995) and is the essence of Quakerism to this day.

During Fox's lifetime, Quakerism spread from England to America. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were a period of insularity within the Society of Friends and also a period of insularity towards society (ibid.; Dandelion, 2018). For example: they used

'thou' (singular) to address everyone equally as opposed to the use of 'you' (plural) which was the conventional way to address superiors in a deferential manner; they wore a distinctive, plain style of dress; they refused to take oaths on the Bible; they educated children in their own schools. These so-called Testimonies, which were supposed to be outward evidence of internal change, gradually ended up as external forms that dominated over spiritual content. Testimonies that originally came from the hearts of people began to acquire external authority. Dandelion (2007) writes in this context:

> "The aspects of the religious life that had once been the consequences of spiritual experience, such as plain dress and plain speech, became part of a code of behaviour and consumption which was used to try to defend the spiritual. What had been consequences of the faith became rules of the faith" (p. 66).

Over time, Quakerism has undergone a series of splits that have resulted in a variety of styles and types of Quakerism (Angell and Dandelion, 2013). Today, most Quakers in the world are evangelical, which resulted from the Religious Society of Friends becoming evangelical in the mid-18th century until the Manchester Conference in 1895, when liberalism prevailed in Britain and parts of North America (Hugh and Frost, 1998). Because I have focused my research on Quakers in Britain, in the following sections of my thesis, unless I indicate otherwise, the terms Quakers and Quakerism refer to the liberal branch of the movement. Many contemporary liberal Quakers consider themselves as Universalists open to, and promoting dialogue between, diverse religions because in their conception

> "religious experience has a universal character, which is the core of all the world's religions, and all religious experience is culturally determined" (Spencer, 2013, p. 155).

Therefore, contemporary liberal Quakers include deeply religious Christians, but also, for example, Jewish Quakers, Buddhist Quakers, or even atheists or non-theists. What unites them is their approach to worship and Quaker values. My research among Quakers (see chapter 6) suggests that Quaker values, access to people and ˈGodˈ, and the concept of the religion as a group are the main aspects that draw individuals into the community.

Quaker spirituality is based on the idea that anyone can encounter God directly, without any intermediary (Dandelion, 2018). Therefore, a personal experience with God is

more important to Quakers than a list of creeds or dogmas. The silent service is an opportunity to be quiet and 'centred' together. During silence, anyone can be addressed by God and hear this as a thought for themselves or for the whole congregation (Durham, 2013). Such a touch from God cannot go unanswered. Dandelion (2018) argues:

> "we cannot be touched by the divine and stay as we were, that this kind of encounter is essentially and necessarily transforming. We are spiritually transformed in order to go out into the world to help transform it. Our daily life is our testimony to our experience of spiritual encounter."

Although Quakers define themselves as opposed to ritual, they do have their customary practices relating particularly to 'Meeting for Worship'. Quaker worship takes place in quiet anticipation of an encounter with God. Friends also talk about seeking the inward Light (Durham, 2013). The silence may be broken by a spoken ministry by anyone in the Meeting. The rule is that after the ministry has been heard, silence is restored; the next spoken ministry, if any, should not immediately follow. The individual's internal decision whether to speak aloud to others is also governed by certain recommended rules, whereby the individual first examines themselves to see whether the thought that has occurred to themselves is really intended for others or for themselves alone (ibid.).

The behaviour and attitudes of Quakers, not only in Worship but in their whole lives, should therefore be the result of God's guidance on an individual and collective level, and are referred to by the term 'Testimony', i.e. Quaker values, an important concept that I develop in detail in chapter 4.

1.3 The Potential Significance of the Research

I hope the thesis will make a contribution in several respects. First of all, it is of use among British Quakers, and perhaps more widely in the international Quaker community, in that it examines the ways in which Quakers seek to mediate their values to children within their community. It may then help leaders of Quaker Children's Meetings to become more aware of their own intentions and the ways in which they seek to put them into practice. At the same time, the research findings may open up new perspectives and new paths into working with Quaker children by enriching the existing ways of teaching with new approaches and connections.

I also see a contribution of the thesis for Feuerstein's followers, because it presents in detail the Jewish roots of Mediated Learning Experience, places MLE in the context of values education and points out its importance in this field. It also provides unique insights into the spontaneous use of MLE principles outside of Jewish culture and outside of the practice of trained MLE mediators.

My ambition is that the findings about Quaker ways of teaching values to children in Children's Meetings and the principles of MLE may become a source of inspiration not only for Quakers but also for other religious groups and for wider society e.g. kindergartens and schools.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

In order to ensure the coherence of the key elements of my thesis and its clarity, I structure the thesis in 9 chapters, an overview of which follows.

The second and third chapters provide a theoretical framework regarding the Mediated Learning Experience.

In chapter two, I first place the Mediated Learning Experience in the context of other cognitive theories, namely those of Piaget, Vygotsky, and Bruner. This is due to the fact that all three of these authors have significantly influenced cognitive psychology with their theories and that Feuerstein's theory is a reaction to Piaget's theory, while it shows many similarities to the ideas of Vygotsky and Bruner. In the second part of the chapter, I discuss Feuerstein's theories directly and present the principles of MLE in detail.

The topic of the third chapter is MLE in the context of values education. In the first part of the chapter, I introduce values education and I define the concept of values. Then I introduce some of the most widely used and well-known approaches to values education, i.e., the cognitive developmental approach by Piaget and Kohlberg, character education as promoted by the Jubilee Centre in Birmingham and the socio-cultural approach based on Vygotsky's theory. I subsequently set the MLE in the context of these approaches. I point first to its Jewish roots and practical use in Jewish culture, then I consider its use outside the context of Judaism.

The fourth chapter turns the focus to Quakerism, presenting both Quaker values at a general level and their application in the principles of Quaker formal and informal

education. In this chapter I also introduce Quaker Children's Meetings and present three frequently used Children's Meeting publications, with regard to the ways in which they work with children and the content they offer.

The fifth chapter is devoted to the introduction and justification of the research methodology. I give a rationale for qualitative research, define the chosen research methods, describe the research process, while also pointing out the limitations of the methods and the problems I encountered during the research process. I also deal with ethical issues and the reliability of data. Later in this chapter I describe the data analysis process.

In chapters six and seven I present the results of the research. While in chapter six I discuss approaches to working with children in Quaker Children's Meetings and the factors that influence them as evidenced in the data, in chapter seven I focus on the elements of MLE that I have identified in the approaches to children described. Also included in this chapter is an analysis of three materials designed for working with children in Quaker Children's Meetings, which I briefly introduced in chapter four. In this section, I focus on their examination in terms of MLE and provide one sample lesson for each material, which I use to present and illustrate my conclusions regarding MLE.

Chapter eight is devoted to a discussion of the research findings. I seek here to take a critical look at the data collected and its interpretation in relation to values education, Feuerstein's approach, and the characteristics of Quakerism.

Chapter nine concludes the whole thesis by summarising it, answering the research questions and reflecting on its potential contribution.

2 Mediated Learning Experience in Context of Other Cognitive Theories

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a context for Feuerstein's theory of Mediated Learning Experience in relation to other theoretical approaches focusing on learning processes, including their practical application through specific methods, and to highlight the most significant aspects that make Feuerstein's theory unique. In this way, I establish a base for exploring the use of Feuerstein's MLE in the context of teaching values, which I address in the following chapter.

Feuerstein claims that one of the most important tasks of parents, educators and teachers is to help the child recognize and develop their learning potential to enable them to understand not only their role in the family and society, but also the culture in which they live, its values and interpersonal relationships (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Mintzker, 2001). Education should therefore include the intentional development of cognitive skills because it is these functions that enable humans to understand themselves and their surroundings, to evaluate and respond appropriately to situations and to learn from their own and others' experiences (Mentis, Dunn-Bernstein and Mentis, 2008). Education is expected to develop children's thinking potential to the maximum and to sharpen and shape their cognitive functions with the aim of making them successful in everyday life (ibid.; McGregor, 2007), which I perceive as finding their place in society, understanding social rules and living in accordance with moral values.

However, it should be noted that teaching thinking has not always been supported by all cultures and countries because their perceived needs have often been influenced by political or religious contexts (Mentis, Dunn-Bernstein and Mentis, 2008). For example, Germany under Nazi rule had different educational needs than East Germany under Communism or the reunified Germany after the fall of Communism. Dictatorial regimes tend to have an ideologically structured education that avoids the development of autonomous thinking, that is thinking where the individual does not uncritically follow the thoughts of others, but is encouraged to ask questions and make their own decisions based on their thinking, including moral ones, for which they are responsible. Nevertheless, the modern history of pedagogy in western societies shows

evidence that the concern for the development of high-order thinking including, according to Bloom's taxonomy, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of knowledge (Moseley, 2005), and moral thinking in children outweighs the tendency to educate pupils to passivity and blind obedience. The second half of the 20th century is marked by the emergence of new teaching methods aimed at the development of thinking, mostly based on the concepts of Piaget and Vygotsky (McGregor, 2007), although the history of teaching thinking goes back to ancient Greece. Socrates and his followers, Plato and Aristotle, are known for using dialogues to sharpen thinking (ibid.). Socratic dialogue is still used today as a pedagogical approach (Feuerstein, Falik and Feuerstein, 2006). Modern pedagogical methods that focus on thinking include De Bono's Cognitive Research Trust (CoRT) programme aimed at creative problem solving (deBono, 2023), Philosophy for Children, developing philosophical and critical thinking (The P4C Co-operative, 2023), Somerset Thinking Skills designed as a cognitive enhancement programme based on Reuven Feuerstein's findings (Learning Recovery, 2023), and Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment method developing cognitive functions (The Feuerstein Institute, 2023) and using principles of Mediated Learning Experience with which I am concerned in this thesis.

Feuerstein's work is based on the ideas of Piaget and his theories show many important similarities to those of Vygotsky and Bruner, the most important 20th century psychologists and educators who studied the learning processes. Therefore, in the following section, I first offer an overview of these theories, and then focus directly on Feuerstein's theories including the theory of Mediated Learning Experience (MLE). I then build on this foundation in the following chapter devoted to the application of MLE in values education. I consider it important to first introduce the general principles of learning and only then focus on the specific part of learning which is the acquisition of values because approaches to teaching values are based on these principles.

2.2 Cognitive Developmental Theories of Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner

2.2.1 Jean Piaget

Piaget (1896-1980) was one of the most important psychologists of the 20th century who studied the way people learn and investigated their cognitive development.

Piaget first studied biology at the University of Neuchâtel and then psychology in Paris, where he worked with Alfred Binet, who first developed tests of intelligence. Evaluating these tests led Piaget to become interested in children's thinking and cognitive development (Kozulin, 2015). Therefore, he began to observe children in their direct contact with the environment and concluded that a child's intellectual development consists of a process of constant construction and reconstruction of knowledge that takes place in successive stages. Each stage involves the child's reconstruction of the views of reality and concepts acquired in the previous stage. Piaget refers to this principle as the process of assimilation and accommodation, in which the mind of the individual always seeks to achieve a balance between the familiar and the new. While during the assimilation process, new information is modified in the mind to fit familiar schemas, the principle of the accommodation process is the modification of the familiar with respect to the new information (Piaget, 1999; Fosnot, 2005). In his conception, knowledge is the result of individual's interactions with the environment and their reflections and interactions do not necessarily involve direct handling of real objects, but rather the processing of individual perceptual activities (ibid.). Therefore, knowledge is something very individual and subjective.

Piaget also believed that cognitive development is dependent on natural biological maturation (see Tab. 2.1), with each child progressing through all stages sequentially without the possibility of skipping any of them. This implies that learning is dependent on the current developmental stage. It depends on development, and development does not change under the influence of learning (Piaget and Inhelder, 2010; Vygotsky, 2017).

Stage	Age	Skills
Sensorimotor	0 – 2	• first only motor reflexes • later systematic repetition of initially inadvertent behaviours • generalization of activities to other situations
Pre-operational	2 – 6/7	• acquisition of symbolic means like language, mental imagery, and drawing • egocentric view on the world
Concrete operational	6/7 – 11/12	• capacity to take other points of view • capacity to consider more perspectives at the same time • capacity to distinguish the constancy of a phenomenon
Formal operational	11/12 – the whole lifetime	• abstract reasoning • capacity to solve many types of challenging problems

Tab. 2.1 The Piagetian stages of development, adapted from McGregor (2007) and Siegler and Alibali (2005)

Piaget's findings have inspired several pedagogical theories and approaches based on direct forms of learning, which assume that the child is the one who initiates interactions with the environment and people. They learn through observation, incidental interaction with the environment and through trial and error. The role of the educator is to recognize the child's current stage of cognitive development and offer appropriate materials, situations, and stimuli so that the child's thinking skills are consolidated (Málkova, 2009). These pedagogical approaches include constructivism (Fosnot, 2005). This emphasises the stimulation of learners through various activities so that they become active participants in the learning process and actively work on (re)constructing their knowledge. Fosnot (ibid.) points out that some educators may misunderstand the meaning of the Piagetian developmental stages (where age is to be understood indicatively, not strictly) and instead of being aware of children's actual developmental stage, they focus on the age they associate with the relevant developmental stage and as a result may offer activities to pupils that do not match their actual abilities.

Despite Piaget's undeniable contribution to cognitive developmental psychology, he has been criticised on many points. The strongest criticism has focused on the fact that his theory is entirely child-centred and that he ignored the influence of social

interactions on cognitive development (Boden, 1994; Wood, 2005). Another equally important criticism concerns his claim that children are not capable of using more advanced thinking skills at a given stage (ibid.). His findings often led to a passive acceptance of the child's current developmental stage and the excusing of any inability by saying “they are not ready yet” and that “they will learn when they are mature enough” (Niggel, 1991, p. 21). These claims were already refuted by Piaget's peer Vygotsky, whose work I present in the following section. Vygotsky was inspired by Piaget's theory, but unlike Piaget, he emphasized the role of communication, social interaction, and even historical and cultural context in the cognitive development of the individual (Wood, 2005).

2.2.2 Lev S. Vygotsky

Vygotsky (1896-1934) focused particularly on the influence of social interaction, language, and learning on cognitive development. Analogous to Piaget, he also considered learning to be developmentally dependent and dependent on individual constructions and reconstructions of knowledge (Fosnot, 2005). However, he also emphasized the importance of socio-historical experience (Sharron, 1987).

He distinguished two conceptions of the learning process: 'spontaneous' and 'scientific'. While he defined spontaneous conceptions as knowledge that the child constructs individually based on interaction with the environment and his or her reasoning (consistent with Piaget's notion of construction and reconstruction – see 2.2.1), scientific conceptions are formed through interaction with the teacher and lead the learner to abstract more and use more logical reasoning than concepts that are constructed spontaneously (Fosnot, 2005). However, scientific concepts develop in relation to the previous development of the corresponding spontaneous concepts, e.g., a pupil cannot understand historical or geographical concepts without understanding the concepts of 'past and present' or 'here and elsewhere' (ibid.).

He also distinguished two developmental levels in terms of learning that are key in his theory: the actual developmental level and the zone of proximal development. Whereas at the current developmental level the child shows what they can do without help, the zone of proximal development reveals what their emerging functions are. Their zone of proximal development with respect to emergent functions is recognized when they are working with the help of a facilitator, because with their help they are

able to achieve skills or outcomes corresponding to another developmental level. The zones of proximal development are individual for each child – if we regard one child's development as one year, another child might develop three years while another develops by three months, depending on their individual ZPDs and the assistance. Vygotsky's experiments also showed that skills that were present in the zone of proximal development at one stage are activated at the current developmental level at the next stage. In other words, what a child can accomplish today with assistance, they will be able to do tomorrow on their own. In this view, contrary to Piaget's view, the development of the mind *follows* mediated learning (Vygotsky, 2017; Kozulin, 2015). It could also be said that while Piaget believes that development leads learning, Vygotsky believes that learning leads development.

For Vygotsky, who was not only a psychologist but also an active teacher, the application of his theory to education was obvious: teachers who act as mediators can accelerate a student's cognitive development, facilitate the learning process, and moreover, effectively support low-functioning individuals. At this point, his theory corresponds with Feuerstein's approach (Sharron, 1987), as I shall demonstrate.

In addition to human mediators, there are two other classes of mediators in Vygotsky's theory: material tools and symbolic tools. Material tools are practical things such as axes, hammers, diggers, or computers, for example. They make people's work easier, and their use has a natural effect on the development of human thought and its higher functions (Vygotsky, 1976). Symbolic or, in other words, psychological tools include all kinds of symbols used in society. These are not only the alphabet, mathematical or, for example, chemical symbols, pictures, graphs, or notes, but also various gestures such as nodding (a sign of agreement) or raising one's hand to ask for a word, etc. These symbolic mediators are primarily external tools that eventually become a person's internal psychological tools, and, when symbolic tools are internalized, the mindset of the individual changes. For example, a graph is an external symbolic tool that can become a way of thinking about data in the form of a graph. When this happens, it becomes an internal psychological tool in the individual's mind. If material tools allow people to work or perform their tasks, symbolic or psychological tools allow us to understand the whole culture we live in (Kozulin, 2015). However, the human mediator plays the most important role in the learning process of an individual because it can take them beyond their current abilities, and moreover, for Vygotsky, it mediates

cultural and historical contexts, which he considered to be key factors in human development (Wood, 2005).

Vygotsky's theory was unknown to Western society for quite a long time. In the late 1920s he visited the USA to attend a psychological congress in New Haven, but the first translation of his book 'Thinking and Language' was not published until 30 years later. This translation aroused interest in his work partly because the author of the preface to the translation was Bruner, a prominent American psychologist who, like Vygotsky, was convinced of the importance of cultural, historical, and social factors in the cognitive development of the individual.

2.2.3 Jerome S. Bruner

Bruner (1915 - 2016), an American psychologist and professor at Harvard University, also studied the relationship between learning and cognitive development. His theory is also based on Piaget's ideas, but, in many ways, his theory overlaps with Vygotsky's. By analogy to him, Bruner pointed out that learning is not only based on the current level of development, but that it can precede development (Bruner, 1965). In addition, he put forward a similar conception of mediators as Vygotsky. While Vygotsky referred to them as tools, instruments or technologies, Bruner had in mind both practical material tools and human skills such as language (see psychological or symbolic tools in Vygotsky's conception) (Bruner, 1965). He was also aware of the importance of the human mediator. Many of his experiments with children were based on teacher-student interaction. Again, analogous to Vygotsky and unlike Piaget, he theorized that meanings can only develop in the context of a particular culture or society and beyond that they are not only shared within a community but are also conserved, developed, and passed on from generation to generation to preserve the continuity and identity of a culture (Bruner, 1996).

Bruner's research and his involvement in school curriculum development led him to important ideas regarding the process of education. In particular, he emphasizes the need to teach students to learn (Bruner, 1965). Other essential points in Bruner's work are the role of structure within the educational process, intuitive thinking, and motivation to learn (ibid.). If pupils have a good understanding of the material they are discussing, they are able to connect it to other content, and recognise relationships between different things, meanings, or events. In other words, pupils should learn the

principles of things that can be applied in other contexts. Intuitive thinking simply means the ability to anticipate, to formulate assumptions, which is very important not only in science but also and perhaps especially in everyday life (Bruner, 1965). Regarding motivation to learn, the last key point in Bruner's work, Bruner concludes that the most important aspects are the learner's intrinsic interest and the near and distant goals of learning. How to stimulate intrinsic interest or intrinsic motivation depends not only on the teacher's ability, but also on the curriculum, on the educational attitude of the family and, of course, on the educational attitude of society as a whole. It is certain, however, that intrinsic motivation increases in relation to success in learning (Olson, 2007; p. 53).

Returning to mediated learning in Bruner's conception, he stressed the importance of dialogue in the educational process (ibid.). It is true that he is very demanding on the teachers because they have to observe the pupils, respond to their needs, and prepare the whole lesson in such a way that all pupils are motivated, including the high achievers but also the less gifted (ibid.). He called this approach to teaching 'scaffolding' and metaphorically explained that the teacher builds a kind of scaffold, a practical support for the pupil to achieve their own understanding. This scaffolding consists of modelling, showing, and telling and is present only as long as the pupil needs it. Once the learner understands and builds their own mental structures, the scaffolding can be removed (Olson, 2007, p. 45). However, Bruner does not present any specific model for how to talk effectively with learners so that they acquire knowledge while developing their thinking skills.

2.2.4 Comparison of Piaget's, Vygotsky's and Bruner's Theories

In the literature, Bruner is often presented and compared to Piaget and Vygotsky (e.g., in Wood, 2005; Olson, 2007; Sutherland, 1992; McGregor 2007; Maclure, 1991; Fosnot, 2005). Although their theories diverge in several respects, they have all contributed significantly to the development of cognitive psychology. To make the similarities and differences in their approaches more apparent, I have summarized them in the following table (see Tab. 2.2). The sources for this comparison were studies by Wood (2005), Olson (2007) and Sutherland (1992).

	Piaget	**Vygotsky**	**Bruner**
Cognitive development	Dependent on biological maturation	Dependent on biological maturation but can be accelerated; two levels – actual stage and zone of proximal development	Dependent on biological maturation but can be accelerated
Knowledge	Arises from direct exposure to stimuli, is constructed through the process of assimilation and accommodation	Spontaneous and scientific concepts; knowledge cannot be isolated from cultural and historical context	Arises based on perception and learning; knowledge cannot be isolated from cultural and historical context; is structured
Intelligence	State of balance between new stimuli and acquired knowledge	Capacity to learn from instructions	Intelligence = knowledge; description of an educated mind
Teacher	Waits until the child is intellectually ready; prepares activities according to children's stage of development	Plays a didactic role; brings the child beyond his actual stage of development; interventionist	Is very active, plays a didactic role; accelerates child's development; interventionist
Learner	Learns from the environment	Learns from the teacher and the environments	Learns from the teacher and the environments
Teaching approach (developed by him or based on his theory)	Constructivism	Scaffolding, social constructivism	Scaffolding, social constructivism
Language	Development of language follows development of thinking	Plays a key role in the development of concepts	Plays a key role in acceleration; emphasis on gesture language as predecessor of spoken language

Culture and history	Does not play any significant role	Very important	Very important
Work with less advanced children	Piaget does not pay attention to this point	Teacher's approach can help them, and they should be helped	Teacher's approach can help them, and they should be helped

Tab. 2.2 Similarities and differences in Piaget's, Vygotsky's and Bruner's theories

As I stated in the introduction to this chapter, the comparison of the theories of Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner is important in the context of my thesis to better understand Feuerstein's contribution. From the introduction of these prominent psychologists and the overview provided, a fundamental difference in the concept of individual development and learning is evident. While Piaget, as a trained biologist, conceives of development from a biological perspective, i.e. as a process that occurs naturally and is controlled by the individual as such, Vygotsky and Bruner point to the role of educators as mediators, i.e. those who can significantly influence the development of the individual, a theory that Feuerstein elaborates further. This distinction suggests that there are two basic modalities of learning - direct exposure to stimuli and mediated learning - which I describe in the next section. This is an issue that Feuerstein mentions frequently, so I feel it is important to define these two modes of learning before I discuss Feuerstein's theory.

2.3 Direct Exposure to Stimuli and Mediated Learning – Two Modalities of Learning

The basic difference between direct exposure to stimuli and mediated learning is that while in direct exposure the child learns on their own through interaction with other people, objects with which they come into contact, or situations that they experience, mediated learning implies that a human mediator mediates between the child and the stimuli to help them understand and learn from the situation.

Learning by direct exposure is incidental (Mentis, Dunn-Bernstein and Mentis, 2008). For example, children visiting an interactive museum may run from one exhibit to another, touching buttons or screens, and in this way, they may learn something new, but randomly, without any system. In contrast, mediated learning is intentional and systematic due to the presence of a human mediator. The mediator in the museum focuses the children's attention on important details, makes sense of the exhibit, interprets different processes etc., constantly checking that the children understand what's being said or what's going on. Another example can be found in everyday school teaching. A teacher can talk about the subject matter without actively interacting with their pupils to find out how they individually understand the topic. Such a lesson would be also classified as direct exposure, even though the teacher is present. They play the role of a transmitter of information in the same way as, for example, a textbook, encyclopaedia or other resource. In contrast, if the teacher focuses the attention of

each student, activates them, explains the meaning of the material, and is interested in, and responsive to, the children's understanding of the material, they become a mediator, and the learning situation becomes a mediated learning situation (ibid.).

Both ways to familiarize a child with the world are natural and important for a healthy development. Nevertheless, Feuerstein, together with Vygotsky and Bruner, puts stress on mediated learning especially for two reasons: firstly, it is more effective than direct exposure as regards continuity of individual cultures, because mediated learning

> "reflects a deeply ingrained need of the human to transmit themselves transgenerationally as a way to ensure their continuity beyond biological existence" (The Feuerstein Institute, 2023);

secondly, it is a significant means of an individual's cognitive development leading to autonomous thinking, including moral reasoning (see section 2.1; Feuerstein, Falik and Feuerstein, 2006).

2.4 Reuven Feuerstein and His Theories

2.4.1 Introduction

In this section, I first present the process of the emergence of Feuerstein's theories based on his practical experience of working with children and adults. This is followed by a more detailed explanation including a detailed description of his conception of mediated learning.

2.4.2 Process of the Origin of Feuerstein's Methods

Although Feuerstein knew Vygotsky's and Bruner's work only after his own theories were created, there are remarkable similarities between them. However, Feuerstein took further steps toward practical application of the theoretical ideas by defining specific criteria for effective teacher-pupil interaction, offering a comprehensive programme aimed at developing cognitive skills, and citing hundreds of cases where his method had positively changed people's lives.

Reuven Feuerstein (1921-2014) embarked on his career as a psychologist and educator during the Second World War, when he met children who were going through difficult situations, losing their families and homes, or going through concentration camps.

Throughout his life, Feuerstein was guided by the firm belief that everyone's mental abilities can be changed and that the current stage of development is temporary, even though it may seem definitive. Already his experiences with children after the Second World War had confirmed him in his conviction of the modifiability of human beings. Under his guidance, children who had been labelled by psychologists as henceforth uneducable regained their zest for life and began to learn again. Many of them graduated from university and, despite the horrific experiences of the war, were able to lead normal lives. Feuerstein's philosophy was simple: if these children were able to learn before the war, and then during the war they were able to adapt to war conditions in order to survive, they must be able to learn and adapt to new conditions after the war (Kozulin, 2015). He had a similar experience with child and adult immigrants. Individuals who seemed unable to adapt to new cultural conditions, and were seemingly ineducable, became able to adapt after his interventions.

In the 1950s, Feuerstein studied psychology with Piaget and Rey in Switzerland, but his experiences did not fully correspond with Piaget's findings. Referring to his numerous experiences with children with low functional abilities, he could not accept the claim that cognitive development was automatic and universal. He argued that if this were the case, it would be inconsistent that not everyone is able to reach the same ultimate level in development, even when they are literally "bombarded with stimuli" (Sharron, 1987, p. 35). Analogous to Vygotsky and Bruner, he also noted that there are differences in children's ability to learn from stimuli depending on their socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds (ibid.). His post-war experiences with Jewish immigrant children and youth from different countries played a key role in this regard.

Before and immediately after the end of World War II, Feuerstein was involved in Youth Aliyah's, a division of the Jewish Agency that was established in the 1930s to help young Jews flee Europe for the 'promised land', the future state of Israel (ibid., p. 21). Feuerstein worked in this organization as a special teacher and counsellor for Holocaust survivors and immigrant children. While working with immigrant children, he noticed the abysmal differences between children coming from different cultures. His greatest challenge was children from the Moroccan Melaha, a Jewish enclave in Morocco. Although they came from a country that was influenced by developed countries, they, to Feuerstein

> “had a very poor grasp of reality; poor perception; they failed to use all sources of information available to them; some children of 14 years could not even name the days of the week. There was not the slightest doubt that they were functioning at very low levels” (ibid., p. 27).

Thanks to these children, Feuerstein developed his assessment method: Learning Propensity Assessment Device (LPAD). In collaboration with Rey (Sharron, 1987; Blagg, 1991), he began testing them with a test focused on their actual abilities, then teaching them, then testing them again. In this way, he found that they all had "the potential to acquire at least normal functioning" (Sharron, 1987, p. 27). Feuerstein's intervention helped Moroccan children achieve normal or even above-average functioning. This experience of Feuerstein's corresponds with Vygotsky's notion of zones of proximal development and unexplored possibilities offered by the human mediator placed between stimuli and the mediatee.

Feuerstein explained the 'Moroccan phenomenon' as cultural deprivation. Originally, the Jews lived in Morocco in their ghettos in which the Jewish culture and traditions were transmitted from generation to generation especially through grandparents because parents were too busy with providing livelihood. But when the Jewish families had started moving to bigger cities the lifestyle of families changed: often, the grandparents stayed in the villages and the chain of cultural transmission ruptured.

> “These children were culturally deprived – but by this Feuerstein means they had been alienated by sociological and psychological factors from their own culture, or, more exactly, their own historical culture, which had been reduced to a shadow of its former richness and cohesion” (ibid., p. 30).

Comparing with other groups of Jews coming to Israel from different countries, Feuerstein concluded that it is not the amount of information and stimuli that plays a key role in cognitive development but the quality of their mediation:

> “Contrary to what conventional theories tell us, the way in which parents and other mediators construct their children’s world is not through bombarding them with stimuli but by selecting, ordering, emphasising and explaining some stimuli at the expense of others. 'Culture,' says Feuerstein, 'is not absorbed by children, it is imposed upon them.” (ibid., p. 36).

Having helped thousands of individuals, Feuerstein devoted his work to a deeper investigation of mediated learning and its impacts on the individuals and in the 1960s

and 1970s he evolved, together with the theory of Structural Cognitive Modifiability (SCM), the theory of the so-called Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) with its specific characteristics. Moreover, together with LPAD, he elaborated a coherent intervention programme named Instrumental Enrichment (IE) which follows all the principles of Feuerstein's theory and is used to help children and adults to develop or improve their mental skills. All the components of Feuerstein's method are illustrated in the following scheme (Fig. 2.1).

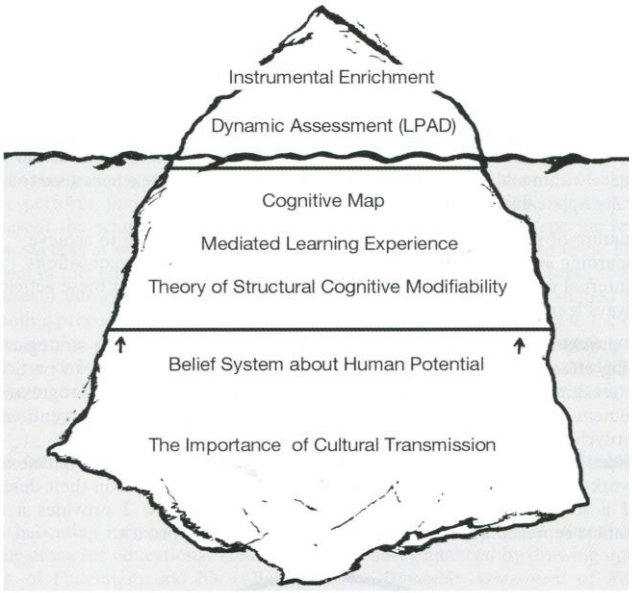

Fig. 2.1 Feuerstein´s theories and their practical applications represented as an iceberg (Kozulin, Rand, 2000, p. 47)

The symbolic representation in the form of an iceberg shows that practical work with students in the form of examining their learning potential and developing their ability to learn through the instruments of the Feuerstein method is based on theoretical foundations, the most important of which is the awareness of the importance of cultural transmission and the belief in the possibility of developing the learning potential of each individual. From this belief, then, derive the theories of Structural Cognitive Modifiability (see 2.4.3) and Mediated Learning Experience (see 2.4.5) representing a way of working with students.

Although, throughout his life, he worked with people with special educational needs, including culturally disadvantaged children, individuals with autism, brain damage, or seniors suffering from Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia, his method is now used worldwide also to work with individuals without special needs or even

accelerated children or adults (Feuerstein et al., 2006). His experience with culturally deprived children seems relevant today in the context of the waves of immigrants in Europe. The potential uses of MLE are being explored in different areas independent of Instrumental Enrichment - it is recommended by its advocates for use in any school subject, to interact with children in everyday family situations, to learn about one's own or foreign culture, etc. (Feuerstein and Lewin-Benham, 2012).

Neither Feuerstein's theory nor his method are isolated in the context of cognitive psychology and pedagogy. As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter (see 2.1), several other methods focused on cognitive development arose in the second half of 20th century, especially in the 1970s and 1980s (Málková, 2007). The best known now are probably Lipman's Philosophy for Children (P4C) (The P4C Co-operative, 2023) and De Bono's Cognitive Research Trust (CoRT) (deBono, 2023). Regardless of the teaching approach and the format, the most significant difference between Feuerstein's method and the other methods consists in the motivation for their origin. While P4C or CoRT were evolved because pupils showed insufficient capacities to argue and logically reason (The P4C Co-operative, 2023; Cibulková, 2009), Feuerstein's method originated due to his involvement in helping suffering children. In other words, he did not evolve a method for supporting children, he firstly supported children and in this way the method was evolved in practice (Sharron, 1987).

The following part of this chapter presents Feuerstein's theories and methods in more detail. First, I focus on the theory of Structural Cognitive Modifiability (SCM) which shapes the initial presumption of the whole method, then I present and discuss Mediated Learning Experience (MLE), the practical expression and application of the theoretical presumption and finally, I offer an overview of Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment Programme (FIE). All this theoretical background is necessary to the exploration of MLE in context of values education which will follow in the next chapter.

2.4.3 Structural Cognitive Modifiability

Feuerstein's theory is based on a strong belief in positive change in response to need. If a person needs something, then they tend to believe that it can be achieved and seeks resources and knowledge to fulfil the need. As I indicated above, Feuerstein's core need was to help children and adults unable to integrate successfully into society because of their low mental functioning. This strong need and the belief that change

could be achieved led him to seek ways of achieving change (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014).

The SCM theory originated in the 1950s, when the brain was considered the most stable and best organized human organ and scientists were convinced that the brain's abilities were solely the result of genetic and developmental processes (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014). Today, thanks to neuroscience, what Feuerstein assumed long ago is widely accepted: the brain is the most plastic and flexible human organ, and its structure can change. For this reason,

> “today when we speak about modifiability, we are referring to a process which is much more important, much more modifying not only the behavioural aspect of the individual, modifying not only the operational thinking of the individual but modifying actually the neural system itself.” (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014, p. 2).

This means that with appropriate intervention, not only people's behaviour can be modified, but also "the neural substrate itself" (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014, p. 2) so that the individuals are able to apply the changes in different situations and contexts. In contrast to behaviourism (Kimmons, 2022), Feuerstein does not want the child to adopt a certain behaviour, but wants to modify children´s thinking, which then has an impact on their behaviour.

The cognitive element plays a key role in SCM theory because cognitive processes involving a wide range of thought processes are essential to human functioning. Feuerstein argues that the rationale for using cognition as a modality through which an individual can be modified is that

> “the cognitive element is not only more able, more sensitive, to become modifiable, to become modified, to become more adaptive. But it is also enabling us to modify our feelings.” (Feuerstein, 2006, p. 5).

Piaget compares cognition and emotion to two sides of the same coin. He argues that both are types of human behaviour that are characterized by affective and cognitive aspects, are always interconnected, and therefore cannot be considered independent skills (Piaget, 1999). The cognitive side of the coin answers the question 'What am I doing and how am I doing it?'. The other side answers the question: 'Why am I doing it?' Feuerstein enriches the illustration of the coin by noting that the coin is transparent. He explains that the question 'Why am I doing this?' significantly influences the

question: 'What am I going to do?' (Feuerstein et al., 2006, p. 6). Every human feeling has a reason, and Feuerstein emphasizes that it is important to look for these reasons because they help us understand ourselves and others and prevent conflict.

Feuerstein's theory of Structural Cognitive Modifiability is an effective tool to help people develop their thinking skills or cognitive functions, and Feuerstein pays great attention to it in his work. In order for an individual to develop autonomous thinking, they need to be developed and functioning. In the following section, I present an overview of the functions as Feuerstein defines them.

2.4.4 Cognitive Functions

Since Feuerstein's definition of cognitive functions is somewhat specific, for clarity I provide below a more extensive quote from his publication ˈCreating and Enhancing Cognitive Modifiabilityˈ (Feuerstein et al., 2006), in which his concept of cognitive functions is explained as

> "the mental conditions essential to the existence of thinking operations and any other behavioural function. The key word in this definition is *condition*. Cognitive functions are defined as conditions in which mental operations are performed. In order to deal with the question of learning one must differentiate the processes of thinking from the operation itself. An operation can be compared to a program stored on a computer, but one that needs knowledge to give correct commands to be applied to particular data. Moreover, one must have sufficient knowledge to enter data into the computer so that the operation can be activated and deal with the problem. The process begins with the creation of the cognitive conditions. These manifest themselves as *functions*, which appear in various specifically identified and mediated skills." (Feuerstein et al., 2006, p. 131).

Mental operations include the sets of activities through which an individual processes information. They range from simple recognition to more complex activities such as classification, ordering, making analogies, etc. In order for mental operations to take place, appropriate conditions or preconditions must be created, which are precisely cognitive functions in Feuerstein’s conception. An important proposition of Feuerstein is that cognitive functions are not innate but develop through the Mediated Learning Experience whether in everyday activities, in school learning or other occasions (Lebeer, 2002).

For better understanding and clarity, Feuerstein divides cognitive functions into phases of mental activity, which are input (i.e. receiving stimuli, acquiring information), elaboration (i.e. processing information) and output (i.e. formulating solutions). This division is practically used mainly in situations where the individual fails in some mental operations. In such situations, Feuerstein rejects the idea that the individual is incapable of a given mental operation but proposes an analysis of the different phases of mental activity and the cognitive functions that belong to that phase, in order to identify which cognitive functions are underdeveloped or deficient and then focus mediation on them (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014). The division of cognitive functions according to the phases of mental activity is of course a simplification, as the different phases are intertwined and so are the different functions, but this simplification is nevertheless beneficial for an easier understanding of the whole issue.

The following overview (Tab. 2.3) lists the individual cognitive functions in terms of their functioning and deficits.

INPUT PHASE		
Function	**Functioning**	**Deficient**
Perception	Clear	Blurred and sweeping
Exploration of a learning situation	Systematic	Impulsive
Receptive verbal tools and concepts	Precise and accurate	impaired
Understanding of spatial concepts	Well-developed	Impaired
Understanding of temporal concepts	Well-developed	Impaired
Ability to conserve constancies	Well-developed	Impaired
Data gathering	Precise and accurate	Impaired
Capacity to consider more than one source of information	Well-developed	Impaired
ELABORATION		
Definition of the problem	Accurate	Inaccurate
Select relevant cues	Ability to	Inability to
Engage in spontaneous comparative behaviour	Ability to	Inability to
Mental field	Broad and wide	Narrow and limited
Spontaneous summative behaviour	Need for	Lack of need for
Project virtual relations	Ability to	Inability to
Logical evidence	Need for	Lack of need for
Internalize events	Ability to	Inability to

Inferential-hypothetical thinking	Ability to use	Impaired ability to use
Strategies for hypothesis testing	Ability to use	Impaired ability to use
Planning behaviour	Need for	Lack of need for
Elaboration of cognitive categories	Adequate	Impaired
Grasp of reality	Meaningful	Episodic
OUTPUT		
Communication modalities	Mature	Egocentric
Output responses	Participatory	Blocking
Expressive verbal tools	Adequate	Impaired
Data output	Precise and accurate	Impaired
Behaviour	Appropriate	Impulsive/acting out

Tab. 2.3 List of cognitive functions by Feuerstein (Mentis et al., 2009, p. 116-118)

2.4.5 Specificity of MLE

Feuerstein argues that the basis of Structural Cognitive Modifiability is a triple ontogenesis, which includes biological influences, cultural influences, and the Mediated Learning Experience (Feuerstein et al., 2006). Biology determines an individual's level of development, health status, and genetic factors. Culture has a significant impact on cognitive development and to some extent influences biological status. For Feuerstein, however, the most important thing is the Mediated Learning Experience, which has the power to modify both biological and cultural factors (ibid.).

> "Mediated Learning Experience, as the powerful ingredient producing human modifiability, is the necessary and vital humanizing element in human development. It is what makes human beings human." (ibid, p. 25)

Bruner commented on MLE at the conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in the 1960s as follows:

> "Mediated Learning Experience is not just for retarded children or deprived children; it is for all of us! It is what make us human!" (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014, p. 26).

Feuerstein's term Mediated Learning Experience has a profound meaning. As he explains, the term 'experience' in the title of the theory is very important because it refers to the interactive process between the mediator and the mediatee. Both the mediator and the mediatee experience new perspectives, new contexts of the situations which they experience and discuss together. They interact with each other, with the mediator entering the interaction with certain intentions, organizing the mediation tools and the environment, but also being open to the reactions of the

mediatee, which may lead the mediator to reflect on his intentions or ways of mediation. For example, it may happen that the mediator does not assess the mediatee's abilities well and prepares a task that is too easy or, on the contrary, too difficult. In such a case, the mediator actively responds to the needs of the mediatee and adjusts the task to match the mediatee's abilities. Too easy a task is boring; too difficult a task is demotivating. Moreover, 'experience' also means that the mediator is not only mediating the content but also their methods to lead the child to 'self-mediation', i.e. to autonomous thinking. They offer an experience of mediated learning, teaching the child how to learn, and also how to learn for themselves. Only when the child has gained experience are they able to apply the knowledge or skills in other contexts and situations.

A similar concept can be found in the work of Vygotsky. He talks about the transition from inter-mental to intra-mental activity. He demonstrates this process with the example of speech: it first emerges as a means of communication between the child and those around him or her. Only later does it become an internal psychological function of the child's thinking (Vygotsky, 1976, p. 314). What is new in Feuerstein's theory compared to Vygotsky's ideas is that Feuerstein emphasises the role of the human mediator who can accelerate and strengthen this process (Feuerstein et al., 2006, p. 61).

Feuerstein's conception of the learning process is essentially an extension of Piaget's conception, which can be illustrated as follows: S(timuli) - O(rganism) - R(esponse) by the element of human mediator, which modifies Piaget's model as follows (Fig. 2.2):

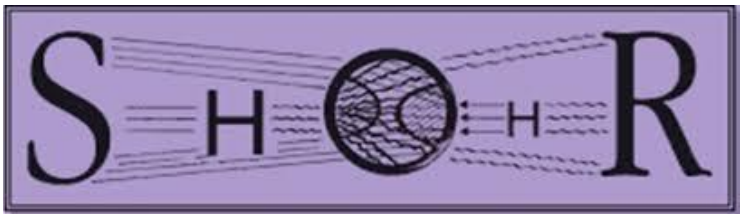

Fig. 2.2 Model of MLE (Feuerstein, Klein, Tannenbaum, 1991)

The position of the two Hs representing the person or mediator is crucial in the model because the mediator's role is to select, point out, interpret, or extend stimuli so that the child meaningfully connects what is already known with new experiences (Blagg, 1991). To ensure this meaningful connection and to activate the child to become an

engaged part of the learning process, Feuerstein identifies twelve criteria of Mediated Learning Experience (see Fig. 2.3).

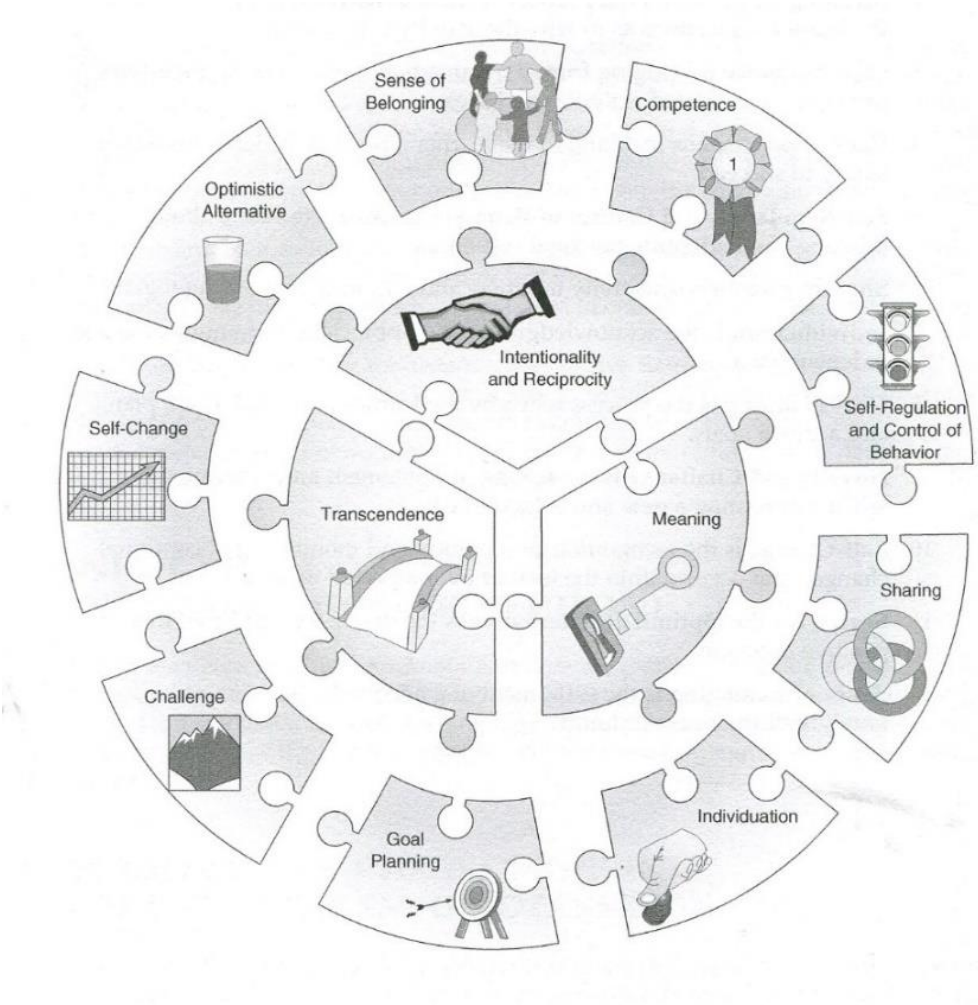

Fig. 2.3 Criteria of MLE (Mentis et al., 2008)

According to Feuerstein, if interactions are to be of MLE quality, the first three criteria must always be met. These are intentionality and reciprocity (two aspects of one criterion), transcendence and meaning. In addition to these criteria, Feuerstein identifies nine others that depend on various factors and goals of the mediation, as well as the value system and beliefs of the social group or family in which the mediation occurs. All these criteria are discussed in more detail in the following section.

MLE does not depend on specific content and, despite its original intent to help individuals with a variety of disabilities (ranging from learning disabilities caused by chromosomal aberrations or other factors to brain damage, to cultural or social deprivation) to integrate into mainstream society as full members (Feuerstein et al.,

2006), MLE is now used as a powerful teaching tool in any context, including any school curriculum, family education or values education. Although much research has been conducted in recent years on the positive impact of MLE on children's mental skills (The Feuerstein Institute, 2023), the two areas of teaching values await deeper investigation (Feuerstein, Sh. 2002).

2.4.5.1 MLE Criteria

To offer a more complex and clearer picture of MLE, I consider it very useful to have a closer look at its twelve criteria since they form the basis of the whole theory. In addition, they are the focus of the following research among Quaker informal teachers in Quaker Children's Meetings.

As it was mentioned above (see 2.4.5), Feuerstein distinguished three essential criteria and nine additional ones which he called 'situational', because they are not necessarily present (see Fig. 2.3). The essential criteria ensure that the interaction becomes a Mediated Learning Experience, that is why they are present also if the mediator wants to mediate one or more of the situational criteria. For example, if it is necessary to mediate a feeling of competence (one of the situational criteria), the mediator simultaneously mediates intentionality-and-reciprocity, meaning, and transcendence. Without these three criteria, a teaching and learning process may naturally occur but it cannot be described as Mediated Learning Experience.

1. **The Essential Criteria**

- **Intentionality-and-Reciprocity**

The mediator initiates the mediation based on an intention. They want to help the child understand the message that is intended for them. The mediator thinks about how to work or talk with the child so that the child sees, hears, and focuses on the point the mediator intends to make. This process involves the mediator selecting a stimulus and shaping it so that the mediatee understands and is able to elaborate on it. The aim is not necessarily to impart knowledge; rather, the mediator guides the mediatee to recognise relationships and connections between perceived facts or ideas.

When mediating the intent, the mediator can use a broad range of means to catch the attention of the mediatee and to activate them: they can speak louder or on the contrary

lower, they show what is important, they can enlarge or change the stimuli etc., they consciously signal what will follow. For example:

> *I want you to have a look at this; I would like you to listen to what I shall say to you now; I want you to look at me when we are talking together*.

Very often, questions are used:

> *What can you see? Have you noticed this?*

This way of interaction corresponds with the other part of the first criterion, the reciprocity. The mediator is not in the position of an omniscient teacher, they are rather somebody who has in the situation more experience and understands it better than the mediatee. On the one hand, they want the mediatee to understand and learn from the situation as well. On the other hand, they are open to the mediatee's points of view and experiences and therefore both the mediatee and the mediator profit from the interaction in terms of learning and mutual enrichment. If the mediatee has only the role of a passive recipient of information, the effect of the teaching would be naturally lower. It would be harder for them to maintain attention, to concentrate, because if they do not share and accept the mediator's intention, they do not have any reason to follow the teaching. This aspect explains why Feuerstein connects intentionality with reciprocity in one criterion. Following the criterion of reciprocity, the mediator activates the mediatee so that they become an interested participant of the interaction. These are some example questions that support the activation of the mediatee and ensure that the interaction is mutual and reciprocal:

> *How do you understand it? What is it like? Have you already heard/read/seen anything similar? What should we do now?*

Feuerstein believes that being human does not mean mindlessly obeying what authority says (Feuerstein et al., 2006). The mediator should be open to interaction and discussion with the mediatee by maintaining the criteria of intentionality and reciprocity. In this way, not only does the mediator learn something new thanks to the help of the mediator, but also the mediator can learn from the mediatee, especially in seeing the task or situation from new points of view that would not have occurred to him or her. This is true reciprocity, which makes the teaching and learning process active, open, and enriching, and therefore meaningful for both parties.

- **Transcendence**

The criterion of transcendence (sometimes also referred to in the literature as transfer or transmission) is to ensure that the child does not learn only in the here and now, but that there is a transference in time and space. Learning specific things for specific situations is very uneconomical. If the child understands the basic concepts and principles and is able to transfer and apply them in other contexts, their abstract thinking becomes more and more developed, and the child learns for life.

If children learn something without being aware of the connections to other content, their knowledge may not develop to include the new experience or abstract idea. For example, if a parent forbids a young child from touching a hot iron, the child knows that they must not touch that particular item because it might hurt them. What has the child learned? *This iron is hot, it can hurt me*. However, if a parent explains to the child that there is a hot iron on the table and then mediates to the child – according to their age – that there are other things that are hot or potentially hot, that there are things that can hurt the child, and that there are situations that are dangerous to the child other than their temperature, the child is led to understand a very important principle: there are dangerous things in the world, situations, and also people, and I have to be careful. This simple example shows how easily a mediator can influence a child's thinking and broaden their understanding of the society in which they live. Moreover, such interaction can be quite natural and normal in everyday life, not systematic teaching in school or during a special course. This fact confirms that Mediated Learning Experience is a natural way for many parents and teachers to communicate with and teach their children. Again, questions are an appropriate means of conveying transcendence, e.g.:

> *Have you ever experienced anything like this? What can you learn from this experience? How do you feel now? Why do you have this feeling? How do you think someone else would feel in this situation?*

These questions not only help the mediated person to realise that there is a connection between the task/work they have done and their mental state, which can be a very useful finding for them in terms of how they function in other situations and contexts, but reflecting on other people's feelings leads them to generalise and reflect on the wider context of people's behaviour. In addition, the ability to recognise and understand

the feelings of others helps the child to develop the concept of empathy. Feuerstein considers active empathy, i.e., empathy that leads to action, to be very important and dedicates a set of three instruments to it (Recognizing Emotions, From Empathy to Action and Preventing Violence). A more detailed description of these instruments follows in section 3.6.3.1.

Based on the criterion of transcendence, the mediator can also cultivate cultural values. According to Sh. Feuerstein, transcendence is more or less present in all cultures, but he distinguishes two basic groups of values that coexist in all cultures: 'survival-oriented values' and 'transcendence-oriented values' (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002). While for societies with predominantly 'survival-oriented values' the most important emphasis lies on present gratification, societies with predominantly 'transcendence-oriented values' tend to link the past with the present and the future and show a need to

> "transmit to future generations a consistent value system that stresses the normative continuity of ideas, attitudes and conduct." (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002, p. 37).

I come back to this topic in section 3.6 where I discuss Mediated Learning Experience in context of teaching values.

- **Meaning**

The third basic criterion of MLE is mediation of meaning, which represents the affective component of the mediation process by incorporating feelings, personal and cultural values, and moral needs (Feuerstein Sh., 2002; Feuerstein, Falik, and Feuerstein, 2006). The mediator's role is

> "to impose meaning on the otherwise neutral stimuli that constantly bombard us, thereby ensuring the transmission of values from one generation to the next" (Sharon, 1987, p. 40).

It needs to be mediated to children that different situations, activities, experiences are good or bad, important or unimportant, right or wrong, etc. Without such mediation, children may not be able to understand situations, experiences, and the influence of the environment on their behaviour (ibid.).

Meaning plays a crucial role in human life. Feuerstein argues that it is only when a person realises that there is meaning to their particular actions and experiences that

they also realise that there must be meaning to their whole life and to the lives of others. In this context, he writes:

> “The specific meanings mediated to the child by an adult mediator can be forgotten or be modified with time. But the need and the orientation to search for meaningfulness, which is instilled by the mediator, become a permanent existential need. Human beings in whom this orientation is lacking, and who do not look for meaning, are deprived both in the cognitive and emotional sense, and in all the elements that affect the motivational and energetic dimensions of life.” (Feuerstein et al., 2006, p. 47)

And Sh. Feuerstein adds:

> “What is of prime importance in this respect is the search for meaning and not an episodic interpretation of reality*”* (Feuerstein, Sh. 2002, p. 68),

meaning the search for context, learning to understand cause and effect and to interpret different situations according to their context.

Examples of questions designed to mediate meaning are:

> “What does it mean to you? What is the value of this experience? Why do I want you to experience it? What do I want you to learn from it? Why should it be so important to you?” (Feuerstein, Falik and Feuerstein, 2006, p. 27)

Knowing meaning awakens intrinsic motivation in the child. Conversely, ignorance of meaning can cause disinterest, feelings of inferiority, and an inability to develop thinking skills (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014). In this regard, we turn back to intentionality and reciprocity, because the positive energy and enthusiasm stemming from the belief in human modifiability that characterise the mediator during the interaction influence the motivation and reactions of the mediatee. Their positive reactions encourage the mediator and vice versa. In this way, an imaginary spiral begins to unfold on which both the mediator and the mediatee embark and travel along it towards ever better performance. Feuerstein's books and articles (especially the book: ˈYou Love Me!!! Don't Accept Me As I Amˈ, Feuerstein, Rand and Feuerstein, 2006) provide many life stories that confirm the spiral principle. An important prerequisite for this process is always the belief in human modifiability:

> “In fact only a person strongly motivated by a belief will be liable to enter into and persist in an action. Why? Because belief is anchored in a need. Knowledge alone of a path or

activity will not necessarily trigger action, because it is not anchored in a need of the individual." (Feuerstein, Rand and Feuerstein, 2006, p. 6).

An interesting aspect of the mediation of meaning is the imposition of meaning on the learner. Feuerstein talks about how this aspect belongs to the mediation of meaning, pointing out, however, that the whole mediation is a process where 'imposition' gradually turns into 'orientation' (Feuerstein et al., 2006):

> "As the energetic determinant of behaviour, it is of great importance to have the individual offered an orientation to the search for meaning. If we view the individual as having a life experience that has been devoid of meaning, it is not because the meaning is not potentially there, but because such individuals have not been sensitized to search for the many meanings that are related to their existence. Meaning that is imposed in this manner does not imply conformity to externalized projections, but rather prompts the mediatee to search for and accept personal and shared meaning." (p. 75)

Thus, if the individual is unable to perceive the meaning, the mediator's role is to present the meanings that they see in the given situation, possibly, depending on the circumstances, to assert one meaning for the given situation, but not with the aim that the mediatee must necessarily accept it as their own forever, but rather with the aim of leading the mediatee to the need to search for meanings independently.

2. **The Situational Criteria**

As explained above, situational criteria are applied depending on the actual situation, the context, the culture, etc. While the mediation of intentionality and reciprocity, meaning and transcendence are constant characteristics of MLE, the following nine are not necessary conditions of MLE. They correspond to the specific needs of the individual.

- **Feeling of Competence**

Feuerstein argues that *being* competent does not necessarily mean *feeling* competent (Feuerstein et al., 2006). Many children (and adults too) are unable to assess their own competence. For this reason, they need to be facilitated so that the outcome of their actions reflects their competence. If an individual believes in their ability to develop, they will indeed develop (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014). In order to achieve this, the mediator must first select work or tasks for the mediatee that are neither too new nor too easy. If the task is completely new to the child, they are likely to get lost in

it and not be able to solve it. If there is nothing new in the task, the child may lose motivation to work and become bored. A well-chosen task is one in which the child can apply their skills while learning something new or developing new abilities (Feuerstein, 2014). This principle fully corresponds with Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (see chapter 2.2.2).

There is a big difference between mediating a sense of competence and giving praise. Praise is very important at all ages; it brings a kind of inner refreshment, but not very often does an individual learn something from it. While praise is usually formulated in general terms, competence mediation offers specific feedback about the individual's positive and negative reactions, which helps them to move on in their development (Feuerstein, 2001).

Here I give some examples of possible reactions to children's work from my own experience not only as a teacher but also as a parent when I want to mediate a sense of competence:

> *You were really successful today. The task was difficult, but you already know that if you concentrate you are able to solve such tasks.*
>
> *You were aware that your brother doesn't feel good today and you stopped teasing him. For this reason, you didn't quarrel; it was great.*
>
> *You have much more free time tonight thanks to your wonderful planning.*

- **Regulation and Control of Behaviour**

The goal of mediating regulation and control of behaviour is to teach the individual to control their own behaviour and to keep external control to a minimum. On the one hand, the mediator tries to prevent dysfunctional, impulsive behaviour that avoids focusing on the important things in the situation; on the other hand, the mediator encourages desirable behaviour. The goal is achieved when the mediatee understands their behaviour and is able to take responsibility for it. The goal can be achieved provided the individual is able to control their mental reasoning behaviour and reactions.

There are several steps in the mediation of behavioural regulation and control (Feuerstein, 2001):

1. The first is to create an interval between stimulus and response. If the child reacts impulsively, they should be given the opportunity to think first and then respond to the stimulus.
2. The next step is to mediate to the child that they should estimate their knowledge, experience, and skills in proportion to the task they have to do. Of course, they must be able to analyse well the task for which the next step is necessary.
3. The facilitator must mediate the necessary cognitive functions (e.g., goal-directed perception, systematic search, comparison) to the child so that they are able to analyse the task and gather the data needed for decision-making.

To nurture children's ability to control their responses and therefore to mediate regulation and control of behaviour, I usually say:

Wait for a moment. First, we must read the task. Do you understand it? Can you reformulate it in your own words?

Let's collect first all the information we have. What do we know?

Think first. Answer only if you are sure your answer is right.

- **Sharing Behaviour**

Sharing is a natural human need that reflects our desire for belonging and contact with others. It is not only an important part of cultural transmission, but it also helps to develop a healthy ego and self-concept, as the individual learns to perceive other people's feelings and beliefs and to confront them with their own experiences. The mediation of sharing behaviour on the one hand shows the basic social value of the person, on the other hand it mediates the ability to understand the views of others and thus leads to empathy. (Feuerstein, 2001)

The mediation of sharing behaviour occurs in a community when its members exchange experiences and talk to each other about everyday events, when they participate in various joint events, and when they collaborate in joint activities.

- **Individuation and Psychological Differentiation**

The mediation of individuation and psychological differentiation contrasts with the mediation of sharing behaviour. While some cultures deny the need to be perceived

as an individual, for Western culture this is one of the most important parameters. The child needs to be helped to understand their uniqueness, but also the uniqueness of the other. There are many opportunities in an individual's life to realize their difference from others, and the role of the mediator is to use these situations to reinforce this individuality and the importance of each person's abilities (Feuerstein, 2001).

Educators help a child develop their unique personality if they recognize the child's talents and support the child in their interests. They do the same if they support them in their responsibilities (Mentis, Dunn-Bernstein and Mentis, 2008).

In terms of schools and teachers, the most important aspect of facilitating individuation is student-centred learning that promotes student autonomy and self-discipline (ibid.).

- **Goal-Seeking, Goal-Setting and Goal-Achieving Behaviour**

Feuerstein claimed that life without a goal is empty (Feuerstein et al., 2006). If there is no goal, there is no motivation, no meaning, no effort, and no joy after reaching the goal. Finding goals and choosing goals means enriching children's lives and developing organizational skills. Goal-seeking is closely related to the cultural environment, beliefs and value system of a group or society. Within the social cultural context, this criterion relates to looking into the future and planning for the future (Feuerstein, 2001).

When the mediator asks the child to choose goals, especially long-term goals, it helps the child to develop cognitive functions and abstract thinking because the child has to imagine situations that are not realistic now but that could possibly occur in the future. There is an illustration of this aspect which tells the story of an old man planting a tree. Someone asks him why he is doing this when he would never eat the fruit of the tree. His answer connects the past with the present and the future: “If my parents had not done so I would not be able to eat the fruit.” (Feuerstein Sh., 2002, p. 82).

Here are some examples how to mediate goal-seeking, goal-setting and goal-achieving behaviour:

> *You have to learn this list of vocabulary by next week. How will you proceed?*
>
> *What tasks do you have for today? What can help you to do everything and to have some free time too?*

You are really good at playing the piano. Do you want to learn it more intensively? How do you want to use your talent?

There are many suffering people in the world. Are there any ways we could help at least some of them? What do you suggest? How should we proceed?

- **Challenges: The Search for Novelty and Complexity**

New and perhaps difficult and unfamiliar experiences are very important for the development of the individual and are a necessary educational goal. People often encounter completely new situations or opportunities, and it is up to them how they choose to deal with them. Either they avoid the challenge, or they choose to try it. Good quality mediation leads the mediatee from doubt and resignation to a readiness to learn. The mediator's role is to help the child evaluate the risk associated with the new and unknown and to help the child experience success, which is a very important moment for their further development. This can be achieved by breaking down complex tasks into a few simpler steps (Mentis, Dunn-Bernstein and Mentis, 2008). It is also important to mediate to the mediatee that initial failures and mistakes are a natural part of life experience.

In order for the mediation of challenge to be successful, it is critical that the mediator believes in the modifiability of the individual and that the child can do more than they think at the time (Feuerstein et al., 2006).

It's natural to be afraid of new things. But you already know the necessary steps to be successful in this task.

Yes, it's a very difficult task, but we don't have to do everything at once. Let's see what partial steps we can take.

Oh yes, you failed today, but that doesn't mean you won't be able to do it one day in the future. What went wrong today?

- **Awareness of the Human Being as a Changing Entity**

This criterion refers primarily to Feuerstein's theory of Structural Cognitive Modifiability, according to which every individual is changeable (both positively and negatively, with Feuerstein naturally fighting for positive changes). One of the most important

prerequisites for positive change in an individual is the mediator's strong belief in the possibility of such changes. According to Sh. Feuerstein:

> "The belief in modifiability can be a potent determinant of change, mobilizing the individual's volitional and intentioned activities to avoid intellectual, affective and moral deterioration and to be useful in actively shaping one's own rehabilitation and redevelopment. Parents or educators who point out to their children the changes which occurred after certain events can sensitise them to the need to be active in pursuing goals of development and improvement." (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002, p. 83)

The mediation of self-change occurs when the child realizes

> "the dynamic potential for change and (…) its importance and value." (Mentis, Dunn-Bernstein and Mentis, 2008, p. 85).

- **Search for an Optimistic Alternative**

Very often people are faced with situations where they have to choose from alternatives - am I capable of doing this or not? Feuerstein considers it extremely important to guide children to choose optimistic alternatives. If they choose the optimistic alternative, an unexpected amount of inner energy and strength is activated, and the individual is able to face the situation because they have a goal in front of them.

> "Choosing an optimistic alternative (…) tends to mobilize all of a culture's resources – physical, emotional, and cognitive – to make a positive outcome happen, (…) Mediating a positive choice to a child involves mobilizing him[1] to search for those elements in the situation that will substantiate the positive choice" (Feuerstein et al., 2006, p. 86).

However, if the child chooses the pessimistic alternative, any cognitive activity that might lead to a positive solution to the problem may be inhibited (Feuerstein, Sh. 2002, p. 84).

The mediation of the search for an optimistic alternative is closely related to the previous criteria, particularly the mediation of a sense of competence, goal-seeking, and the search for novelty and complexity. In mediating the search for an optimistic

[1] Gendering a generic statement would be unacceptable today.

alternative, the mediator supports the child in finding positive possible approaches to the situation or task they are facing. In such moments it is very important to look for optimistic and positive formulations of the situation because such formulations encourage the abandonment of a pessimistic view (Mentis, Dunn-Bernstein and Mentis, 2008, pp. 94-95). In my practice I know situations where children think, for example, *I have too much to learn, I can't do it*, which means that they are thinking and choosing a pessimistic alternative: *it's impossible, I can't do it, I'm a total failure*. There are many ways to mediate the search for the optimistic alternative, e.g.:

> *Yes, there are many things you need to learn, but, as a teacher, I wouldn't give you assignments you can't do. Let's look at how you could organize your day so that you have enough time to learn everything and so that you have some free time as well.*
>
> *You already know this, this, and this. Now just build on your current knowledge. It's great to learn something new and push the frontiers of your knowledge. Let's take a look at the things you already know.*
>
> *You know from experience that when you approach things positively, they seem easier, and you can work efficiently. Why is that?*

- **Feeling of Belonging**

Mediating a sense and need for belonging is essential in Western society, where traditional families are in decline and may not provide security and stability (Feuerstein, 2001, p. 47). People need to belong somewhere - to a family (nuclear and extended), to a community, a class, a club, a culture, etc. Lack of mediation of belonging can lead to cultural deprivation, which means that the individual does not understand how their culture works, what the rituals, customs, beliefs, practices, and rules are. They are unable to make sense of the world or develop the cognitive skills necessary to function effectively (Mentis, Dunn-Bernstein and Mentis, 2008, p. 102).

On the other hand, awareness of one's place in society among others supports cognitive and personal development. It also shapes one' s behaviour and is related to the performance of social duties and the use of social rights. As a member of a community, the individual participates in its events, contributes to its goals, enriches it

with their personal qualities, and is enriched by other members of the community (Feuerstein, 2001).

The mediation of a sense of belonging happens through building and nurturing relationships within and to the family, among friends or classmates, to school and other institutions to which one belongs, and thus to society. Parents or teachers should talk to children about the importance of various religious or social practices of the family or society and should also tell children about the roots of the family, stories from the lives of their parents and grandparents or, for example, talk to them about famous and important personalities.

2.4.6 MLE in Practice

Having introduced the different criteria of the Mediated Learning Experience according to R. Feuerstein, I consider it important to discuss the application of MLE in practice, focusing mainly on its lack. Feuerstein argues that although it is usually assumed that the younger children are, the more naturally and intensively mediation takes place by parents and other educators (Feuerstein and Lewin-Benham, 2012), this is not always the case, for a variety of reasons, two of which are

1. the adults do not see a need for mediation or
2. the adults are not able to provide mediation (Feuerstein, Falik and Feuerstein, 2006).

On the one hand, there are parents and teachers who believe that direct exposure to stimuli is sufficient for children's learning, not realizing that children need some help to really benefit from this direct exposure. Feuerstein explains this as follows:

> “It has been posited that direct exposure to stimuli suffices, and that if the child gets information from exposure to many toys and objects and other rich stimuli (such as going to the zoo and so forth), there’s no need to mediate; the child sees and experiences. It is not understood that in order to really experience one’s environment, it first needs to be mediated. The child must be endowed with those tools of perceiving, of elaborating, performing, in order to be able to benefit from direct exposure. So, these children are given a lot of stimuli but literally do not see or do not feel the meaning in their environments, and thus are unable to benefit from their exposure.” (ibid. p. 33).

On the other hand, many children do not receive mediation because their parents are not able to mediate them for such reasons as lack of “time, patience, mental resources or energy” (ibid, p. 37).

In addition to these two reasons, Feuerstein also discusses instances of a conscious effort to cut oneself off from one's culture and not convey its values to children, which again may be due to various factors (Feuerstein, 1980; Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014). I return to this topic in more detail in section 3.6, where I discuss the application of the MLE in the context of teaching values.

2.4.7 Programme of Instrumental Enrichment

A specific application of SCM and MLE theory is contained in Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment Intervention Programme. The programme consists of 13 so-called instruments for young children aged 3 to 6 years and low-functioning individuals (IE Basic) and 14 instruments for students aged 7 years and older, including adults (IE Standard). The instruments are worksheets or workbooks focusing on different mental skills. The term instrument was chosen deliberately because, according to Feuerstein's theory, the material is not the goal of the work, it is a tool to serve as an impetus for further thinking (see the criterion of transcendence in 2.4.5.1). To work with the instruments, the pupil only needs the worksheets, a pencil and an eraser.

The instruments can only be used by mediators who have undergone a special course and have been familiarised with the theory of the method, the MLE criteria and the instruments. An overview of all instruments is in Appendix A.

2.5 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to contextualise Feuerstein's theory of mediated learning and present it in detail as it forms the theoretical basis of this thesis. As described above, Feuerstein's approach is not unique in pedagogy. There are several points of contact with other cognitive approaches to teaching, primarily with the approach of Vygotsky and Bruner, but also Piaget, under whom Feuerstein studied (see 2.4.2). However, what makes Feuerstein's approach exceptional is not only the comprehensiveness of his theory but, more importantly, its application both in the Instrumental Enrichment programme and in any teaching or learning context. The effectiveness of the Mediated Learning Experience is demonstrated by numerous

studies that confirm that, by maintaining the basic criteria of MLE and appropriately supplementing them with situational criteria, learning is not only maximally effective for children, but also significantly develops their ability to learn through direct exposure to stimuli (Mentis, Dunn-Bernstein and Mentis, 2008; Howie, 2020).

As Feuerstein explains (Feuerstein et al., 2010), the Mediated Learning Experience leads a person to be flexible, sensitive and eager to understand what is happening beyond the situation or phenomenon they are experiencing. Through mediating transcendence, the individual moves beyond their primary, biological needs to spiritual, moral, and aesthetic needs. The mediation of meaning then brings into the interaction the cultural and moral values, customs and norms characteristic of that culture. Situational criteria reflect cultural habits, the diversity of cultures and differences between people (ibid.).

As I will point out in the following chapter, the Mediated Learning Experience, according to Feuerstein, has its roots in Jewish culture (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002) in which he was immersed. However, his research has confirmed that the Jewish environment is not the only one where the Mediated Learning Experience has been used, as evidenced by the theories of Vygotsky and Bruner described above, which show significant similarities with Feuerstein's approach (see 2.2.2; 2.2.3 and 2.4).[2] The use of the Mediated Learning Experience beyond the Jewish setting is, then, the subject of my practical research, which, as I described in the Introduction (see chapter 1), focused on the setting of the Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers, as a values-oriented community.

A detailed description of Feuerstein's approach in the context of the other theories mentioned therefore, firstly, clarifies the principles of learning leading to the development of autonomous thinking, which plays an important role in values education (Haydon, 1997), a topic I elaborate in detail in the following chapter; secondly, it is necessary as a theoretical framework for my research aimed at

[2] Interestingly, however, both Bruner and Vygotsky came from Jewish families (Kozulin, 1990), but assessing the extent to which they were exposed to mediation in their childhoods is a question beyond the scope of this thesis.

identifying features of MLE in the interactions between adults and children in Quaker Children's Meetings.

3. Mediated Learning Experience and Values Education

3.1 Introduction

While the previous chapter introduces the Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) in the context of other cognitive theories and shows its principles and importance in the learning process, in this chapter I focus on the application of MLE in the context of teaching values, which is the central theme of my thesis.

Since the beginning of Feuerstein's theories, the main goal of his approach has been perceived to be cognitive development, correcting cognitive deficits and, as a consequence, teaching individuals to learn from direct contact with the environment, i.e. to become their own mediators (Feuerstein et al., 2006). This is also how the Feuerstein approach, including its programmes and methods (see 2.4), has been generally used in the field of psychology and education. However, the challenging of this conception was contributed to by both Sh. Feuerstein, with his study of the Jewish roots of the method (see 3.6,1 and 3.6.2 below), and by R. Feuerstein himself, when towards the end of his life he also started to refer more to the Jewish roots of his method, which he had not particularly emphasized during his long career (Falik, 2019). Moreover, the idea of MLE is based on the principles of cultural transmission, which naturally includes the transmission of values.

Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment programme (FIE) includes several instruments aimed at developing and supporting mental skills relevant to moral reasoning and offering space for reflection on values. According to Sh. Feuerstein, the principles of MLE can be found already in ancient Jewish writings and he argues that MLE "is essential for the education and development of an individual's value system" (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002, p. 22). In his book 'Biblical and Talmudic Antecedents of Mediated Learning Experience Theory', he presented the application of MLE in values education and teaching in the context of the Jewish religion. However, he suggested that MLE is not limited to Judaism but has a place in every culture and in culture in general (ibid.).

The issue of MLE in the context of values education is the topic of this chapter, in which I first define the term values education and discuss its role in today's society. Next, I define the concept of values from different perspectives. I then provide an overview of different understandings of moral development and approaches to values education

such as the cognitive-developmental approach, character education and the socio-cultural approach, within which I situate MLE. Drawing on the work of Sh. Feuerstein, I summarize the use of MLE within Judaism and then compare this approach with other approaches to values education. This complements the theoretical foundation of the previous chapter, which I draw on in my in-field research conducted in a Quaker setting.

3.2 Definition of Values Education

Before I begin to talk about values education and different approaches to it, I find it necessary to define the term, primarily because alternative terms appear and are used in the literature (Haydon, 1997; Muchová, 2015; Halstead and Taylor, 1996). The most common of these are 'moral education' or sometimes 'character education'. Often, these terms are broadly used as synonyms, whereas the differences between them are not significant. These differences lie in the different emphases: while 'moral education' emphasizes the distinction between right and wrong action (Lovat and Toomey, 2009, p. xi), 'character education' emphasizes the development of positive personality traits (Carr and Harrison, 2015). In my conception, however, I agree with Taylor cited by Halstead (1996) who suggests that the aim of these kinds of education is the same:

> "to help individuals develop as responsible and caring persons and to live as participating members of a pluralistic society" (Taylor cited by Halstead, 1996, p. 8).

Based on this definition, I argue that 'values education' can be considered an umbrella term that encompasses moral and character education, and I use it in this sense throughout this thesis. However, the term character education is not only used as a synonym for moral education or values education, but also as an indication of a specific approach to teaching values, which I discuss in more detail in section 3.5.2. When I write only about character education, I am referring to this specific approach.

In the context of values education as defined in this way, though, several issues arise that need to be addressed. These include how values education is carried out, what values should be transmitted, what approaches and methods to use, and what the role of values education is in our pluralistic society. It can be assumed that no clear-cut answer can be given to these questions, since values education and related areas (moral formation, internalisation of values, etc.) are still being researched and depend

on various aspects such as family or cultural background. However, it is possible to show different perspectives and principles, which I summarise and discuss in the next section.

3.3 Values

The concept of 'value' is very complex and different authors offer different definitions and perspectives on it depending on what they consider essential.

In his book 'Teaching about Values', Haydon (1997) elaborates on the concept of values from a number of different perspectives and, in order to highlight the complexity of the concept, argues that

> "it is much easier to draw up a list of examples than it is to give a general account of what kind of thing a value – any value – is." (Haydon, 1997, p. 27).

One of the reasons why values are so difficult to define is that, in some cases, as Haydon (ibid.) notes, values merge with human qualities (e.g. unselfishness, loyalty, tolerance). Moreover, as Hawkes (2005) notes in his study of the impact of the introduction of values in primary school, the term encompasses not only the goal but also the process to achieve it:

> "Values not only constitute goals; they also constrain the pursuit of other goals. For example, to the extent that truth is valued, it is believed that it is wrong to lie, even to achieve something else that is required." (Hawkes, 2005, p. 63).

For Warnock (1996), values are primarily about what we as humans like or dislike. The key word in her definition of values is the word 'we' because it conveys that

> "there is a presumption that humans (…) share the preferences." (Warnock, 1996, p. 46).

In other words, there are values - for example, fairness, justice, respect for others, non-violence - that reasonable people agree on despite their cultural or religious backgrounds.

> "No-one, whatever their cultural background, or the religious source, if any, out of which their moral convictions flow, can do other than morally condemn people who are cruel to the weak, who pursue their own gain at whatever cost to other people, who care nothing for hurting or merely offending others, who neglect or abuse those for whom they are responsible." (ibid, p. 47).

I would argue that this conviction seems somewhat problematic because history tells us that there have been or still are political and religious systems (such as slavery, exploitation, honour killings, Nazism, communism, or radical Islamism) that sanction violence against the weak and that have an interest in their own benefit, at whatever expense to others. But, as Haydon also notes, there are values that "everyone ought to recognize, even if not everyone does." (Haydon, 1997, p, 32) and he continues arguing that different people have different conceptions of values:

> "A person, for instance, who thinks in terms of simple and general rules of behaviour, which admit of no exceptions, has a different conception of morality from one whose approach, explicitly or implicitly, is in terms of a plurality of values which have to be realized as fully as possible in the concrete situation." (ibid, p. 33).

Related to the plurality of values aspect is also the fact that even if people agree on, for example, a value such as fairness, they may disagree on how these values are applied in real-life. Haydon (1997) takes this issue even further when he considers the question of whether an individual's values lie more in what they profess to be their values or in how they behave. He answers this question as follows:

> "Probably the answer is all of these. You might say that people's real values are shown in what they do, since when they talk about their values people may be insincere or self-serving. Yet what people say about their values – their professed beliefs about values – can't be neglected; on the contrary, it is where much of the conflict between people over values originates. In any case, if somebody fails to be, say, as kind as they would like to be, it doesn't mean they don't genuinely value kindness." (Haydon, 1997, p. 30).

This quote shows that not only can each individual perceive the application of values differently within society, but also within their own lives, depending on different factors such as, for example, their current state of mind, the reactions of other people, the difficulty of the situation, strength of character, etc.

To some extent, the aspect of plurality seems also to be related to the development of moral reasoning, which I discuss in more detail later in this chapter. As Haydon suggests in the quote above pointing out that different people have different values, there are people who understand values as fixed rules to be followed in every case; for other people, values do not mean fixed rules but principles whose application depends on various factors. These people are also aware that different situations require the consideration of more than one value, which are often in tension (ibid.).

Haydon gives one example: a researcher cannot get a job. She is alone with two young children. Eventually she can get a well-paid job with suitable work hours. The only problem is that she would be involved in the development of chemical weapons. She is against the use of any weapons, so the decision whether or not to accept the job could be very simple. However, there is also her difficult family situation. Moreover, if she accepted the job, she could perhaps stop the development of weapons (ibid., p. 51). The contrast between the two lines of moral reasoning is evident in this example. The example also shows that different moral priorities and conceptions of values naturally have different impacts on human life. The researcher has several choices: she can refuse the job because of her values, but she can also accept it because of her values. If she accepts, she can adapt to the conditions and continue the research, or she can try to change the research. There is not just one value at play for her, which causes a dilemma. Persons who think in terms of a plurality of values often encounter dilemmas of this kind (Haydon, 1997, p. 51). Halstead (1996) expands on this idea in his definition of values and emphasizes the role of values in an individual's actions, decisions, and behaviour. In his conception, values are

> "principles, fundamental convictions, ideals, standards or life stances which act as general guides to behaviour or as points of reference in decision-making or the evaluation of beliefs or action and which are closely connected to personal integrity and personal identity." (Halstead, 1996, p. 5)

I consider this definition to summarize all previous considerations. Moreover, it captures the general attitude of Quakers towards their values (see 4.1). However, Halstead points out here another important aspect of values, namely their interconnection with the formation of personal identity. Hiltin (2003), in this context, argues that not only is an individual's personal identity shaped by their values, but conversely, what values an individual adopts is influenced by their personal identity:

> "the behaviors [sic] we enact as a result of our identities can cause us to reflect on our values and, over time, to find different values most compelling. When this happens, we experience shifts in our personal identity, our sense of 'who we are'. Thus the relationship of values at the core of the self to the various identities we incorporate into our sense of self is not unidirectional. Personal identity shapes - but also is shaped by - our other identities and behaviors." (Hiltin, 2003).

This is an important observation that I return to in chapters 6 and 8, where I describe (chapter 6) and discuss (chapter 8) Quaker approaches to transmitting values to children. Indeed, the issue of personality formation is prominent in Quaker approaches to education.

3.3.1 Summary

The preceding discussion of values shows the complexity and ambiguity of this concept. I believe that it is not possible to draw up a list of values that is complete and acceptable to all. Nor can it be understood as a binding list of criteria for decision-making, because for some people values mean fixed rules, while others regard them as principles and realise that one situation may require the consideration of more than one value. Nevertheless, in my understanding, values are principles that have a great influence on our daily lives and everyday decision-making.

Also, the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), which is the subject of my study, considers its values as principles that influence everyday life:

> “Values can be described as a standard or moral principle by which you strive to live. Quaker values might be living simply, pacifism or equality.” (Living as a Quaker, 2009, p. 2).

Heath (2009) explains the Quaker concept of values as a ʿway of lifeʾ (Heath, 2009, p. 25), which means that for Quakers the concept of values is strongly related to how life should be lived. This idea is to some extent recalling Warnock's view (see above), which speaks of common values for all humanity. For example, Quakers consider equality to be a basic and fundamental value from which all other Quaker values derive (see 4.1), but while they identify with this value, they do not claim that it is a universally accepted or universally valid value. In their conception, it is up to each individual to accept this and other Quaker values as their own or not. Moreover, as my research shows, the Quaker conception of values also includes the aforementioned aspect of plurality in the sense of individual application of particular values. This means that each individual applies Quaker values in their life according to their own personal understanding, which can also change over the course of an individual's life (see chapter 6).

3.4 Values Education and Its Place in Current Society

I suggest that values education is one of the characteristics of human society. Comenius, the famous 17th century Czech theologian and educator, wrote:

> "It is an unhappy education that does not turn into morality and piety. For what is education without morality? He who thrives in knowledge and loses morals (says the old proverb) loses more than he gains" (Comenius, 1948, p. 75; my translation).

In these words he expressed a belief that, albeit modified in various ways, values education has been present in European society since at least antiquity and is evident in cultures across the centuries (Tappan, 1998). Also, for other famous thinkers and philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Hus, Erasmus, Rousseau, Kant, Pestalozzi, Dewey and others, moral education was a central idea in their thoughts on education (Dvořáček, 2004) and it is no less important in contemporary education:

> "Motivating the student toward moral learning is therefore the educator's primary responsibility. In encouraging this type of consciousness, the educator should transmit the information which the pupil has learned to specific situations that have moral meaning." (Lindgren and Blount, 2011).

Although the appreciation of morality and moral education in the broadest sense (i.e., all views of values) has always been present in human society, a significant change in the concept of morality, and thus values education, occurred after World War II, when individualism and liberalism in education began to be emphasized and the influence of religion decreased. Dvořáček (2004) argues that this tendency reached its peak in the postmodern era, which is characterized not only by individualism but also by pluralism and relativism.

Another manifestation of postmodern society, according to some commentators, is that ethical values are weakened, and society becomes more hedonistic (Dvořáček, 2004; Rajshree, 2013; Bull, 1973). However, this does not necessarily mean that postmodern society tends to be immoral. Sociologists prefer to talk about 'crisis': crisis of the family, ecological crisis, economic crisis, crisis of world peace and justice, and others (Muchová, 2015). The Greek term 'crisis' implies not only decline and radical change (of values, for example), but also new possibilities. Muchová (ibid.) explains it as follows:

> “Crisis makes worse our living conditions, but it can also lead to changes in value orientation, to intentional revival or rejection of traditional values. After a crisis, not a disaster but a new beginning may come.” (ibid, p. 8, my translation)

Current events in the world (climate change, mass migration, political tensions, terrorism, the Covid 19 pandemic, the conflict in Ukraine, etc.) are manifestations of the crisis that reveal the weaknesses of society. However, educators, psychologists, theologians, sociologists and politicians are also looking for ways to promote values education. Given that there are wide disagreements about what form values education should take, and that this can hinder its acceptance in schools, there is a strong case for arguing that values education should focus primarily on the development of critical thinking, which is essential for good decision-making, as well as on the development of sensitivity to the needs of others and empathy.

In the second chapter I have discussed some approaches to the development of critical and autonomous thinking of individuals at a general level and, in the following section, I focus on the application of these theories and the use of their principles in the field of values education.

3.5 Approaches to Values Education

In this section, I consider the answer to the question of how to implement values education and what is the place of MLE in the context of values education and consider some current approaches to it. Given the characteristics of MLE, which aims at general personal development while working with cognition and considering the cultural context, I focus on the cognitive-developmental approach based on Piaget and Kohlberg's theory, the character education approach, particularly promoted in the UK by the Jubilee Centre at Birmingham University, and the socio-cultural approach described and promoted by Mark B. Tappan (1998).

3.5.1 Cognitive-Developmental Approach

The cognitive-developmental approach to values education is based on Piaget's insights into the development of moral reasoning, which have been further developed by a number of other authors, including Kohlberg. The label 'cognitive-developmental' reflects the nature of this approach: it occurs through the stimulation of children's thinking about moral issues and seeks to help children move through a hierarchy of moral stages (Kohlberg, 1975). As Kohlberg notes, Dewey originally came up with the

idea of stages of moral development, but his work remained purely theoretical (ibid.). Piaget began to investigate the stages of moral development by observing and questioning children about their understanding of rules in play. Kohlberg then built on Piaget's research not only by further studying and elaborating on the stages, but also by making practical use of the theory in the context of values education. What follows is a brief overview of the moral stages according to Piaget and Kohlberg.

3.5.1.1 Development of Moral Reasoning According to Piaget

Piaget distinguishes two basic stages of moral development: the heteronomous, which concerns young children between the ages of approximately 4 and 8, and the autonomous, which appears between the ages of 8 and 12 (Heidbrink, 1997; Muchová, 2015). Depending on the stage of young children's rational development, heteronomous morality is characterised by strict respect for authority, understanding rules as unchangeable, fixed, and determined by authority, and accepting punishment as a necessary consequence of bad or inappropriate behaviour (Vacek, 2008, p. 17). On the other hand, autonomous morality reflects a shift to higher intellectual skills, so that children are increasingly able to be aware of other people's points of view and to adopt other perspectives, such as those of the group or society, and to take account of multiple moral factors. Rules are no longer perceived as fixed and determined from the outside but can be criticised and possibly changed if necessary. Punishment is seen as a tool to restore order to situations and to repair damage. At this stage, children can reflect on different circumstances and their influence on behaviour (Vacek, 2008, p. 22).

Although the Piagetian conception of morality is presented as a two-stage development with an intermediate stage where the child is not exclusively oriented to either stage, Piaget emphasizes that the stated age for each stage is only indicative and there may be children of the same age who are at different developmental stages (Heidbrink, 1997, p. 56). Furthermore, it is not clear to what extent the movement from heteronomous to autonomous morality is dependent on the stages of cognitive development (Snarey and Samuelson, 2014, p. 55). Piaget considers it important that children have sufficient time and space to explore the world, including its moral side, independently, and educators should not, in his view, reveal rules or ready-made truths to children until they are ready to understand them, otherwise they are likely to accept them as dogmas:

"Each time one prematurely teaches a child something he could have discovered himself (…) that child is kept from inventing it and consequently from understanding it completely. (…) The problem is to know what will best prepare the child for its future task of citizenship. Is it the habit of external discipline gained under the influence of unilateral respect and of adult constraint, or is the habit of internal discipline, of mutual respect and of 'self-government?' (…) We therefore do not at all agree with Durkheim in thinking that it is the master's business to impose or even 'reveal' rules to the child." (Piaget quoted by Snarey and Samuelson, 2014, p. 56).

Piaget argues that educators can help children develop mature moral reasoning by discussing controversial situations with them as equals and seeking knowledge together, rather than from a position of authority (ibid.).

3.5.1.2 Development of Moral Reasoning According to Kohlberg

American psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg (1927-1987) built on Piaget's research, which he further developed based on his own research on the development of children's justice judgments. He distinguishes three levels of moral development (pre-conventional level, conventional level, and post-conventional level), each of which includes two stages. Kohlberg thus describes a movement from rather egocentric reasoning to other-centred reasoning, then through societal reasoning followed by universal reasoning (see Tab. 3.4).

Stage	**Level**	**Characterised by**
1	Pre-conventional level	Avoiding punishment
2		Mutual self-interest
3	Conventional level	Good boy attitude
4		Law and order morality
5	Post-conventional level	Social contract
6		Universal principle

Tab. 3.4 Kohlberg's model of moral development (Arthur et al., 2017)

According to his research, each individual goes through the stages in the same order, and it is impossible to skip one or more of them (Kohlberg, 1975). He concludes that not everyone is able to reach the highest level with its stages, his research reveals that only about 10% of the population reaches stages 5 or 6 (see table above) (ibid). Kohlberg used dilemma stories for his research, first presenting the individual with a

dilemma and then asking questions to find out how the person resolved the situation and why they chose that solution.

3.5.1.3 Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education

The goal of the cognitive-developmental approach to moral education in Kohlberg's conception is to move to higher levels of moral reasoning. The emphasis is on justice, because for Kohlberg it is the only universal value on which all moral people can agree (ibid., p. 673). Kohlberg suggested that moral education should be done primarily through moral discussion and communication, while children should be exposed to higher-level reasoning and situations that are contrary to the child's current level of moral reasoning, so that they compare their own moral structures with these higher-level conceptions and are led to reconstruct their own position (called cognitive dissonance and assimilation, see Piaget's concept of assimilation and accommodation, 2.2.1). On the one hand, there is the intention and desire of educators to help children move to higher stages; on the other hand, in Kohlberg's conception, it is not possible to move to the next stage until reconstruction has taken place. This process is understood as a natural one depending on the development of children's mental skills and degree of 'social understanding'.

3.5.1.4 Criticism of Kohlberg's Approach

Kohlberg's theory has drawn the attention of many critics. Some of them call in question the rigidity of the stages, namely that every individual goes through the stages in the same order, and that it is not possible to skip one or more of them and if they reach the stage which is for them the highest one, they stay in it for the rest of their life. They point out that there are also values, virtues, character traits, emotions and personal interests which have a significant impact on individual's reasoning and moral behaviour so that people can show different levels of reasoning at the same time depending on situations in which they are living (Muchová, 2015). Critics also claim that moral action is very significantly 'automatic' and that there is a gap between what people think they ought to do and what they actually do (Van Bavel, 2012). However, Kohlberg (1975) argues that although there are other factors that influence moral behaviour (e.g., the situation and its pressures, the individual's motives and emotions, and the individual's volition), moral reasoning is the most important factor in the cognitive-developmental approach because:

a) It is the single most important or influential factor yet discovered in moral behaviour.
b) Moral judgement is the only distinctively moral factor in moral behaviour.
c) Moral judgement change is long range or irreversible; a higher stage is never lost. Moral behaviour as such is largely situational and reversible or losable in new situations. (ibid, p. 672)

A legitimate objection to this claim is that individuals may be able to reason at a high level, but this may not affect their moral behaviour in real-world situations (Arthur, 2017).

Gilligan (2018), a major critic of Kohlberg's theory, disagrees with Kohlberg's sole focus on reasoning about justice, which studies have shown is favoured more by men than women. Gilligan's studies among women have shown that they often prefer an ethic of empathy and caring when making moral judgments (Gilligan, 2018; Arthur, 2017)[3]. According to Gilligan and other psychologists, morality cannot be reduced to justice alone, but must also consider caring, love, and friendship (Arthur, 2017).

The critique of Kohlberg's theory led his followers (the so-called neo-Kohlbergians, e.g. Rest and Thoma from the Minnesota University) to widen the content of moral development to include other virtues and other elements such as moral motivation, sensitivity and courage (ibid.). Arthur et al. (2017) claim that in this way,

> "Kohlberg's heritage came closer to an Aristotelian account of moral development" (ibid. p. 60).

Moreover, the Kohlberg approach has inspired many other educators who have added their own perspectives. Thus, for example, an approach that argues that children benefit from being taught how to think morally. Rowe (2018) considers it important to equip children with appropriate language skills and to help them acquire moral reasoning practices so that they can develop into responsible, caring, and wise individuals. In his approach, he uses 'morally rich stories' (ibid.), which children discuss with teachers in three steps: first, they look for moral issues that arise in the story, then they develop more general thinking through questions such as 'What would happen if ....?' and finally, they encourage children to share their own feelings or experiences

[3] Kohlberg's original research was conducted only among boys and men.

related to the story, thereby developing children's skills of empathy, perspective-taking, and building trust and a sense of community (ibid.).

Wilson (cited by McLaughlin and Halstead, 2000) also points to the importance of language and reason in the context of moral education as a tool to help children think and discuss moral issues clearly and rationally. Moreover, he argues that a person can only be considered morally educated if they do "the right things for the right reasons" (p. 251). In his conception, a morally educated person is equipped with concepts (rules, principles), feelings that support the use of concepts, knowledge of the surrounding circumstances, which includes identifying one's own and other people's emotions and understanding the situation, and finally using all of these components in dealing with other people and in making decisions (Halstead, 1996).

3.5.1.5 Summary

Both Piaget and Kohlberg presented a theory that describes what they found by observing or interviewing individuals. They posit that individuals learn about morals and values primarily through life experiences and by using their cognitive abilities to interpret and understand them. In their conception, moral development is linked to cognitive development. Their theories have contributed significantly to the understanding of moral development and have inspired other psychologists and educators to further work with children in this area. However, they have also aroused criticism concerning not only the developmental process but also the concentration on only a few aspects of morality (justice in the case of Kohlberg) and thus have inspired many educators and psychologists to consider a wider spectrum of components influencing moral development (love, care, feelings, empathy, volition etc).

3.5.2 Character Education

While the cognitive-developmental approach to moral education emphasizes moral reasoning and decision making as the most important means of promoting moral development, character education focuses on the development of several virtues that build 'good character' (Arthur et al., 2017). In other words, character education is virtue-based and is concerned with how people can develop as 'good people', who know what good is, love it and do it. Character education also includes the idea that through morally good individuals, society as a whole will improve (Lee and Kisby, 2022)

Character education has a long tradition, with its roots going back to Aristotle, to whom contemporary promoters of character education regularly refer (Lee and Kisby, 2022). In the 20th century, this approach to teaching values first developed in the USA, and later found popularity in the UK and elsewhere. According to the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, Birmingham, a centre promoting character education in the UK,

> "the ultimate aim of character education is the development of good sense, or practical wisdom; the capacity to choose intelligently between alternatives. The capacity involves knowing how to choose the right course of action in difficult situations; it develops gradually out of the experience of making choices and the growth of ethical insight." (The Jubilee Centre Framework for Character Education, 2022, p. 7).

The emphasis of character education rests on the acquisition and strengthening of virtues which are defined by Arthur et al. (2017) as

> "stable dispositional clusters, concerned with praiseworthy functioning in a number of significant and distinguishable spheres of human life and with a special emphasis on emotions and achieving a golden mean between extremes and the development of phronesis – practical wisdom or good sense" (p. 18).

Specific virtues taught in virtue-based approaches are justice, compassion, gratitude, humility, integrity, or respect (Arthur et al., 2017). Ideally, children should encounter character virtues everywhere. The Jubilee Centre offers a range of sophisticated techniques and methods to develop virtues in children. These methods are practised both in school life in general (school rules, conflict resolution, role models in the persons of teachers and classmates) and are used in direct teaching of values in themselves and across subjects.

According to the Jubilee Centre's secondary curriculum (described in detail in Arthur, 2017, pp. 72-75), teaching values includes the following elements:

- Building knowledge of virtues through which children are guided to understand virtue(s) and their manifestations in practice. They also explore the emotions that can explain the use of the virtue in practice.
- Reflection on virtues, through which children are taught to think about when and how to act appropriately. Various moral situations and moral dilemmas are used in this context.

- The practice of virtues, which means moving from a theoretical understanding of virtues to their application in the child's life. An important part of this element is self-examination, where children should observe the extent to which they can apply virtue in situations that require it and how they might further strengthen and develop it.

In contrast to Piaget and Kohlberg, Arthur et al. (2017) propose four qualitatively distinct stages of moral functioning (pp. 62-63), which they graphically represent using a so-called character development ladder (see Fig. 3.4). This 'ladder' can serve as an aid for self-examination as well as an aid for teachers.

You act virtuously with pleasure				xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
You do what is virtuous habitually			xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
You know what is virtuous to do		xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
You can make moral progress	xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
	Stage 1: Moral indifference	Stage 2: Emerging self-control	Stage 3: Self-control	Stage 4: Virtue

Fig. 3.4 Character Developmental Ladder, Arthur et al. (2017), p. 63

In addition to the Jubilee Centre's programmes, Neil Hawkes' Values-based Education programme is quite widespread in the UK. This is a whole-school approach focusing on virtues or values, chosen by the whole school after consultation and discussion. According to Hawkes (2019),

> "a values-based school seeks to promote an educational philosophy and practices based on valuing self, others and the environment, through the consideration of a values vocabulary (principles that guide behaviour) as the basis of good educational practice." (Values-based Education, 2019)

In values-based schools, the emphasis is on the integrity of words and actions, i.e. a person's actions should be consistent with their words, with teachers as role models

for students (ibid.). This approach is reminiscent of the Quaker position in which integrity is one of the core values (see 4.1) and, as my research shows, role modelling is often used in Quaker Children's Meetings (see 6.4.3.3). The question in this context, however, is the issue of motivation, which in the case of character education seems to be the desire or belief to behave properly, whereas in Quakerism the motivation may be respect for other people, which is based on the belief that there is something of God in each person (see 4.1).

3.5.2.1 Criticism of Character Education and Summary

In relation to character education, there are criticisms that it is a form of indoctrination, that it is individualistic, conservative and even anti-democratic and anti-intellectual (Lee and Kisby, 2022). This critique is based primarily on an analysis of the teaching materials and the procedures for working with them. The authors point out that the stories and situations that are discussed with students often offer simplistic conclusions. The emphasis placed on the use of a particular virtue or virtues in a particular situation can end up obscuring the complexity of the situation and overlooking other issues that arise in the context (ibid). A key component of character education appears to be 'moralisation' in that it distinguishes between desirable moral outcomes and undesirable ones. Rowe (2018) argues that developing prosocial values in children through experiencing and learning about them in schools is not enough and that schools

> "should go further and actually teach moral reasoning, so that students can see a situation, recognize what kind of issues are involved under the surface and know how to resolve them fairly" (p. 17).

It also seems that character education does not sufficiently recognize moral obligations as important factors in moral decision-making. It should also include teaching about legal and moral rights so that children become "more considerate and tolerant of the rights and views of others" (ibid., p. 16).

It can be argued that, whilst character education is a beneficial approach that helps children focus on positive virtues and their development, it pays too little attention to the way in which the move from one stage to another occurs and how specific factors influence this process. An individualistic focus based on the belief that if individuals improve morally, society as a whole will improve (Lee and Kisby, 2022), which is

countered by the idea of young people collectively engaging in civic action (ibid.), also seems problematic (ibid.).

Whereas the character education approach considers the impact of the individual on society, the socio-cultural approach, which I discuss in the following section, offers an opposing view, namely, the influence that society has on the individual in their moral development.

3.5.3 Socio-Cultural Approach

Tappan (1998, 2006), a prominent promoter of the socio-cultural approach, offers this approach as an alternative to the two approaches described above. According to Tappan, this approach incorporates features that the other approaches lack:

> "sensitivity to context and culture, and an appreciation of the centrality of social interaction in moral development." (1998, p. 143).

His theory is based primarily on the work of Vygotsky, which has been applied mainly in the area of cognitive development (see 2.2.2), but Tappan sees great potential for Vygotsky's theory in social and personal development as well, as it provides important insights into the processes of mental functioning, which promotes better interactions with children to foster their moral development.

3.5.3.1 Egocentric and Inner Speech

Tappan (1997) argues that moral functioning – as a form of higher mental functioning – is always mediated (in Vygotsky's words) by psychological tools: words, language and various forms of discourse. Children are exposed from an early age to comments from parents and educators about what is right and wrong, what the social rules are, how others feel when children behave in one way or another, etc. Later on, they start talking about these issues with adults and over the years they

> "gradually create their own internal plan of moral thinking, feeling, and acting, based on their experience in the social world." (Tappan, 1997).

Morality is therefore shaped through social interaction and communication and is shaped by the cultural, historical and institutional environment (ibid.). Thus, in Tappan's conception, the development of morality is not seen as a process that occurs in everyone according to the same pattern as in Kohlberg's conception, but as a process dependent, for each person, on a unique cultural, historical and social context.

Tappan again draws on Vygotsky and his concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (see 2.2.2) and believes that moral development begins within the ZPD and is realised through transformation into intramental processes, i.e., moral understanding, moral sensitivity and moral free action of the child (Tappan, 1998, p. 148). Thus, the new skill is first mediated to the child by a more experienced individual. Gradually, the child begins to mediate the same through internal language until eventually no mediation is needed because the skill is internalized, and the child is ready to acquire new skills (ibid).

Tappan raises another important question in relation to this approach to moral development, namely what motivates individuals to act morally (1997). The answer is again offered by Vygotsky, who argues that

> "thought is not the superior authority in this process. (…) It is engendered by motivation, i.e., by our desires and needs, our interests and emotions. Behind every thought there is an affective-volitional tendency, which holds the answer to the last 'why' in the analysis of thinking." (ibid., p. 96).

Thus, moral development cannot be studied solely from a cognitive point of view but must also include affective and volitional dimensions.

3.5.3.2 Criticism of Socio-Cultural Approach

The socio-cultural approach is quite clearly defined in contradistinction to both the cognitive-developmental approach and character education (Tappan, 1998). Yet, this approach can also be seen as complementary to both of the previous approaches. I would argue that the view of the development of moral reasoning offered by this approach enriches both the cognitive-developmental and the character education view in the sense that moral development does not depend solely on the development of cognition or learning of particular values but is shaped from the earliest age in interaction with parents and educators. The socio-cultural approach sees the individual in their social and cultural context,

> "it does not view individuals as isolated entities; rather, it provides a richer perspective, focusing on the fluid boundary between self and others. It portrays the dynamic of a learner acquiring knowledge and skills from the society and then in turn shaping their environment" (Polly et al., 2018).

I see as the great disadvantage of this approach that, in addition to describing the child's moral development, it does not offer specific procedures for encouraging this development. Although the idea of ZPD suggests that it is necessary to go beyond the current developmental stage of the child, how far to go is purely individual and therefore it is up to the sensitivity and ingenuity of the educator to offer the child sufficiently stimulating impulses. Thus, this approach may seem very challenging for educators.
In addition, children who grow up in unsupported environments or who experience unkind and cruel treatment from their parents acquire different ideas about values and moral behaviour than children who grow up in loving families. However, if we combine this finding with Kohlberg's approach, we can explain why some individuals at the same level of Kohlberg's scale of development of moral reasoning exhibit more egocentric behaviour while others exhibit other-centred behaviour.

3.5.3.3 Summary

Unlike the previous two approaches, the socio-cultural approach emphasizes the social and cultural environment in moral development. It also looks at educators from a different perspective: they are not sources of information or those who offer instructions about morality, values, and virtues, but rather facilitators of language and thus of the thinking skills necessary for moral reasoning and action. This perspective is based on the conception of moral development as a process that is not seen as purely biological, that is, that certain structures mature naturally in the individual and these then manifest themselves in their behaviour, but as a process that is influenced primarily by the stimuli coming to the individual from the people among whom they live.

I would suggest that this approach makes it possible to use everyday situations for the purposes of moral development and values education without having to resort to special materials such as hero stories or dilemmas. Moreover, it is not limited to general moral values or virtues, but also includes cultural and historical values. However, because children are encouraged to pay attention to the reflections of educators and to take from them guidance for their own thinking, this approach places high demands on educators to be real role models for children and to deliberately encourage their moral and value development. Unfortunately, it can also be abused.

3.5.4 Cognitive-Developmental Approach, Character Education and Socio-Cultural Approach in Comparison

Comparing different approaches to values education and critiquing them may lead to the conclusion that some are better than others. In the literature, these different approaches are often defined against each other, e.g. Kohlberg's stages of growth in moral consciousness versus the development of an individual's moral character, which is shaped by many factors, including socio-cultural interaction. However, it seems to me that it is possible to view these approaches in an integrative way that incorporates the contributions of all of them.

The cognitive-developmental approach points to the natural evolution of the individual from self-centred, through other-centred reasoning to universal principles whereby the individual evaluates their direct experiences of interacting with the environment and thus develops their moral reasoning. The socio-cultural approach adds to the idea of the natural development of moral reasoning the idea of the importance of the environment in which the individual grows up, and thus also offers an explanation for why some people reach higher levels on Kohlberg's scale of moral development or why people at the same level exhibit different ways of reasoning, e.g., individuals at level 4 (social orientation) may have either a highly empathic worldview or a self-centred worldview with low empathy. Character education focuses attention on specific values and virtues that are useful to reflect and act on.

I believe that an integrative view of the different approaches to values education opens up possibilities for its further development and a better understanding of people's actions. The three different perspectives of moral development under review can all shed light on someone in, for example, a very limiting moral environment. An individual who did not grow up in a loving environment may perceive the world as a hostile place. Their repertoire of virtues and positive values can be very limited, which affects their emotions and volition. Also, their moral reasoning would be affected, so one would expect that, although this individual has reached a certain level of moral reasoning through natural development, they would be more focused on themselves than on other people. The moral attitudes, values, behaviours, and reasoning of the individual can not only be better understood but also further worked with due to the different approaches to values education discussed.

Moreover, I argue that in everyday life, children are also exposed by their parents and other caregivers to a mixture of different approaches rather than one particular one, which brings me to the Mediated Learning Experience in the context of values education which, in a way, can be seen as an integrative approach. In the following section I discuss MLE in the context of values education in detail.

3.6. MLE Approach

As I explained in chapter 2, MLE is a means to promote cognitive development and therefore a means to promote moral development, as morality and cognition are interrelated (Bull, 1973; Kay, 1973; Kohlberg, 1975; Vygotsky, 2017; Tappan, 1998; Feuerstein, Sh., 2002).

In this section, I first write about the religious background of Reuven and Shmuel Feuerstein, which I consider very important for understanding the whole philosophy of MLE. Then, based on Sh. Feuerstein's study, I summarize the principles of values education in the context of Judaism to show a specific example of the use of MLE in a faith context. I then present some of Feuerstein's instruments that can be used as a means to develop values, empathy, and moral reasoning. I conclude this section with a discussion of the use of MLE in values education outside the context of Judaism and outside the context of Feuerstein's instruments, which will be an introduction to my practical research focusing on approaches to the transmission of values in Quaker settings and the role of the MLE in this context.

3.6.1 Feuerstein's Religious Background

To understand the MLE and its role in teaching about values, one must consider Feuerstein's religious background, as his religion - he was a devout orthodox Jew - was an integral part of his life, and as his close collaborator and personal friend Louis Falik has noted, is evident throughout his work, though not explicitly (Falik, 2019). It was only towards the end of Feuerstein's life, according to Falik, that

> "he very much wanted people to know the relationship between his theories, the application of Mediated Learning Experience, and its Judaic structural influence in both applications and the concept of human existence" (ibid. p. 12).

In the following section, therefore, I will first focus on some of the key moments in Feuerstein's life that shaped his theory of the Mediated Learning Experience. To do

this, I will use two main sources: the chapter ˈReuven Feuerstein: Propelling the Change, Promoting Continuityˈ in Experience of Mediated Learning (2000) by Burgess, and the biography of Feuerstein entitled ˈChanging destiniesˈ (2019), written by Falik. I consider it important to present these moments from Feuerstein's life because they illustrate the emergence of the whole theory of MLE and at the same time they are an example of how upbringing and environment shape an individual's moral reasoning.

Perhaps the most important time in Feuerstein's life that shaped his theories was his childhood. He grew up in a family where his father worked as a ˈshochetˈ (ritual slaughterer) who not only supplied the community with kosher meat, but who also provided advice on religion and on people's personal lives. His wife, Reuven's mother, is also described as a woman who was very hospitable and attentive to the needs of others. Their home was always open to everyone. So Reuven grew up in a very busy but loving and inspiring environment where his parents taught him the basic principles of the Mediated Learning Experience, which was a natural way for them to interact with other people, although Feuerstein did not elaborate on these principles until much later. Feuerstein claimed that,

> "I did not invent mediation. My mother knew it long before I was even born. I merely watched what she did and followed her steps. (…) Mothers are natural mediators and the foremost transmitters of culture, ideas, and values. They do so in the most wonderful ways" (Feuerstein and Lewin-Benham, 2012, p. 69).

Another important aspect of his childhood that greatly influenced him was the social and political situation not only in his homeland and among his fellow believers, but also throughout Europe. Botoşani (Romania), his hometown, was on the route connecting Eastern Europe with Western Europe, which was frequented by many pilgrims seeking their fortune in one region or another. Reuven was therefore confronted from childhood with different cultures (Falik, 2019, p. 13). At that time, many European Jews dreamed of returning to Eretz Yisrael, the Promised Land, many of them actively preparing to realize their dream. Young Reuven did the same when he became actively involved in the Zionist organization. Again, this was a very important experience for him, because, as Burgess describes,

> "he learned to live in an imaginary world – outside of time and space, dreaming of the possibility of creating a society where justice, peace, and positive possibilities existed. As a result, he was better prepared to cope with what lay ahead" (p. 4).

The roots for his unceasing optimism and his deep belief in the possibility of positive change may partly originate here.

Another source of his optimism was undoubtedly his conception of religion. Reuven's religious community was strongly influenced by Hasidism, which he described as follows:

> "Hasidism initially addressed itself primarily to the poor, to the ignorant, to the very simple and sincere people. These were people who believed in G-d [sic] and in serving G-d with the simplicity of their lives. They sang and danced, not always understanding what the words of their songs meant (…). Many could not read or write in Hebrew. Thus they made their prayers in great naivete and candidness" (p. 19).

Hasidism is a pietistic-mystical religious movement that originated in the mid-18th century in eastern Poland but quickly spread throughout Eastern Europe. Each Hasidic community had a rabbi who was its spiritual leader. Reuven's grandfather Levi was very close to his rabbi, so young Reuven grew up in a very stimulating, traditional environment. As Falik puts it,

> "all his adult life, he remained a deeply observant Jew with a deep commitment to all aspects of Judaism but with a flexibility blending the cultural inheritance with the exigencies of modern life – within the fabric of Judaism but also reflecting an international and intercultural experience." (Falik, 2019, p. 31).

From his childhood, Feuerstein was taught to be sensitive to the needs of other people, to empathize and to actively help. From his religion and his family he carried the belief in the possibility of changing people despite the conditions that determine their way of thinking and behaving at any given moment, regardless of whether these conditions are genetic, medical or socio-cultural (ibid.).

Rabbi Rafael Feuerstein (2021), R. Feuerstein's son, lists the most important elements of Judaism that are identifiable in the MLE as follows:

- **The image of God** and the resulting belief that human beings are open systems capable of development despite possible adverse conditions due to their genetics, health, the environment in which they grew up or are growing up, etc. (see the theory of Structural Cognitive Modifiability in 2.4.3).
- **Education**, which plays one of the most important roles in Judaism. It is on the basis of the Jewish model of education as experienced in his own family during

his childhood and youth that R. Feuerstein defines the criteria of MLE and the role of the facilitator.

- **Love for every human being**, one of the most important values of Judaism, has been R. Feuerstein's motivation from the very beginning of his career as an educator and psychologist. Throughout his life he was known for his dedication and willingness to help any client he encountered. This value is embedded in his approach in both the SCM theory (see 2.4.3) and the MLE criteria (see 2.4.5.1).
- **Role of the free will** – free will is another important value in Judaism that allows human beings to do whatever they see fit, i.e., both wonderful and meaningful things and evil or meaningless things. Feuerstein saw free will as a powerful motivating element that defined his entire career: In the beginning, he had a need, i.e., he wanted to help impoverished children. This need created a belief that help was possible, and the belief activated the necessary skills and strategies. Feuerstein passed on this attitude of free will to his students.

As can be seen from the above, in Feuerstein's upbringing there was a mix of a socio-cultural approach and character education (transmission of Jewish values). I would argue that the values behind Feuerstein's entire approach stress the importance of humanity, education and the spiritual dimension in people's lives. I believe, therefore, that considering elements of the MLE within Quaker Children's Meetings is legitimate and enriching for both the Quaker setting and the MLE, to which I will return below (see 4.3.1).

3.6.2 Mediation of Values in Judaism

As I pointed out in the previous section, Feuerstein's MLE theory is strongly influenced by his religious background. Sh. Feuerstein, R. Feuerstein's brother, claimed that

> "MLE is a powerful didactic instrument. But beyond this, it is also a vehicle for transmission of a value system that is of paramount importance for education" (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002, p. 22).

His research led him to the realization or belief that the principles of the MLE are an integral part of the Jewish Bible and Talmud (ibid., p. 21). Although his work focuses on Jewish culture and tradition, according to the MLE's criterion of transcendence his

conclusions are applicable to other cultures or religious groups. In this context, he wrote:

> "By creating a synthesis associating cognition, the emotions and the value system, principles formulated in one area can be transferred to others." (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002, p. 21).

How the MLE in relation to the transmission of values manifests itself outside of Judaism, specifically in Quakerism, is the subject of my research, which I describe in the following chapters. First, however, I want to use Judaism, from which, as is evident, the entire theory of MLE is derived, as an example to show the application of MLE principles in the context of cultural transmission and values education because, as I have already shown when I discussed the religious background of Feuerstein (see 3.6.1), for this religion the process of mediating values and behaviour is a natural process (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002).

The evolution of cultures and their values is a continuous process, the understanding of which plays a crucial role in the life of each individual. People's past experiences help individuals prepare for the future. Depriving oneself of cultural attachments can cause an inability to face life's demands and challenges (ibid., p. 39). R. and Sh. Feuerstein realized this fact, for example, when working with immigrants coming from different cultures to Israel after World War II and in the following decades who were unable to adapt to the conditions in their new cultural environment. To observers, they appeared maladjusted and unable to function normally, and their children had many problems at school, but the cause was their lack of understanding of the new culture and its values (Feuerstein, Falik, and Feuerstein, 2006).

Sh. Feuerstein characterizes Jewish culture as a so-called ˈtranscendence-oriented cultureˈ, which, in his words, is shaped by the intense transmission of beliefs, values, ideas, attitudes to future generations in order to ensure its continuity (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002, p. 37). He argues that it is because of this approach to education that Jews as a people have survived through centuries of persecution.

In the following section, I describe how value transmission takes place within Judaism, focusing first on specific applications of the MLE criteria that Sh. Feuerstein characterizes as typical of Judaism, and later, again based on Sh. Feuerstein's study, I list the most common modes of mediation used in Judaism. With this overview, I want

to both present a practical example of the use of MLE in values education and use it for comparison with values education in a Children's Quaker Meeting setting.

3.6.2.1 Mediated Learning Experience Parameters Specific to Judaism

Sh. Feuerstein identifies four parameters of MLE "specific to Judaism and Jewish Education" (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002, p. 91):

- mediation of awareness of cultural transmission,
- mediation of awareness of Jewish identity,
- mediation of mutual responsibility and
- mediation of Kiddush Hashem or sanctification of God's name.

Studying his work, I first came to the false conclusion that these four parameters are additional MLE criteria because the author writes:

> "These new parameters should be seen as an addition to the theory of MLE, which is still a 'theory in development'" (ibid.).

However, because these parameters differ significantly from the MLE criteria, primarily in that they focus on specific content and cannot be used as principles in any learning context (see 2.4.5), I turned to Rabbi Feuerstein (R. Feuerstein's son) for guidance on how to understand them. He explained to me that these parameters involve the application of two MLE criteria, namely 'sharing behaviour' (mediating cultural transmission, Jewish identity, and mutual responsibility) and 'meaning' (mediating kiddush Hashem – the sanctification of God's name):

> "Mediating cultural transmission, Jewish identity, and mutual responsibility shows how does the Jewish nation define and protect itself. Every culture and every nation gives different content to the parameter of 'Sharing behaviour'. Kiddush Hashem refers to my understanding of the parameter of 'meaning'. It is a characterization of the power of meaning given to Jewish values. There are cultures, secular in nature, that will give other meanings to values like morality, happiness, freedom etc." (Feuerstein, R. S., 2020.)

I deal with these specific parameters because even in the Quaker environment certain parameters are mediated which are based on the philosophy of Quakerism. A comparison of Jewish parameters with Quaker ones is thus offered, which I address in part 7.5. The following text offers a nearer description of the parameters specific to Judaism.

- **Mediation of awareness of cultural transmission**

In the case of Jewish culture, Sh. Feuerstein explains that the need for cultural continuity is rooted in religious commandments and is revisited not only in the celebration of Jewish holidays, but also in daily rituals and in communal or personal study of the Bible and Talmud (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002, p. 92).

The mediation of cultural transmission consciousness in Judaism occurs when Jewish children are raised to perceive the biblical stories not as historical records of past events, but as representations of actual events that they experience while reading about them (ibid., p. 22). This approach to religious and cultural transmission may be one of the most important factors that ensured the continuity of Jewish culture despite the nation's tragic history (ibid., pp. 15-17).

Cultural transmission implies an attempt at continuity, which seems to be one of the typical features of religious societies. The Bible teaches how the beliefs of the two religions – Judaism and Christianity – were transmitted from generation to generation, or in the case of the origins of Christianity, from city to city and from state to state. Thus, the need for cultural (religious) continuity was met in two dimensions: temporal and spatial. The same phenomenon can be observed over the centuries not only in Judaism and Christianity as a whole, but also in their division into different communities. The mediating consciousness of cultural transmission helps the individual to imagine cultures, situations and events without having direct experience of them. It cultivates the ability to mentally 'time and space travel' and teaches children not only historical facts, but also influences their understanding and behaviour (Feuerstein et al., 2006, p. 97).

- **Mediation of awareness of Jewish identity**

This parameter is closely related to the previous one, except that the mediation of awareness of cultural transmission concerns the nation as a whole and the mediation of awareness of Jewish identity focuses on each individual and their decision to identify or not identify with Judaism.

Sh. Feuerstein claims that

> "Jewish identity has always been a central issue in Jewish culture, on both the individual and the community levels" (ibid., p. 92).

He sees the reasons for this in the fact that Jews have been confronted with many cultures from their origins to the present day, which has led to a constant need to decide whether or not to identify with Judaism (ibid.). In MLE theory, this is reflected in the criterion of individual and psychological differences. One belongs to a group, but at the same time one is aware of one's uniqueness.

- **Mediation of mutual respect**

Sh. Feuerstein regards this criterion as crucial for Jewish education (ibid., p. 92). The mediation of ˈmutual responsibilityˈ leads on the one hand to mutual aid, on the other hand to drawing attention to inappropriate behaviour and its correction.

In Judaism, mutual responsibility is reflected in many other commandments, such as "not to leave the congregation if it would dissolve the minyan[4] of the Jews in their prayers" (ibid., p. 93).

- **Mediation of Kiddush Hashem (sanctification of God's name)**

Kiddush Hashem which "is doubtless one of the most transcendent values in Jewish thought and cultural transmission" (ibid., p. 93). The expression Kiddush Hashem means sanctification of God's name and is interpreted as one of the highest principles of Judaism (Newman and Sivan, 1992, p. 87). Originally, it meant a readiness to sacrifice oneself when Jews were forbidden to practise their religion. Throughout the history of the Jewish people, there are many examples of individuals, families and entire Jewish communities who were prepared to die rather than commit idolatry or give up their religion (ibid.). This concept is again linked to the mediation of cultural continuity consciousness, but while the latter focuses more on historical and current events as determinants of culture, the mediation of Kiddush Hashem leads individuals to accept God and His will for their lives.

Later in my research, I come back to these four parameters and discuss their parallels in Quaker upbringing.

[4] A prayer minimum of ten adult men, without which the community may not hold any public devotion. (Newman; Sivan, 1992)

3.6.2.2 Mediational Ways Used in Torah

Having described the key MLE parameters for Judaism, I will now focus on the four basic mediational ways used in the Torah as described by Sh. Feuerstein: questioning, text and figures, history, and acts. These are specific examples of the ways in which values are transmitted in Judaism. Since my research focuses on the ways in which values are transmitted in Quakerism and identifies features of the MLE, I find this overview useful for subsequent comparison with the Quaker setting.

- **Questioning**

Asking questions is a typical way of teaching in Judaism. Two types of questions are usually used in Torah study: open-ended questions, which have many possible answers, and closed-ended questions, which do not necessarily lead to one answer but the answer options are limited (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002). Which type of questions to use depends on the situation, and it is very important that the teacher has a questioning strategy tailored to their students. The goal of the teaching process is not only that students should be able to answer the teacher's questions, but also that they should have the need to ask and be able to do so.

So-called Talmudic questioning is not used to point out a student's lack of knowledge, but to encourage higher mental processes:

> "...the mediator must organize the relevant material and guide the mediatee's behaviour. In this perspective, questions involve analysing and organizing the text, discovering its literary structure, contradictions, logical or historical consistency, and bridging with previously learned material" (ibid. p. 126).

Here are some examples of questions used in Talmudic learning processes (Feuerstein, Sh. 2002):

- What is the difference? Why there is a difference?
- What could be the good reason for it? What is the point?
- What do they want to let us know? What kind of meaning do they want us to derive from these sayings?
- From where are these words, meanings, conclusions? How and where did you derive them?
- What do you learn from it? What is derived from it?

These and similar questions help the student to work with the text in depth, not just skim it, requiring them to work with different sources of information and to focus not only on content but also on structure. They are encouraged to look for possible explanations and reasons and to argue logically. Obviously, this style of teaching exercises thinking very well, but it is also really challenging for both the mediator and the mediatee.

R. Feuerstein recommended just this kind of questioning in mediation interactions with children.

- **Texts and figures**

Biblical texts are an important tool for transmitting cultural values and values education (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002, p. 135). They are very instructive, and their primary aim is not to entertain but to educate and activate. If the reader reads them only as they are written, without reflecting deeply on their form and content, and without trying to interpret them in the context of other texts, content and literary figures used in them, they may learn some information, but they remain passive recipients who are not touched by the text. The transmission of values does not work in this case. According to Sh. Feuerstein,

> "the historical stories in the Bible are not geared solely towards transmitting information. Rather, they are intended to enable future generations to perceive themselves as experiencing the events in them… In other words, the story, and the way it is told transforms the past into the present. The story is destined to become a system of ideas and concepts." (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002, p. 136 and 137).

In the way and form in which the stories were written, we can find all the main criteria of the MLE: the stories were written with intention, they contain meaning for the reader, and they were not only written for a people which has lived for thousands of years, but they are still relevant today, which corresponds to the criterion of transcendence. Reciprocity is reflected in the way the stories are read, as the reader is provoked to ask questions and seek answers in the text itself, in the commentaries, or to discuss them with someone else.

Sh. Feuerstein gives the well-known story of Noah's Ark as an example of how a biblical text could be read. According to Jewish interpretation, the main message of the story is not the description of an historical event, but the moral directives implicit in the

lexis of the story (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002, p. 139). While the world before the ark is characterized by words such as disorder, corruption, violence, for the ark there are precise dimensions, materials, interior details, etc. (Bible, Genesis, 6, 11-13). Shmuel concludes:

> "The parallel between these two texts forms an implicit illustration of a value system to be respected and transmitted to future generations:
>
> DISORDER is contrasted with ORDER,
> CORRUPTION with normative COMMANDMENTS,
> DISRUPTION is contrasted with CONTINUITY,
> UNDIFFERENTIATION with DIFFERENTIATION
> IMMEDIACY with TRANSCENDENCE."
> (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002, p. 140)

This example shows the Jewish principle how to read biblical texts and learn about values.

- **History**

History is an important mediator as well. In the whole Jewish Bible, the words 'remember' or 'tell your sons' are very often to read. All the historical events recorded in the Bible are there to transmit the value system.

> "The commandments of historical remembrance in Judaism in the form of 'remember the…' are not designed simply to provide information. Their major goal is to modify the individual, to deepen his cognitive and emotional belief system and to lead him towards accomplishment of the entire commandment system linked to the historical event in question." (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002, p. 181).

We can see here again what I already explained above – the texts, or in this case the history, mediate the events so that they become real for the reader or listener, they live them, becoming an active participant who can react on them and let them modify them.

- **Acts**

By 'acts' Sh. Feuerstein is referring to the various holidays and their symbolic meaning (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002, p. 197). During the year, Jews have many occasions for celebration. However, all holidays are closely linked to history and have metaphysical significance (Szlakmann, 2003), so that they do not only serve to relax, spend time

with family or friends, or spend money on gifts and food, but also to learn about God and to reflect on history, culture, and one's own life (ibid.).

3.6.2.3 Summary

In this section, my intention was to present MLE application to the transmission of values within Judaism, which uses various mediating means that are an integral part of its culture (biblical texts, rituals, holidays). While this may seem to be a very specific setting of one particular religion and its perception of the world, I would argue that all of the examples given are transferable beyond Judaism: thinking about the meaning of different holidays and traditions in any culture, discussing different stories (see, e.g. working with stories in other approaches to values education), thinking about historical events and the actions of different figures, asking questions about events, stories or even personal experiences, are all elements of MLE that we encounter to varying degrees in other settings. My research among Quakers is based on this premise.

3.6.3 Mediation of Values Outside the Context of Judaism

In the previous section I focused on the principles of MLE in the context of values education in Judaism, for which this approach, as Sh. Feuerstein explains, is typical. I now turn my attention to the application of these principles outside the context of Judaism. To this end, I will first present some of Reuven Feuerstein's instruments for helping children develop their thinking skills, which are an integral part of moral development. I then reflect on the application of MLE in everyday situations.

3.6.3.1 Feuerstein's Instruments Focused on Emotions, Empathy, and Violence Prevention

In his Instrumental Enrichment programme, there are three instruments in the basic set that focus on emotion recognition, empathy, and violence prevention. These instruments form a comprehensive set of materials that starts at the level of emotions and leads to reflection on conflict situations. In Feuerstein's conception, it is first necessary to understand one's own emotions and the emotions of others, which is also the theme of the first instrument in this set. Our actions and behaviours depend on feelings and emotions and our ability to understand and express them. If people are able to understand emotions, it is much easier to develop empathy (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014). For Feuerstein, empathy is not only the ability to put

oneself in another's shoes, but also to act, to do something to improve the situation. The second instrument in this set offers plenty of material to think about empathy and action. The third instrument, entitled 'Think and learn to prevent violence' completes the set. Students are encouraged to reflect on different conflict situations using their knowledge and experience from the first two instruments. *Which solution to the situation is more appropriate? Why? Always? How might the people in the pictures feel? Why?* These are examples of questions used when working with this instrument.

For all of these instruments, the children are asked to analyse some situations and decide what emotion or reaction (depending on the instrument) corresponds to the initial situation. The role of the mediator is not to moralize, but to guide the mediatee to use the necessary thinking skills (e.g., focused perception, information gathering, analytical thinking, deductive thinking, comparison) to understand the situation and decide on a solution to explain it.

Sample pages of these instruments follow (see Fig. 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7). Fig. 3.5 is the first page of the instrument Identify the Emotion. Students first work with the initial photograph to identify the emotion depicted. They then analyse each situation in the pictures and think whether the emotion corresponds to the situation and to what extent. Fig. 3.6 shows page 12 of the instrument From Empathy to Action. Students first analyse the situation in the opening picture above, then think about the different possible solutions to the situation which are on the pictures below and discuss which solution seems to be the most appropriate and why. Fig. 3.7 is the cover page of the instrument Think and Learn to Prevent Violence. Students use the title page to prepare for working with the following pages of the instrument, discussing the concepts of violence and prevent. Through illustrative pictures, they think about what the whole of the concept of violence can include. In the discussion they are guided to connect the situations in the pictures with what they already know from the previous instrument about emotions and empathy.

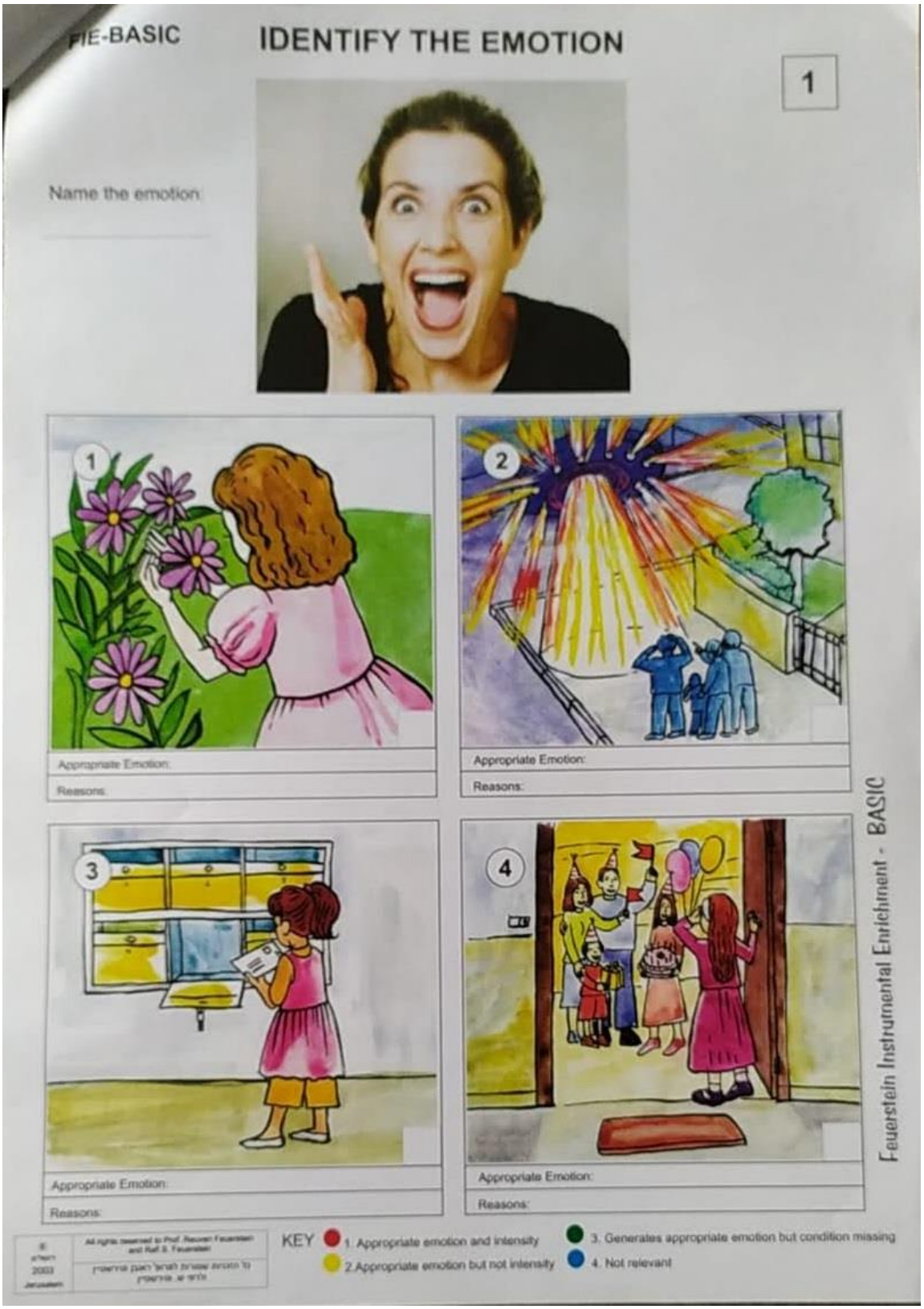

Fig. 3.5 Page 1 from the instrument Identify Emotions

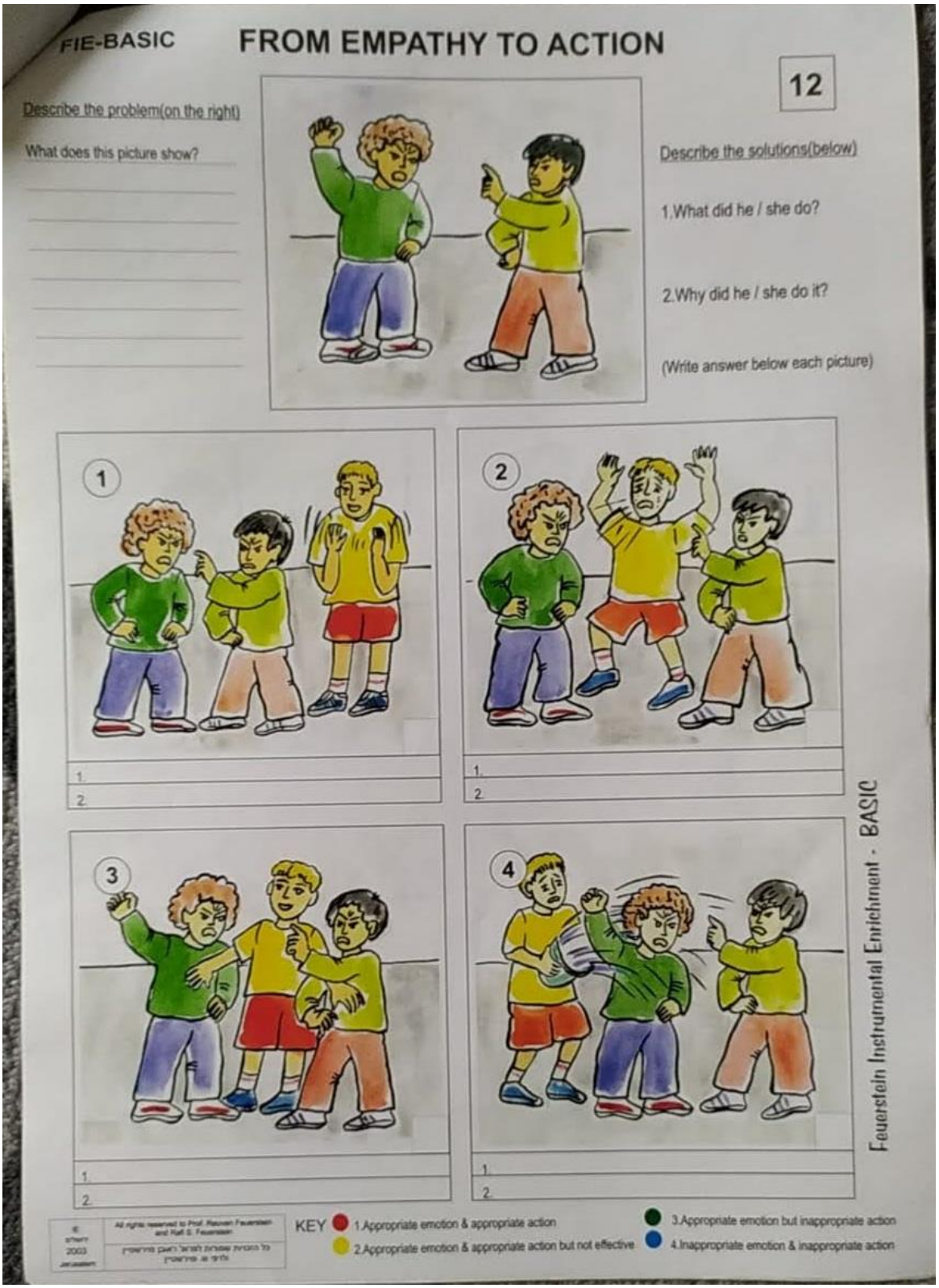

Fig. 3.6 Page 12 from the instrument From Empathy to Action

Fig. 3.7 Cover page from the instrument Think and Learn to Prevent Violence

Apart from these three instruments, there are no others that explicitly address human behaviour, morality or values. This makes sense because Feuerstein declares his programme as content-free and applicable regardless of the cultural background of the mediators (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014). The three instruments above do not contradict this rule either, as they are meant as thought-provoking, offering more than one correct solution. Mediators from different cultures may see situations differently depending on their beliefs, value systems and cultural traditions.

3.6.3.2 Application of MLE in Everyday Situations

I argue that due to the nature of the MLE it can be used in any everyday situation. The term 'experience' in the title of this approach highlights the fact that the mediator turns situations into experiences that help children learn and benefit from them (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014). If we assume values as principles that shape human decision-making in particular and influence human behaviour (see section 3.4), the mediator's role is to take the opportunity to help children better understand conflict situations of any kind (e.g., conflicts between siblings or peers, various dilemmas in children's lives - what to buy, whether or not to help others, cheating at school, etc.) According to the MLE criteria (see 2.4.5.1), the mediator does not play the role of a moralist who gives advice and guidance to the child on what to do and how to behave. Rather, on the one hand, they guide the child to better understand the situation, to focus on the relevant aspects and to think about possible solutions. On the other hand, they are a role model for the child, sharing their own dilemmas and the procedures they have used to solve them. This sharing can occur naturally at any time, not only in situations where children are confronted with difficulties. According to the socio-cultural approach, moral reasoning is internalised from the outside, i.e. from the social to the individual, which means that the more children are exposed to the mediator's sharing about conflict or dilemma situations and the process of solving them, the more their moral reasoning is developed. I emphasize the term process here because it is not enough for children to know what is right and wrong in a particular situation. They definitely need to know and understand that every situation is original, that many aspects influence it and that ideally all of them need to be considered in order to decide. It is not possible to transfer the solution of one situation to another, but it is possible to transfer the principles on which the reasoning about the situation is based. In my view,

the Mediated Learning Experience offers just this way of educating children to think morally and develop their value system.

Feuerstein and Lewin-Benham in their book 'What Learning Looks Like' (2012) show various examples of classroom and museum activities that help children develop thinking, empathy and values. One such activity was an exhibition called 'Remember the Children', which aimed to stimulate thinking about prejudice using the example of a 10-year-old Holocaust victim. The exhibition was designed to allow visitors to experience the boy's story through all their senses and also to have the opportunity to talk to Holocaust survivors. The authors summarise it as follows:

> "Mediation was the keynote of the exhibition and was successful because visits were planned with as much time for discussion as for experiencing Daniel's story and engaging in the various exhibit activities. Discussion was the main technique to encourage visitors to reflect, analyse, summarize, disagree or concur, and through common experience, share their reactions. (…) Mediation can help adults guide children to develop increasingly sophisticated thinking, values, and feelings." (ibid., p. 69 – 70).

This kind of activity is similar to the Jewish approach to communicating values through biblical stories or historical events (see 3.6.2.2).

As shown in the previous section, where I introduce FIE instruments focusing on emotions, empathy and violence prevention, Feuerstein considered empathy as a very important basis for moral action. According to him, only when an individual recognizes the feelings of another and is able to understand what triggered these feelings, they can respond appropriately:

> "Emotion and cognition play complementary roles in the feeling of empathy. In order to feel empathy, you must experience another's suffering. But you must also know what happened to the victim – a cognitive process – in order to identify with him." (ibid., p. 121).

Mediation Learning Experience is a means to foster and nurture children's natural sense of empathy (ibid.).

3.6.3.3 Summary

The aim of this section was to show how the MLE approach can support moral development. In particular, the benefits of MLE include a process orientation, the development of abstract thinking, the promotion of intrinsic motivation, and the active

modification of the individual's personality and functioning in everyday behaviour (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002, pp. 113-117). It increases the individual's flexibility and improves their ability to benefit from direct action. This ability causes better orientation not only in one's own culture but also in a new culture and leads to better and more confident reactions in difficult situations. The Mediated Learning Experience promotes the development of the mental skills that are so important for moral reasoning.

Feuerstein's instruments emphasize elements that are not so obvious in the cognitive-developmental approach and the character education approach. These are emotion and empathy, and in this approach, they are seen as crucial to the development of moral reasoning and behaviour. If children can understand their own and other people's emotions, they can more easily understand a situation and are more likely to respond to it than if they do not know their emotions and have not developed empathic behaviour (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014).

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I first reflect on the concepts of 'values' and 'values education' and then describe three different approaches to values education: the cognitive-developmental approach, character education and the socio-cultural approach. Although I have described the approaches separately as distinct and mutually incompatible, as they are usually presented in the literature, I believe that they can be seen as complementary perspectives that can be used together. Whereas Piaget's and Kohlberg's approaches explain natural moral development as dependent on the development of cognitive functions, the socio-cultural approach points out that development can be significantly influenced and developed through language and other mediating tools. After all, Kohlberg himself suggested that children should be exposed to the views of individuals who are one to two steps higher on Kohlberg's scale when dealing with moral dilemmas. Each of these approaches offers a different perspective - while the cognitive-developmental approach looks at the individual from the perspective of their natural development, the socio-cultural approach looks at the individual from the perspective of the influence of the environment in which they grow up. Character education brings the important realisation that values and virtues can indeed be nurtured and presents specific virtues that are desirable in our society. Like the socio-cultural approach, it emphasizes language, the naming of virtues and an understanding of their nature.

The term 'socio-cultural' is a way of describing any learning in which people learn the norms of a given situation through social interactions that are based on that cultural environment. Such learning takes place both intentionally and unintentionally. MLE is an approach that uses the socio-cultural view of learning intentionally. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that, in addition to elaborating a theoretical foundation in which points of contact can be found with both Piaget (see 2.2.1) and Vygotsky (see 2.2.2), it provides mediation criteria that guide the mediator on how to work with the mediatee to make learning as effective as possible. While maintaining the criteria of intentionality and reciprocity, meaning and transcendence, the child is actively involved in learning about values, their understanding and moral conduct without moralization on the part of the educator. The criterion of belonging offers an aspect of cultural and historical specificity, the criteria of sharing and psychological differentiation leads to respect for others. The mediation of regulation and control of behaviour helps to evaluate situations, to reduce impulsivity in decision-making, to think more about oneself and others.

As a teacher who uses Feuerstein's Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) in my practice, I am convinced that this approach and the way I use it are effective ways to mediate values to children, such that they are encouraged to examine them critically, to respond authentically, and thus, in time, incorporate them into their own thinking and apply them to their own behaviour, in other words to lead them to autonomous thinking (see 3.6; Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014).

Although MLE appears to be an appropriate approach to values education, research in this area is not extensive. This opens room for further studies. One such contribution is my research which focuses on the elements of MLE in the interactions between adults and children in Quaker Children's Meetings which I present in the following chapters.

4. Quaker Values and Their Application in Education

In this chapter, I first define the concept of Quaker values and then present their application to Quaker formal and informal education. This background information helps to situate the tendencies in Quaker attitudes towards children that I focus on in the research section.

4.1 Quaker Values

As I mentioned in the introduction (1.2) Quakerism is strongly values-oriented. The values (also called ˈTestimoniesˈ in Quaker settings) on which Quakerism is built have accompanied it from the very beginning. It is interesting to see how it has evolved over time. Often cited examples such as specific dress, the use of ‘thee’ and 'thou' (used to address all other people as equals, not social superiors), not using secular names for days of the week, etc. were important to Quakers in the 17th and 18th centuries, but over time some of these outward manifestations have lost their significance and new ones have emerged. The use of the word 'Testimony' also evolved. While it was originally used in the singular and it meant an individual’s expression, in words and in their life, of their religious revelations, contemporary Quakers often refer to six basic Testimonies: Equality, Integrity, Peace, Community Simplicity and Sustainability (Muers, 2015). According to Dandelion (2018), this shift from understanding everyday life as a Testimony to a list of Testimonies was due to the need to bring Quakerism closer to newcomers. He also points out that today's Quakers consider Testimonies to be more general concepts than their predecessors did in centuries past. Testimonies have become values that open up space for individual interpretations and the search for individual ways to apply them in personal life (Dandelion, 2007; 2018). Although Testimonies are often presented individually today, their interconnectedness is still evident. As the results of my research will show (see chapter 6), for many Quakers Testimonies signify the whole, not individual items. Testimony, or Testimonies in contemporary language, are based on the principle of love:

> "As Friends, we commit ourselves to a way of worship which allows God to teach and transform us. We have found corporately that the Spirit, if rightly followed, will lead us into truth, unity and love: all our testimonies grow from this leading." (Advices and Queries, 1995, p. 3).

Love can be seen as an umbrella value for all the other ones. Love leads to Equality and Peace. All people are God's creation, all people have the opportunity to know God, and therefore all people are equal. If all people are equal, on the one hand there is no reason to harm others and, on the other hand, there is also a need to actively work against injustice and evil, because Integrity means harmony between thoughts, words and actions. There is also Simplicity which is

> "Forgetfulness of self and remembrance of our humble status as waiting servants of God" (Dandelion, 2007, p. 228).

Manifestations of Simplicity in everyday life, such as not wasting things, money, words or time, stem from spiritual simplicity, the essence of which is liberation from everything that prevents a "pure and immediate relationship with God." (Durham, 2013, p. 153; Dandelion, 2007). Recently, Testimony has begun to manifest itself in the pursuit of Sustainability, a lifestyle which conforms with Equality, Simplicity and Peace.

One practical application of the Testimony is in the area of education, which has been a concern of Quakerism from the very beginning. A deeper insight into this area is offered in the following section, in which I first describe the development of Quaker formal education, including the principles of the Quaker approach to it, and then focus on Quaker informal education, which is the subject of my research.

4.2 Quaker Formal Education

Although Quakerism and education have been closely linked from the beginning, opinions on this issue have varied. On the one hand, there were those among the early Quakers (including George Fox) who believed that formal education was necessary for children, particularly because of the exclusiveness of Quakers and their desire for their children not to be 'infected' by the prevailing society. On the other hand, there was a widespread belief that formal education, especially in religion, was not necessary because everyone is guided by the Inner Light, also called the Inward Teacher, and therefore there is no need of any human teachers (Woody, 1920).

Whatever the views on education among the early Quakers, several Quaker schools were established as early as the 17th century. Although Quakerism never developed any particular pedagogical approach (Dalke and McNaught, 2004), there are many common features that characterized the early Quaker schools in particular. From the very beginning, Quaker schools were based on the Quaker Testimonies (O'Donnell,

2013). One of these is Equality, which was manifested in the context of the establishment and operation of Quaker schools by the fact that Quaker schools were open to all children from Quaker families "regardless of wealth, gender or race" (O'Donnell, 2013, p. 406). George Fox even initiated the establishment of a girls' school and co-educational schools were also established during his lifetime. This attitude towards education for all was something truly new at the time (Kenworthy, 1987, p. 6).

Later, Quakers opened schools for First Nations people and Black people in America, there were some special schools for children from poor families as well (Woody, 1920). Beyond daily schools, there were also many boarding schools, including one school for the children of families who had become ‘disowned’ by the Society[5].

Quaker schools have made great progress in this respect compared to the rest of society, but Equality in this context had its limitations. Unfortunately, there is evidence of the disciplinary practices of some Quaker schools seeking to eradicate the traditional culture of children that would be considered cruel in the present day (Decolonizing Quakers, 2023). Similarly, the distinction between schools for rich and poor children or the fact that female teachers were paid less than male teachers does not fully reflect the idea of Equality (O'Donnell, 2013, p. 406). Stewart (1971) cites young Quaker teachers who complained about the 'class distinctions' in the Society's schools (the record of the complaint dates back to 1942):

> "Within our own system there are privileged and non-privileged schools, reflecting and perhaps helping to perpetuate class distinctions in the Society itself." (p. 243)

The emphasis in education was on moral and religious education (Woody, 1920, p. 7-8). Fox meant that all education should lead to the knowledge of God, anything else was meaningless in his view (Stroud, 1944, p. 14). For this reason, the Bible was the main textbook, although later Quakers, including George Fox, began to write their own textbooks. The ordinary textbooks used in non-Quaker schools were unusable because they did not fit Quaker beliefs and convictions (Kenworthy, 1987, p. 8).

In boarding schools in particular, strict rules prevailed. In some schools, for example, children were not allowed to leave the school and thus would avoid meeting the

[5] 'Disowned' people were for example people who married non-Quakers.

'dangerous' world. Holidays did not begin to be introduced until the second half of the 19th century (Stroud, 1944, p. 121). The schools had a system of punishments which, on the one hand, was not so severe compared to the ordinary schools of the time, but on the other hand, was not always humane by today's standards. Some schools, for example, had separate cells in which children who were punished were locked up with only bread and water; there are also references to the use of straps and canes (ibid.). The second half of the nineteenth century brought changes in the perception of children and their education, and these changes were reflected in Quaker schools where educators began to use positive motivation, praise, and rewards rather than a continued focus on punishment (ibid.), which gradually subsided between about 1840 and 1900 (Stewart, 1971). Thus, Quakers concluded, relatively early on, that non-violence needed to be applied not only to other adults but also in the education of children (Kenworthy, 1987). Corporal punishment was not banned in state schools in Britain until 1986 and in 1998 for independent schools. The above description of Quaker schools shows a long developmental process in which the greatest changes probably occurred during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The decline in the need for Quaker schools began with the first National Education Act in 1870, which made schooling compulsory and free until the age of 13 (Gillard, 2018). At the same time, Oxford and Cambridge universities opened to students from non-Anglican backgrounds. This gradual opening of education to all was accelerated in the 1944 Education Act, which provided free and compulsory schooling for all children and young people up to at least 15 years of age (ibid; Kenworthy, 1987). The consequence of these events was that more and more children and young people from Quaker families attended mainstream schools, while Quaker schools were still fee-paying and the difference between curricula was minimal (Kenworthy, 1987). While interest in Quaker education declined among Quakers, it grew among non-Quakers. Nigel Newton, who completed his doctoral research on Quaker schools in 2016, reported that there were currently 10 Quaker secondary schools in Britain and that less than 5% of teachers and about 3% of students in these schools were Quakers or came from a Quaker family (Newton, 2016, p. 2). However, the trend of declining numbers of Quaker teachers in Quaker schools was already evident in the first half of the 20th century, when Quaker teachers increasingly felt uneasy about teaching in a privileged sector and saw it as incompatible with the Equality testimony. According to a small survey

cited by Stewart (1971, p. 248), 34% of a sample of about 160 Quaker teachers said they would not teach in a Quaker school.

What is attractive about Quaker schools to non-members of this religious group, and why they are no longer necessary for children of Quaker families, are certainly interesting questions, but beyond the scope of this thesis.

4.2.1 Principles of Current Quaker Formal Education

Although Quakerism and education are inextricably linked, as has been shown above, it would be wrong to speak of 'Quaker pedagogy' as describing a particular approach to teaching based on any fixed rules or principles, such as Montessori or Waldorf pedagogy. This is because Quakerism is a religious society that does not rest on a closed system of rules and traditions, but rests on what is called an enduring revelation that comes through any member or participant (Dalke and McNaught, 2004).

The question of what and how to teach in Quaker schools has been addressed by several authors. They agree that what makes Quaker schools different from other schools is not necessarily the curriculum but the approach to pupils and staff. According to research by Newton (2016), Quaker values are still very important to Quaker schools in Britain. The values most appreciated by pupils and teachers include friendliness, trust, community, individual identity, equality, and mutual respect (pp. 335-339). Jaggar (1984) identifies several principles of Quaker religious philosophy that he considers relevant in the context of Quaker education. These are personal spiritual experience, belief in something of God in each person, integrity, the need to live in community, and not to impose the will of the majority.

Smith (2004) offers a list of principles underlying Quaker formal education, derived from the Testimonies, and describes in more detail their application in practice:

- Priority of experience

Smith emphasizes the idea that the teacher's main role is not to provide a wealth of information, but rather to encourage students to learn and show them that whatever they learn is meaningful to them. Each pupil may find a different meaning in the subject they are learning, but it is important that they are encouraged to find it at every opportunity.

- Integrity

There are no two separate worlds - the academic and the lived. There is only one world, and the goal of education is not to know, but to be able to apply what we have learned in different life contexts and to better understand the whole world.

- Friendly facts

From a Quaker perspective, the world is perceived as welcoming and friendly. Throughout history, Friends have had to come to terms with the idea of a fallen world dominated by sin but have concluded that humans can recreate harmony between God and man.

- Invite all voices

> "Quaker pedagogy invites all voices into the dialogue, with the conviction that each may bring some measure of light and truth" (p. 13).

In accordance with this principle, educators strive to create an atmosphere in which no one need be afraid to reveal their inner spiritual experiences and opinions.

- Non-violence

In the context of education, children should feel safe, and education should not intimidate them, but rather support and encourage them.

These principles apply to Quaker schools, however, there are many Quaker teachers who do not teach in Quaker schools but seek to apply Quaker values in their teaching and work with children. The book ˈFaith and Experience in Education: Essays from Quaker Perspectiveˈ (2018), edited by Rowe and Watson, presents the contributions and experiences of such educators. The essays offer a wide range of perspectives and teaching methods as each individual author presents his or her own experience. They generally do not begin with a list of Quaker values to show their application in education. Rather, they describe their approach to teaching, their inner attitude, their truth, and relate it to those Quaker values that underlie their thinking and actions. Mason (2018), a maths educator and one of the contributors to this book, puts it this way:

> "I do not experience my pedagogic choices as being informed by Quaker testimonies, but, on reflection, I find that the behaviour I value is consistent with Quaker values. This

> is not that I teach in a particular way because I am a Quaker, but more that I am a Quaker because what I value is consistent with exposed Quaker values." (ibid., p. 199)

It is clear from these essays that the authors share common principles and values. In particular, they mention Love and Care, Authenticity, Equality, Justice, Peace, Trust, Spirituality, and Diversity (Rowe and Watson, p. 6).

An important aspect of the Quaker contribution to education that is highlighted in this publication is the therapeutic aspect, with some of the specifically Quaker schools being explicitly therapeutic for troubled children, which stems from the fact that Quakers were involved in a movement that became known as Planned Environmental Therapy, helping children who had suffered emotional trauma (especially after World War II). According to Pollard and Reader (both of whom are quoted in the book's introduction), Quakers did not bring any particular educational philosophy, but

> "they played a pioneering role in the development of schools as sites of therapeutic practice in the twentieth century" (ibid., p. 4).

The authors believe that this stems from Quaker attitudes that are concerned not only with children's knowledge but with the development of their whole personality and point to the value of Love and Care as key to this.

Later, Quakers became significantly involved in restorative justice work and its application in state-funded schools, which focuses on peaceful conflict resolution and mediation between victims and offenders.

> "This Quaker involvement in restorative approaches in schools, including conflict resolution and peer mediation, is today widely regarded as the Society of Friends' most visible corporate contribution to modern educational practice. Quakers have a history of, and unending commitment to, trying to change the world for the better through faithful action, and the educational system is a values-rich environment with the capacity to inspire and transform the lives of young people of whatever ability" (ibid., p. 5)

In addition to Love and Care, these activities are evidence of the Quaker Peace Testimony and its application in the context of education.

The book offers valuable insight into the practice of teachers, with several specific examples of how they express their inner experience and work with children in ways that are consistent with their beliefs. As I have stated above, the texts offer no one-

size-fits-all approach because each individual is authentic and original, and while they may share the same values, they live and practise the values in different ways. However, underlying all the approaches documented are several commonalities, such as treating children with respect, letting them express all their ideas and reflect on them together, developing their critical thinking skills, teaching them problem solving and peaceful conflict resolution, and respecting the individuality of each child.

4.2.2 Summary

The aim of this section was to introduce the principles of Quaker formal education. The concept of Quaker education is not a pedagogy based on fixed rules. Yet Quaker education exhibits common principles derived from Quaker Testimonies. Each teacher or school with a Quaker background emphasizes some of these, depending on his or her personality (in the case of teachers) or focus (in the case of schools). Regardless of the individual Testimonies, the approach of Quaker teachers and educators is specific because they are interested in the development of children not only in terms of academic knowledge but also in the whole personality. It is likely that their approach to teaching can be inspiring for teachers outside the Quaker context.

Developments in Quaker formal education also led to the establishment of so-called First Day Schools or Sunday Schools, which became widespread in the nineteenth century, particularly in America but also in the UK (Kenworthy, 1987, p. 16). There were two types of Sunday Schools: one for adults and one for children. The aim of adults' schools was especially

> "to teach basic literacy skills and offer religious instruction to working-class labourers" (Welling, 2013, p. 310).

One of the reasons why First Day Schools for children were established was that a high percentage of Quaker children did not attend Quaker schools and adults were aware that they would need some religious education outside of school (Kenworthy, 1987). The main teaching tool in these schools was the Bible (Macy, 2013). Over the years, the Children's Sunday Schools, which were mainly aimed at teaching religion and the Bible and were run in a rather authoritative and strict manner, have evolved into Children's Meetings (second half of the 20th century), which are more responsive to the needs of children in terms of their spiritual development and religious education (Collins, 1994).

4.3 Quaker Informal Education, Children's Meetings

In general, Quakers regard children and young people as "an important part of the life of Quaker Meetings", as stated on the British Quaker website, and hold a variety of regular and occasional events for and with them at local, regional, national and international levels. I would argue that the aim of these events is to offer a safe space and build community where children and young people can make friends, develop their own spirituality and learn about Quakerism. Collins (1994) writes in this context:

> "It is the responsibility of the Quaker community to nurture the spiritual path of everyone in the Meeting including the children and young people." (p. 10).

One of the most common Quaker programmes for children and youth are the regular Children's Meetings that many Quaker Meetings hold. Depending on the number and ages of the children, these Children's Meetings are held weekly or at regular intervals, depending on local conditions, during adults' Meetings for Worship. In some Meetings, children can choose whether they wish to participate in the children's programme or whether they prefer to attend the silent Worship with adults. The Children's Meetings are usually led by volunteers from among the members or participants of the Meeting, and of course all the safety rules of the country are observed. The content of individual children's sessions is not determined by any centrally set curriculum but is entirely within the discretion of the Meeting or those involved in organizing the children's session, but in principle the content of the session can be said to be guided by Quaker values. Many Children's Meeting leaders use support materials produced by a central team based at Quaker headquarters, Friends House, in London.

Welcoming children and young people into Quaker Meetings is a great responsibility and a challenge that raises many fundamental questions that each Quaker Meeting must answer for itself. As is evident from the aims of Children's Meeting (see chapter 6.3.5 below) it is not a space where children play until the adult Meeting has finished worshipping, but the ambition of Children's Meeting is to offer children a similar experience to that of adults, and so it should also be seen as a Meeting for Worship only tailored to the needs of children and young people. In this context, mention should be made of the booklet ˈOpening Mindsˈ by Collins (1994), where the author provides a provocative and critical perspective on Children's Meetings. I find it useful to summarize her most important ideas here as they are closely linked to my research.

Collins sees the goal of Children's Meetings as not only spiritual education, but also affirmation of the self as an individual, acceptance as a valid part of a religious community, and knowledge of Quakerism (p. 9). She points out that the activities in Children's Meetings may resemble those that children do in school or at home, but there is a different emphasis that lies in the context of the group:

> "The difference may be subtle and difficult to express but there should be some thought given to the context – the context of a group of people whose main activity is worship" (p. 10).

To achieve these aims, it is crucial to know the children well and to be interested in them (ibid.).

In this context, Collins questions whether children are indeed always accepted, and refers to the Testimony of Equality. She points to what she calls 'hidden messages' (p. 20) that show how highly Children's Meetings and children themselves are valued by the adults. She addresses the Adult Meetings with provocative questions such as: Do the children have an extra room that is appropriately equipped? How do the adults communicate with the children? Does their speech resemble the school environment? Is the adults' speech intelligible to them? Does the Meeting have appropriate children's books? Are children considered in the Meeting's decision making? Do Meeting members think about nominating young people for various positions? These are examples of 'hidden messages' that not only show how welcome children and their parents or grandparents are to Meeting but evidence the application of Quaker Testimonies of Love and Equality.

Regarding the approach to working with children in Children's Meetings, Collins says:

> "There is also the acknowledgment that while we can instruct children in religion, we cannot teach them faith. A gradual shift is now looking at ways we can work with and alongside children" (p. 29).

This shift is also confirmed by my respondents (see 6.3.5).

She also comments on the use of the Bible in children's work and concludes that fear of its premature use has led many Children's Meeting leaders not to use it at all in their work with children. Collins not only connects knowledge of the Bible to the historical

roots of Quakerism, but also points out that knowledge of the Bible is essential in terms of cultural heritage:

> "... much of our heritage of literature has been lost to more than one generation of children. English literature is full of biblical allusion – without the biblical background the allusions are meaningless" (p. 28).

Referring to my research, I argue that the use or non-use of the Bible depends more on the attitude of the leader towards it than on the fear of its premature use, when children may not be able to understand it. Moreover, materials such as ˈGodly Playˈ, which I describe in more detail below (see 4.3.1), show that there are ways to introduce the Bible to very young children.

Collins' book is a critical analysis of the position of children in Quaker Meetings. She offers insights drawn from her personal experiences and those of other Quakers. She openly points out problematic areas where some Quaker Meetings fail and may even discriminate against children and young people. On the other hand, she offers many suggestions for improving the situation.

I address the above points in more detail in chapter 6, where I analyze and summarize the results of my research. I will now focus on describing and analyzing the most used materials for working with children and young people in Children's Meetings, as many of my respondents work with and refer to these materials in the interviews. In the analysis I will focus primarily on how these materials conceptualise teaching Quaker values, which is the theme of my research.

4.3.1 Children's Meetings' Materials

Materials for working with children in Quaker Children's Meetings come in both paper and electronic formats. The electronic ones can be found on the Quakers in Britain website (Quakers in Britain, 2022). For this analysis I chose 'Journeys in the Spirit' (Series 17, Issue 121, May 2019) which seems to be the most commonly used material, 'Godly Play' (Berryman, 2006), which was also mentioned quite frequently by my respondents, and 'Living our Faith' (Halsted and Rehard, 2006), with which I have personal experience.

Given the focus of my research and taking into account the findings regarding the different approaches to values education discussed in the previous chapter, I have

chosen several criteria for my analysis, which include factors influencing the learning environment, its content and the learning process. In particular, I am interested in what topics the authors consider important, how these topics should be presented, what role the adults who lead the meetings should play, according to the material, and, of course, how children are involved in the whole process. The criteria are:

- age group,
- aims,
- themes,
- lesson structure,
- ways of interactions,
- activities,
- adult's role.

In Table 4.5 I present a comparison of the three teaching materials based on the above criteria, then I discuss each material in more detail. The analysis with regard to the MLE criteria follows in section 7.4.

	Journeys in the Spirit	Godly Play	Living our Faith
Age group	5 – 12	3 – 12	5 – 13
Aims	Exploring Quakerism; nurturing spiritual development	Exploring the mystery of God's presence people's lives	Teaching about Quaker values in context of biblical texts and stories
Themes	For example: Spirituality Quaker Testimonies Bible stories Quaker stories Feelings Living as a Quaker Children voices	Biblical stories Christian traditions	Peace Simplicity Integrity Equality Community
Lesson structure	➢ Getting ready ➢ Gather ➢ Engage ➢ Respond ➢ Reflect ➢ Review	➢ Opening ➢ Hearing the word of God ➢ Sharing the feast ➢ Dismissal	➢ Scripture ➢ Discussion questions ➢ Activities
Ways of interactions	Story telling Questioning Sharing Listening	Story telling Questioning Sharing Listening Playing	Story telling Questioning Sharing Listening
Activities	Telling or reading stories Discussing Reflecting on problems from daily life Craft Games	Telling stories Asking questions Responding to the stories (individual work – playing with the material, craft) Common snack	Reading from Bible Discussing proposed questions Reflecting on problems from daily life Craft Singing Guided meditation Games Telling stories
Adult's role	Adult – facilitator, guiding	Adults - "door person" and "storyteller" guiding	Adult – teacher "teaching"

Tab. 4.5 Examples of teaching materials used in Quaker Children's Meetings

- **Journeys in the Spirit**

According to my research, ˈJourneys in the Spiritˈ seems to be the most frequently used material in Children's Meetings. It is a monthly publication produced by the Quaker Life children and youth work team. The full material is available on the website: . It covers many topics from the Bible through Quakerism to current world issues. A special edition is also prepared for young children aged 0 to 4.

The aim of this material is to provide opportunities for children to explore Quakerism and nurture their spiritual development. The authors define four directions of the spiritual journey, all of which are included in each lesson:

- inwards to ourselves,
- outwards to others,
- upwards (or further inwards) towards the Light, God, the deeper mystery,
- downwards to the world we live in.

The material offers not only suggestions on what to do with the children, but also ideas on how and what to prepare for the leaders of the Children's Meetings themselves. This is also evident from the structure of the material, which includes the following sections:

- getting ready (for those co-ordinating the programme),
- gather (meeting, centring, focusing),
- engage (beginning to think about the theme),
- respond (activities linked to the theme),
- reflect (ending appropriately),
- review (evaluating what has happened).

The first part (getting ready) and the last part (review) offer adults suggestions on how to prepare for the lesson and how to learn from each lesson. During the 'gather part', children are welcomed to the children's meeting, have a space to share their news with others and the adults introduce them to the topic. The 'engage part' offers at least two different ways to approach the topic. It is up to the adult leading the Meeting which of the two or three options they choose. They are not expected to use all of them. The adult will often read or tell a story or show a picture and talk about it. The presentation of the story is followed by a discussion with the children. In the 'respond section' ideas

are given on how to develop the theme creatively (craft activities, songs, dramas, games). The session ends with a 'reflect section' which opens up space to re-centre and reflect on what has been done during the session. Children can also prepare to meet adults and share what they have been doing. The last section (review) is for the leaders of the children's session and their facilitator to evaluate the session.

The role of the Children's Meeting Leader is to introduce the topic and guide the children in their individual thoughts. One of the most important tools seems to be asking open-ended questions that focus on the children's personal experiences, awaken their imagination, and require their critical thinking. Here is an example of some of the questions:

- I wonder which part of this story you like the best.
- I wonder if there is any part of this story that you could leave out and still have all the story that you need.
- Other Religions – are they too different from us?

The structure of each lesson is very clear, thanks to the fixed sections which can be a great help for leaders of Children's Meetings when preparing a lesson. The selection of topics is very rich and new topics appear every month, so leaders can find suitable topics for children according to their interests or needs.

Although many of the topics are Quaker or Bible oriented, the teaching method is definitely not oriented around information. The leader should reveal information to the children that is necessary to know and understand the context (for example, historical context), but much attention is given to exploring and formulating and sharing their own ideas. The way of interaction varies, of course, depending on the age of the children. While young children are asked more specific questions (e.g., what they see in the picture, what was the character in the story), older children are asked more open-ended questions (see examples above).

Each session has an objective, which the leader introduces at the beginning, and at the end of the session the children have the opportunity to comment on what they have learned. The teaching method is exploratory rather than authoritative. However, a great deal of responsibility lies with the leaders because of their interaction with the children - they choose topics, formulate questions and respond to children's suggestions, and offer role models. In addition, they often introduce Quakerism in its various aspects to

newcomers, as there may be parents who come with their children and stay at the Children's Meeting rather than go to the Main Meeting. As one of my interviewees mentioned, the authors of ˈJourneys in the Spiritˈ also take this possibility into account and prepare the material with this in mind (Int. 22).

- **Godly Play**

ˈGodly Playˈ is "a distinctive approach to Christian ministry with children, both innovative and deeply grounded in our spiritual tradition" (Berryman, 2007, p. 18) developed by theologian, author, and educator The Rev. Dr. Jerome Berryman.

It is based on Montessori pedagogy. Although ˈGodly Playˈ is not originally Quaker material, it is often used in Quaker children's meetings. I believe its popularity in the Quaker context is due to its respectful approach to children and the space for personal exploration.

As the name of the approach suggests, it is based on play, which the author defines as enjoyable, spontaneous, and nourishing activities such as creativity, language learning and social role learning (Berryman, 2007). He also places a strong emphasis on the language aspect of play (ibid; Berryman, 2008). In addition to wondering questions, he also recommends the use of 'open and empowering responses' that describe rather than evaluate children or their work and emphasising children's decision-making and problem-solving skills. Examples of such responses include "This is big work. The paint goes all the way from here to there."; "That's the way. You can do this." (ibid., p. 18) On the one hand, this way of communication expresses the adult's interest in the child, but on the other hand, it opens up a free space for children to form their own views, opinions and attitudes.

Lessons have a fixed structure, which consists of the following steps (Berryman, 2007):

- Opening: entering the space and building the circle,
- Hearing the word of God: presentation, wondering and response,
- Sharing the feast: preparing the feast and sharing it in holy leisure,
- Dismissal: saying goodbye and leaving the space.

During the first step, the children are greeted by the person at the door, sit in a circle and have the space to share their news. Then the 'storyteller' begins to present the Bible story. The material for each story is kept in a box. The boxes are different colours

according to the themes. The material usually consists of pieces of fabric and wooden pieces. This part is followed by a reflection. In this step, the storyteller asks ˈI'm thinkingˈ questions that allow the children to think about the story and express their opinions and points of view. The questions are open-ended. Berryman argues that there are different important questions depending on the type of story. For example, an important question for sacred stories is "I wonder where you are in this story or what part of this story is about you?" (Berryman, 2007, p. 56). An important question for a parable is, "I wonder what this seed (pearl, tree, etc.) might actually be?" (ibid.). The children can then choose any activity within the allotted space and time. It can be a play with the material (not only with the current story, but they can also choose other story boxes they already know), a craft activity, relaxation. After some time, the children clean up and are invited to have a snack together. Then they end the lesson with a goodbye.

I consider the structure of teaching very important because it sets boundaries for children and creates a safe environment where their spirituality can develop. Berrymann says in this context:

> "Pay careful attention to the environment you provide for children. The ˈGodly Playˈ environment is an *open* environment in the sense that children may make genuine choices regarding both the materials they use and the process by which they work toward shared goals. The ˈGodly Playˈ environment is a *boundaried* environment in the sense that children are guided to make their own choices within constructive limits." (Berryman, 2007, p. 53).

In addition, the structure and approach of adults towards children promotes their own problem-solving skills and respect for others. Children learn to share material and interact with others respectfully.

Although the roles of the adults are clearly defined and the structure of the lessons helps them, their task is very complex and challenging. It involves not only presenting stories and coordinating the children's other activities, but also responding to children's needs and possible misbehaviour. Children have to get used to the special way of presentation and all the rules that accompany this approach. If some children do not attend lessons regularly, they may find it difficult to adapt to the structure, which can cause difficulties for adults and other children. Adults are therefore a role model and

support for the children and must help them to overcome even inappropriate behaviour with respect.

- **Living our Faith**

The material ˈLiving our Faithˈ comes originally from the USA, and it was developed by Clear Creek Friends Meeting. The authors define the aim of this material as follows:

> "to communicate in simple, concrete ways the meaning of abstract concepts: the testimonies" (p. xii).

To accomplish this, they decided to use biblical stories from both the Old and New Testaments as a starting point to introduce various aspects of the testimony under discussion. Thinking about Testimonies and developing the theme is supported by various activities such as problem solving, crafts, singing, playing games, etc. Discussion questions are an integral part of each chapter. Each Testimony is worked through sequentially in six to eight chapters, each chapter can be completed in one session lasting approximately 40 minutes but can also be divided into multiple sessions.

In this material, the adult is referred to as the teacher and their activity is called teaching. In my experience, Quakers in Britain would prefer to call the role of the adult a facilitator. However, a closer look at the structure and content of the material reveals that the understanding of the role of the adult is similar in both cultures, only the labels differ. Although the adult is called a teacher, their role in this context is not to impart information and facts, but rather to offer stimuli for thought and response. Nowhere in the material is it written that the teacher is supposed to teach the children directly, but rather to open up the topic and guide the children through it.

The authors stress that children must be actively involved in the learning process. In addition, they should learn from each other, and teachers should also be open to learning from them. Children are encouraged to engage all their senses. According to the authors, one of the most important teaching tools is the enthusiasm of the teacher, which children catch from them (p. xii). In any case, the way of teaching should not be authoritarian but exploratory.

Much attention is paid to the teacher's preparation for the lesson. First of all, the teacher must work on their personal spiritual development. The material is not only for

children, but also for adults. It is recommended to read the Bible stories several times, meditate on them or pray and reflect on the meaning of the text and the Testimony in one's own life. Taking into account the particular group of children, the teacher chooses from the activities offered those that are most suitable for them.

The teacher should introduce each lesson by announcing what will be done and why. The teacher also introduces each new Testimony by first discussing it and its significance. For discussion, the teacher has suggested questions in the material. The questions are open-ended and are not focused on content, but rather on life and one's own experiences. For example, the following questions are available:

- What does it mean to worry?
- When is it pleasant or difficult to wait?
- How do you pray in your family at home? How do Friends pray together at Meeting?
- What would have happened if Samuel did not tell Eli the truth about what God told him?

Not only the questions, but also other activities encourage reflection and active participation of children in the learning process and the transfer of what they have learned to everyday life. Here is an example of such an activity:

> "Talk about basic conflict resolution techniques, then try a role play of one or more of these situations. Then practice the steps above for resolving the conflict.
>
> Two children are playing a game. A third child comes and wants to play, too, but the first two are in the middle of the game and one of the players doesn't want to be interrupted. The third child says, 'you promised you'd play the game with me'.
>
> A friend comes over to your house and asks if you want to play. You go outside and he shows you some firecrackers that he wants to set off In the street. You don't think your parents would approve...." (ibid., p. 9)

Craft, drama or singing songs are other ways to activate the children and to help them to understand the theme.

The whole resource is clearly structured and offers a rich material and a lot of inspiration. It is very Bible-centred but connects it to the present in the sense that it uses Bible stories to show the desires, conflicts, and dilemmas of individuals that are

common to people past and present. On the one hand, the Testimonies are presented as values that are embedded in the Bible, but on the other hand, they are very relevant to the lives of adults and children. The material encourages exploration, reflection and action, but at the same time presents the Bible as a living actual book and offers a space for meditation and spiritual development.

Again, although the material is well prepared, the teacher takes on a great deal of responsibility as it is they who leads the group, who responds to the children's responses and ideas, who guides them in their thinking and exploration, and who inspires them to action. From this point of view, their task appears to be very demanding. Moreover, as I mentioned when talking about ˈJourneys in the Spiritˈ, it is essential for this kind of teaching that there is trust and friendship between children and adults.

4.3.2 Summary

The aim of this section was to introduce Quaker informal education, particularly in Children's Meetings. In addition to Collins' important ideas, I focused on an introduction of three materials often used in working with children in Children's Meetings.

All three materials are very well developed and structured so that they can be used by people without a teaching background. They guide the Children's Meeting leader from personal preparation to evaluation. What is important is flexibility, harmony with the children and openness towards them. The essence of leadership is not about facts and information, although these are also important in some contexts, but about exploring and learning together. Children may come up with different ideas that need to be dealt with sensitively and responsibly and all the materials make this recommendation in various ways.

None of the material presented needs to be covered in strict sequence, only parts can be selected, but the gradual discussion of certain thematic units that ‘Journeys in the Spirit’ and ‘Living our Faith’ offer is certainly more important than simply picking out interesting parts of the whole. In this way, children will be introduced to the whole range of the topic and its different perspectives. However, the materials are well suited to working with small groups of children (even just individuals) as well as larger groups, and continuity, while certainly an advantage, is also not a necessity. On the contrary, it seems that for a Children's Meeting to function properly, whatever materials are used,

it is essential that the children know each other and that they know the adults who work with them, otherwise it may be difficult for some of them to participate actively in discussions and other activities.

In any case, it is clear from all three materials that Children's Meetings are a very important part of Quaker Meetings and that Quakers have much to pass on to children. The essence is not only the topics chosen but also the way they are presented and the attitude of adults towards children.

If we compare these materials for working with children in Quaker Children's Meetings with the approaches to values education that I presented in the previous chapter, we can conclude that they correspond to a socio-cultural approach. While there is a strong emphasis on individual Quaker values, unlike the principles of character education the focus here is not on children learning individual values and observing for themselves the extent to which they can practise those values. Rather, children are guided through language, but also through other tools (practical activities, craft activities), to learn about the values from different perspectives, leaving room for them to gradually decide for themselves whether to adopt the values and how to incorporate them into their lives. The aim is therefore not to *transmit* values to children, but to *introduce* them to them. The emphasis is on practical living and experiencing the values in different contexts (e.g. planting flowers, making gifts for others, getting involved in charity projects, etc.). I see the point of contact with the cognitive-developmental approach mainly in the adaptation of the activities to the age group being worked with.

I return to these materials in chapter 7, where I analyse approaches to working with children in Quaker Children’s Meetings from an MLE perspective.

4.4 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to introduce Quaker values and their application in formal and informal Quaker education. While the field of Quaker formal education is relatively well documented, both in terms of its development over time and the work of Quaker teachers in Quaker schools and beyond, studies and publications on Quaker informal education, which includes Quaker Children's Meetings, are limited. However, there is a relatively large selection of materials for working with children in Quaker informal education that offer insights into ways of working with children.

The issue of Quaker Children's Meetings is further developed in the following chapters, which are devoted to the results of my field research and its analysis.

5. Field Research Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter elaborates my research purpose, research questions, rationale for qualitative research design, research methods, ethics and data analysis strategies. The aim of the chapter is to explain why I have chosen this form of research, what advantages and disadvantages such research offers, and how the reliability of research results is ensured.

5.2 Research Design

The aim of my research is to investigate if there are similarities between Feuerstein's theory of Mediated Learning Experience and the Quaker approaches to working with children in Quaker Children's Meetings in terms of values teaching. As a teacher trained in the Feuerstein Method and a Friend of Friends, who has experience of leading Quaker Children's Meetings in context of Quaker Central European Gatherings, I hypothesise that resemblances might exist because of the specifics of Quaker belief and the characteristics of Mediated Learning Experience which I introduced in the previous chapters (see 2.4 and 4.1). My research question is - *To what extent are the principles of MLE manifested in the transmission of values in Quaker Children's Meetings?* I added a few sub-questions, which I list below, to help me answer the main question:

- What approaches do Quakers use to teach values to children in Children's Meetings? Why do they use these approaches?
- How do they work to develop children's understanding of Quakerism and what it stands for?
- How do Quakers transmit their values to children so that they become principles?
- Are there any features of MLE in their teaching and education approaches? If yes, which ones and why these in particular?
- How are these MLE features generally operationalised in practice if there is any generality?

From the ontological point of view (Mason, 2002), in my research, I investigate belief systems, motivation and attitudes. I gain knowledge through the experiences and

perspective of attenders at Quaker Meetings who are familiar with the environment and understand its functioning. Because of the character of my study, I chose qualitative research which, according to specialised literature (Hendl, 1999; Mason 2002, Bell, 2014), is useful in areas concerning human experience and individuals' perceptions of the world.

Authors dealing with qualitative research agree that there is no single definition of qualitative research, mainly because of the wide range of approaches and methods used in qualitative research (Hendl, 1999). Corbin and Strauss (2015) understand qualitative research as one in which results are not quantified in any way, and Silverman (2014) adds that qualitative research verbally describes real-life situations (as opposed to quantitative research, which involves numerical analysis of relationships between variables, p. 4). Mason (2002) argues that qualitative research is defined in different ways depending on the discipline in which it is used, however, several common elements that characterise qualitative research can be defined (ibid):

- deals with questions of how we interpret the social world, how we understand it, how we experience or shape it,
- the data collection methods used are flexible depending on the context,
- an understanding of context and detail is essential for making arguments, so it is important to get enough nuanced and detailed data.

Hendl (1999, p. 43-44) adds several principles of qualitative research, including:

- openness to the persons, situations and methods used,
- the inclusion of subjectivity, where the researcher partially identifies with the phenomenon under study in order to gain access to the subjective interpretations of the subjects,
- the concept of research as a process – research is a process during which its different elements may change,
- reflexivity, i.e. the fact that the researcher is able to reflect on new phenomena and realities and adapt research methods to them,
- contextuality, which means trying to understand phenomena and behaviour not only in a given context but also in a wider social and historical context.

According to Hendl (1999), the advantages of qualitative research include the fact that its methods are based on common activities which include observation, interviews or

evaluation of verbal information. At the same time, qualitative research enhances the capacity for empathy and promotes a diversity of perspectives on a given issue (ibid.). On the other hand, however, this type of research is in many ways more difficult compared to quantitative research, mainly because the data collected is subjective in nature and the main instrument of research is the researcher themselves, who must therefore be equipped both in terms of knowledge of methods and practical experience (ibid.).

5.2.1 Methods of Data Collection and Their Connection to Research Questions

Qualitative research offers various methods of data collection, which include primarily various forms of interview and observation (Hendl, 1999). Given that my research is aimed at uncovering certain phenomena and concerns motivation, attitudes, experiences and practices of Children's Quaker Meeting leaders, in consultation with my supervisors I decided on semi-structured interviews combined with observations as the most appropriate method of data collection.

5.2.1.1 Rationale for Using a Semi-structured Interview and Observation as the Data Collection Methods in My Research

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) argue that conversation is a basic and natural mode of interaction between people, and therefore interviews can be a way to gather information, even though they may be structured in particular formats. Structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews are used as data collection methods.

In a structured interview, the researcher has prepared questions in advance and asks them all in the same order to each interviewee, which makes it easier to compare and evaluate the answers. However, one of the main disadvantages is that once the questions have been prepared and the research has begun, they cannot be changed or added to in order not to affect the replicability of the interview method (Hendl, 1999).

An unstructured interview, on the other hand, is conducted without pre-prepared questions, thus offering great flexibility and freedom. When conducting such an interview, in contrast to a structured interview, it is easier to create an open atmosphere and to take individual differences into account. However, it is both time-consuming to conduct an interview in this way (often more than one such interview is conducted with

the same person, where the new interview builds on the previous one and tries to develop the previous themes) and challenging in terms of data comparison, as each interview is different (ibid.). It is therefore desirable that an interview of this type be conducted by an experienced researcher.

Semi-structured interviews, based on a phenomenological approach, are a tool that allows one to know the phenomenon under study from the interviewee's perspective, without much risk that the conversation will evolve in an undesirable direction that will not benefit the research, or a rigidly structured questionnaire that does not allow deviation if there is a need for additional questions or development of a new topic that has emerged from the conversation (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). In a semi-structured interview, the interviewee has sufficient space to express themselves as freely as possible on the topic, but at the same time the interview is directed to some extent by the interviewer. Knowledge is produced by the collaboration between interviewer and interviewee. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) explain:

> "The research interview is an inter-view where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between two people. The interviewer and the subject act in relation to each other and reciprocally influence each other." (p. 35)

The author defines several aspects of semi-structured interviewing from a phenomenological point of view, which I tried to consider as much as possible in my research. When collecting data and then analysing it, one must take into account that the interviewee is speaking from their perspective and the topic of the conversation is their everyday world. Thus, the interviewer aims to describe the interviewee's experiences as accurately as possible; the focus of the interview is on specific situations, not general opinions. The researcher seeks to elicit not only information but also its meanings and should approach interviews with an openness to new and unexpected phenomena and be critical of his or her own assumptions and hypotheses. Therefore, when conducting a semi-structured interview, it is important not to ask questions that suggest an answer that the interviewer needs to hear or otherwise influence the interview. Questions should be open-ended, inviting the interviewee to freely tell what comes to mind about the topic. In interviews, it naturally happens that some interviewees' statements are not sufficiently clear or are ambiguous or contradictory. The researcher's task is then to try to clarify whether the ambiguities and contradictions are due to a communication error or whether they reflect inconsistencies

and contradictions in the interviewee's life situation. At the same time, the researcher is also required to approach the interviewee with the knowledge that their interaction may evoke different emotions, such as anxiety, and as a result, certain defence mechanisms. Thus, the interviewer should be sensitive to possible ethical overstepping of the interviewee's personal boundaries. Brinkmann and Kvale (ibid.) remind in this context that

> "the knowledge produced in a research interview is constituted by the interaction itself, in the specific situation created between an interviewer and an interviewee." (p. 35)

Another interesting manifestation of reciprocity in a semi-structured interview is that it can become an enriching experience for the interviewee, whereby talking about their own situation leads to new insights into it (ibid.).

As a novice researcher, I realised the difficulties and exigencies of this research method but on the other hand, I evaluated this research method as the most suitable for my research due to the aspects described above. In order to achieve the aim of my research, i.e. to find out whether the respondents spontaneously use the principles of MLE in their practice and if so, which ones and why, I needed to obtain as accurate and detailed description as possible of their way of working with children and to learn the reasons and motivations that lead them to such a way of working. During the research it was not possible to ask directly about the individual MLE criteria as my respondents were not familiar with them, but at the same time I could not let them speak completely freely about their work with children in Children's Meetings either, as there was a risk that they would only focus on a particular aspect of their work and not get to share their experiences and their motivation, which were key to my research. In relation to this issue I have used my practical experience as a teacher trained in the Feuerstein method, which I have been using in my practice for more than ten years. My knowledge of the Feuerstein approach and my practical experience of applying the Mediated Learning Experience were particularly beneficial to me as a researcher, as questions are one of the main tools in the application of the Mediated Learning Experience. The facilitator in MLE is accustomed not only to asking questions, but also, in accordance with the criterion of reciprocity (see 2.4.5.1), to listen attentively to the answers, respond to them and develop the incoming ideas further. At the same time, however, the interlocutor is used to keeping an eye on the purpose of the conversation and not letting it take off in an undesirable direction.

The research method matches the epistemological and ontological assumptions behind the growth of knowledge, values and experience that are the aims of both MLE and Quaker Children's Meetings, namely that knowledge about being human is shared through dialogue and other interactions within a social context.

Originally, I also wanted to use observation of Children's Meetings as an additional research method. Hendl (1999) argues that while the interview provides information about what happens and what the interviewee thinks about it, the aim of observation is to find out what is actually happening. He divides observation into non-participant and participant. In the case of my research, I wanted to use the non-participant form of observation. Participant observation means that the researcher is directly involved in what is happening in the social situation and is also collecting data while participating. The author points out that this form of observation is very demanding, not only in terms of time, where sufficient time must be spent understanding the setting, but especially in terms of the demands on the observer, who should be sufficiently experienced and trained in both data collection and subsequent data analysis (usually it involves extensive observational notes). In contrast, non-participant observation means that the researcher has only minimal interaction with the subjects being observed. Their goal is to obtain as complete and accurate a record as possible of what the research participants did and said. Among the main advantages of this mode of observation, Hendl (ibid.) includes the fact that it is not so obtrusive, and it is not influenced by the emotional involvement of the researcher. However, a major disadvantage is that it is harder to obtain information about participants' attitudes, perceptions and motivations, so it is advisable to combine non-participant observation with interview.

As I intended to carry out the observations in a setting where children were being worked with, I decided for ethical reasons not to use any audio-visual technology to help record the situation, despite the fact that the focus of my research was on adults working with children rather than children's behaviour. Thus, I intended only take notes. The idea was to focus especially on ways of communication between the adults and the children, on Quaker values emerging during the session explicitly and implicitly and on the course of the programme. These notes should be used as additional material to the main research method to identify the potential features of Mediated Learning Experience in teaching values. I also wanted to make a short conversation before and after the observation between me and the leaders of the Children's Meeting about the

programme of the Meeting. More detailed clarification of potential questions could be done per email or per Skype. In the end, however, for objective reasons I could not use observations. I comment more on this issue in the following section, where I also describe the preparation, the process and the difficulties encountered during the research (see 5.2.3).

5.2.2 Ethics

In accordance with University of Birmingham policy, I sought Ethical Approval from the University before commencing the research. I only started the research after it was approved.

I prepared a participant information sheet for all those interested in participating in the research (see Appendix F) and asked them to sign the consent form for interviews and observations (see Appendix I). I informed them that they have right to withdraw from the project up until three months after the interview without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences – they only had to inform me by email. In that case, the participant's data would have been deleted.

In the case of observation, I prepared an information sheet for parents and carers (see Appendix G) and also an information sheet for children in Children's Meetings (see Appendix H). I anticipated the possibility that some parents would not agree to have their child participate in the Meetings I would observe, so in addition to an information sheet offering the opportunity to participate in the observations, I also prepared an information sheet offering the option to remove their child from the observation or have interactions with their child omitted from my research notes (see Appendix J and K).

To ensure protection of the confidentiality of the interview subjects, all interviewees are anonymised, and individuals and Meetings are not recognisable. To designate the interviewees, I use numbers, I refer to individual Meetings as ˈa Meetingˈ.

The research data was audio-recorded and transcribed into my computer. Audio recordings were stored on my computer, which is password protected, until the analysis was complete after which they were destroyed. Only I had access to the audio recordings and only I, my supervisors and an independent English native speaker (member of Prague Quaker Meeting) had access to the transcriptions. The English native speaker was necessary for me to check the transcription of interviews and they

signed a confidentiality agreement and had only access to a segment of audio-recording if and when there was a query about meaning in the transcript.

All data were used only for research purposes and not made available to others (except individuals mentioned above), nor used in other people's research presentations. The transcribed data will finally be stored in the University Research Data Archive for the regulatory time. The participants have access to the results of the research.

5.2.3 Course of the Research, Practical Choices, Arrangements, and Limitations

5.2.3.1 Source of Data

I used two types of sampling to select my respondents: convenience sampling and snowball sampling. Convenience sampling is characterized as

> "the most common form of qualitative sampling and occurs when people are invited to participate in the study because they are conveniently (opportunistically) available with regard to access, location, time and willingness." (Lopez and Whitehead, 2013, p. 124)

I opted for it because in choosing a group in which to conduct the research I had to consider the fact that I do not live in Britain, although it was not such a big problem for me to get there and conduct the research[6]. On the other hand, for time reasons, I initially tried to recruit respondents from only a certain area so that I could conduct as many interviews as possible during my limited time in Britain.

During the operationalising of the research, snowball sampling gradually occurred, i.e. a situation when I obtained new respondents through existing respondents. Lopez and Whitehead (2013) describe snowball sampling as follows:

> "Also known as 'chain referral' or 'networking' sampling, snowball sampling occurs when the researcher starts gathering information from one or a few people and then relies on these people to put the researcher in touch with others who may be friends, relatives, colleagues or other significant contacts." (p. 125)

As the authors further state (ibid.), this method of sampling is mainly used when it is not easy to find suitable individuals for research in other ways (e.g. marginalised

[6] However, my ability to travel was halted during the research by the Covid 19 pandemic.

individuals, people suffering from various diseases, etc.). In my case, snowball sampling arose quite naturally after the passage of time, so it was not the primary method of recruiting interviewees, but a supplementary one, which, however, was very useful for my research because it allowed me to get additional participants for the interview that I had not reached in the first phase of the search for respondents. The advantage of snowball sampling is that it is relatively easy to get additional respondents (ibid.) and, as I have found, their willingness to participate in the research, which is probably to some extent due to the fact that someone has recommended them and also that they can check with the friend who recommended them what their participation in the research will mean in practice.

I logically chose Quakers who work with children in Quaker Children's Meetings as the source of my research data, specifically liberal British Quakers, because Britain is the cradle of Quakerism and the Quaker community there is the largest in Europe. Unlike Central Europe, there are several dozen Quaker Meetings in Britain that run Children's Meetings.

My aim was to get a minimum of 20 respondents so that I would have a relatively wide range of answers, and I was open from the start to the possibility that I would not get that many respondents for various reasons (e.g., people not willing to share; not as many Children's Meetings in the area I had prioritised; peer communication not working as well as it should etc.). I was also open to the possibility of needing to gather even more respondents, as new perspectives and ideas emerged from the interviews that would need to be expanded upon. In either case, I was willing to reach out to other Quaker Meetings, regardless of geographical location in Britain, to get more respondents. In this case, I was open to the possibility of going to Britain more than once, or if not otherwise possible, using internet applications (Skype, Zoom, etc.) to conduct interviews.

To gain the necessary research sample, with the help of my supervisors, I prepared a letter in which I explained the research aim, research methods to be used and the ethical aspect of the research (see Appendix E). With this letter I first approached

Britain Yearly Meeting[7], which I asked to provide a list of all British Quaker Meetings. After my request was granted, I emailed the letter to all Quaker Meetings which stated on their webpages that they run a Children's Meeting. Within several weeks, I received 35 positive responses. At the same time, I also contacted Central European Quaker groups that offer a programme for children. (from the Czech Republic, Poland and Ukraine) and planned to do a pilot research project with them in April 2019 during the Quaker Central European Gathering in Slovenia. The start of the field research was planned for the beginning of July 2019 in London Meetings.

In communicating with individual Quaker Meetings, on a few occasions I have had the contact person for that Meeting promise to pass my request on to the Children's Meeting leadership, but after that I was not contacted. It has also exceptionally happened that a prospective interviewee has promised to participate in the research, but in the end, we have not been able to find a suitable date for the interview, until communication gradually died down. On the other hand, I managed to get in touch with many active and willing people who agreed to be interviewed and it was no problem to arrange a date, either in person or via the Internet. As I already described above, some of these interviewees then also put me in touch with other people working with children in Children's Meetings, so that in the end I had a sufficient number of interviewees. Getting these new contacts was very valuable to me because they were usually people who were known to be active and enthusiastic about participating in Children's Meetings and known to have interesting things to say about Children's Meetings.

From the self-selected group (35 positive answers to my request to take part in the research) I chose 15 interviewees who are living in London and its surroundings and in the Birmingham area so that I could do several interviews in one area without wasting time on travelling to distant cities. However, during the course of the research I began to actively use online settings (Skype, Zoom) for interviews, primarily due to the Covid-19 outbreak and travel restrictions, but also because the respondents I recruited through snowball sampling mostly live in a different area from the one I originally set out to research, so my original intention to limit myself to a particular

[7] The title of Quakers in Britain

geographical area would have been unnecessarily restrictive. I ended up with a total of 28 respondents.

5.2.3.2 Preparation of Questions and Conduct of Interviews

I began the research part of my project in spring 2019 with pilot interviews conducted at the Quaker Central European Gathering in Slovenia. I then used my time in London and Birmingham (summer and autumn 2019, respectively) to conduct further interviews. Further interviews were to follow in 2020 thereafter. However, in early 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic broke out, limiting my ability to travel to Britain so much that I had to conduct the remainder of the interviews (20 of the 28 interviews) online only.

In preparing the interview questions, it was necessary to bear in mind that – in line with the research method I had chosen (see 5.2.1.1) – I wanted to learn about the functioning of Quaker Children's Meetings from the perspective of the individual interviewees. Thus, I had to consciously abandon my perception and also detach myself from the principles of MLE that are the subject of my research and not incorporate them into the questions. If I were to ask only about specific MLE criteria (for example, *Do you connect what you are teaching the children to their everyday lives?* - the transcendence criterion) I would get an idea of which criteria are applied by the leaders of Children's Meetings, but the research would be deprived of other important aspects of their work that are not only based on the MLE. At the same time, I would run the risk that I might be satisfied if respondents answered in the affirmative, and would no longer ask for reasons, because I would consciously or subconsciously interpret the answer to mean that if the person in question is doing it, they have similar reasons for doing it as I would. The respondent may have completely different reasons that I might not have thought of. It was therefore necessary to dispense with the MLE for this part of the research so that thoughts, insights, aspects and perspectives could emerge that I might otherwise have suppressed. This was initially difficult for me, but under the guidance of the supervisors I was able to achieve the necessary academic discipline.

In preparing for the interview, I first thought about the topics I was interested in:

- the respondent's attitude to Quakerism (e.g., how and why they became a Quaker, what they appreciate most about Quakerism),

- The local Children's Meeting in general (e.g., frequency of meetings, organization of meetings, number of children, content of meetings),
- approaches to working with children (e.g., methods of interaction, examples of activities, ways of using didactic materials, motivation, understanding of their role in Children's Meeting).

Learning more about the interviewee's attitude to Quakerism was important for me to better understand their way of working with children and their motivations for doing things the way they do. As I described above (see chapter 1.2.2 and 4.1), Quakerism, these days, is not characterised by a single faith, but we can meet people of all different faiths and beliefs in this community. I anticipated that personal perceptions of Quakerism would influence Quaker Children's Meeting leaders own work with children. In addition, the question of how the interviewee became a Quaker, with which I usually opened my interviews, served as an ice-breaking question, as in all cases it was a question that interviewees were happy to answer. It was only necessary to emphasise that I was asking for brevity when some interviewees tended to answer this question in great detail and at length, which then risked making the interview too long and all the more challenging for both parties.

I chose to ask questions about the organisational structure of the Children's Meetings in order to gain insight into the situation of the Meeting, to understand why it works in a certain way, For example, Children's Meetings might work differently with children who regularly come every week and form a kind of heterogeneous group and differently with children who come sporadically, so that there is always someone different in the group; the age composition of the children also plays a role. The answers to these questions sometimes also pointed to the attitudes of the adults of the Quaker Meeting towards the children (see Collin's reflections on hidden messages in 4.3)

The third group of my questions concerned the actual work of Quaker Children's Meeting leaders with children, where I was interested in how they specifically worked with children, what topics they chose, to what extent they integrated Quaker values into their work, either explicitly or implicitly, and why they did so. The answers to these questions provided information and perspectives from which I was then able to analyse the common features of the approaches and also identify elements of MLE.

The preparation of my questions went through a certain process, for example, I initially proposed the question *How do you involve children in the planning and preparation of the Children's Meetings programme?* However, in the early stages of the research, after I conducted the first three interviews and began to analyse them, this question emerged as a leading question because the question prompted the idea that children should be involved in the planning and preparation. It was replaced by the following formulation: *To what extent do the children have the opportunity to decide the programme of Children's Meeting? How do you react to their suggestions if there are some?* Another example is the original question *How important do you think it is to engage in dialogue with children? Why do you say that?* This question can also be described as a leading question because it evokes the idea that children should be engaged in dialogue. New formulation: *In what ways do you interact with children? Why do you say that?* did not limit the responses to dialogues only, but allowed for responses from a broader perspective, that is, respondents offered me insight into the different kinds of interaction (including dialogues) in which Quaker values are transmitted, both explicitly and implicitly. I provide a full list of questions in the Appendix (see Appendix L), but it should be noted that I did not always ask all the questions, as, in keeping with the principles of semi-structured interviewing, I gave my respondents a degree of freedom in sharing their experiences of Quaker Children's Meetings. Often, too, it was not necessary to ask all the questions on the grounds that the respondent had answered several other questions in response to one question without my asking them. I also did not always ask questions in the same order, because sometimes it was necessary to respond to what had just been said, which was a good time to ask a question that I had originally wanted to ask in another part of the interview. At other times, on the other hand, additional questions still needed to be asked, either directly while the interview was in progress, or after the interview had finished via email when, after reading the interview, I realised that something important had been left unsaid (e.g. for Interview 25 I additionally asked by email for specific examples of questions asked by the interviewee during discussions with children). It also happened that I needed to ask follow-up questions beyond the prepared questions because the respondent mentioned an area that I had not originally considered, but which was related to the topic, and I wanted to know more about it (e.g. the issue of participation or working with children with special needs). I then included these newly developed areas in subsequent interviews. This method of interviewing fits the characteristics of

a semi-structured interview (see 5.2.1.1), and in particular Brinkmann's and Kvale's view of interview as conversation (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). In the appendix (Appendix M) I present a comparison of the questions asked in three interviews. This sample illustrates the questioning process described and justified above.

As for the problems that arose during the course of the interviews, they concerned my ability to conduct face-to-face interviews. As I explained above (5.2.3.1) my opportunities to spend extended periods of time in Britain were limited. It soon became apparent that my original plan to conduct as many interviews as possible in one time period in one area had its limits, as it was not possible for all interviewees to be in a given place at a given time. To save time and travel expenses, I decided to solve the problem in such cases by conducting interviews online. While in the beginning of my research I envisaged this form of interviewing rather rarely, in the second phase I only conducted interviews online due to the Covid 19 pandemic and travel restrictions. I consider online interviews to be a viable solution as it enabled me to conduct interviews not only with people for whom it was not possible to accommodate my time while I was in Britain, but also with people from different parts of the UK that I would have found difficult to visit in person for the purpose of the interview (too great a distance, time and money commitment). I used Skype or Zoom for the internet interviews, and we both always had the camera on so we could see each other, and the interview was as close to a face-to-face as possible. In event of occasional technical problems (most often a short-term signal failure) it was no problem to ask the interviewee to repeat what was not understood or heard. None of my respondents that I asked for an online interview had a problem with this form of communication; the pandemic situation has probably contributed to people becoming more familiar with using digital media.

As I mentioned above (5.2.3.1) I conducted a total of 28 interviews, of which 8 were in person and 20 online. I stopped gathering interviews when saturation occurred, which Corbin and Strauss (2015) define as follows:

> "Saturation is usually explained in terms of ˈWhen no new data are emerging.ˈ But saturation is more than a matter of no new data. It also denotes the development of categories in terms of their properties and dimensions, including variations, and if theory building, the delineating of relationships between concepts." (p. 143)

So when I found that not only no new data were appearing, but also that no new categories were emerging in the analysis, nor were existing categories being further developed, I stopped seeking further interviewees.

5.2.3.3 Preparation of The Observation and Rationale for not Carrying It Out

In terms of observations to support the interviews, I had found out in advance from the websites of individual Quaker Meetings, Quaker Children's Meetings only take place in very few Meetings on a regular weekly basis. Therefore, it was necessary to plan my travel to Britain well so that I could observe more Children's Meetings during my stay. I also intended to attend a week-long stay at Britain Yearly Meeting, where I would have the opportunity to observe several Children's Meetings for different age groups. In order to get a satisfactory overview of how Children's Meetings actually take place, I envisaged a minimum of eight observations in different Meetings.

I had planned to start observing in the summer of 2020, a time when I expected to have completed most of the interviews and have a better understanding of the Quaker Children's Meeting environment through them. In addition, there was an opportunity to attend Britain Yearly Meeting, an all-British national Quaker Gathering, where I could observe several Children's Meetings in one week, which would save me travel to and around Britain and time.

Unfortunately, my original intention to support the interviews with observations did not come to fruition, mainly due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which both prevented me from travelling to the UK and moved Quaker Meetings online. I asked several Quaker Children's Meetings for permission to join their online programme so that I could at least make observations in this way, but the response has been negative in all cases on the grounds that this is not possible due to interpretations of safeguarding rules. The research was therefore conducted only through interviews and analysis of selected materials used in Quaker Children's Meetings (see 4.3.1).

By not being able to make observations, my research is based solely on the respondents' statements and my interpretation of them. What is missing is a report of what I would have observed, and the possibility of comparing what was communicated with what was observed, and the emergence of other phenomena that might have enriched the communicated accounts with new perspectives. However, I contend that my research is valid nonetheless because the aim was not only to find out how Quaker

Children's Meeting leaders work with children, into which I would have gained insight through observation in addition to interviews, but also to learn the motives and principles of Children's Meeting leaders for their approaches, for which the interviews served me well and I claim to have gathered sufficient data through them to provide answers to my research questions. Moreover, from the beginning of the research planning, I planned interviews as the main research method and observations as a complementary one.

5.2.3.4 Transcription

The validity of the research was supported by audio-recording of interviews and a faithful transcription of the records proofread by a native English speaker whereas I transcribed the interviews, and a native speaker validated the linguistic authenticity of my transcription. According to the literature (Oliver et al., 2005; Bucholtz, 2000), there are two basic approaches to transcription, which differ according to the purpose of the research. The first is the so-called naturalised transcription, which aims to capture spoken speech in a way that replicates it as faithfully as possible. Naturalised transcription thus includes stutters, pauses, colloquial expressions, nonverbal expressions, etc.). This method of transcription is used mainly when the research is focused on the linguistic aspect of speech. Another type of transcription is denaturalised transcription, which also attempts to capture speech verbatim, but the emphasis is on the meaning of what is said rather than the exact way it was said. Therefore, in this type of transcription, variations in pronunciation, pauses, non-verbal expressions, etc., are not recorded so that they do not interfere with the flow of speech and the meanings of what is said can be more easily perceived. Since my research was not aimed at investigating speech as such, I opted for denaturalised transcription, thus omitting all expressions such as ˈerrˈ, ˈuhmˈ, etc. when transcribing the interviews; I also omitted the frequently repeated expression 'you know' and parts of sentences where the interviewee, for example, said the same words twice in a row before figuring out how to continue sharing. The interviewees were able to read my transcription of their words and challenge them if necessary.

In transcribing the interviews, as a foreigner whose first language is not English, I encountered places in the recording that I did not fully understand. In order to maintain the reliability and validity of the research, I asked a native English speaker to help with transcription in these cases. This person did not know the identity of my interviewers

and only helped me with selected parts of the interviews that were incomprehensible to me. Thus, they did not have access to the entire interviews. My supervisors also drew my attention to instances when I quoted from the interviews and my transcription was not fully understandable. In that case, I re-listened to that part of the interview from the recording and, if necessary, consulted the said native speaker in a wider context to ensure that my understanding of the passage was not distorted by my own ideas or interpretations, but was indeed the interviewee's words.

5.2.4 Data Analysis

In this section, I first discuss the theory of data analysis, then describe how I specifically went about analysing my research data.

5.2.4.1 Principles of Thematic Analysis

Clarke and Braun (2017) define thematic analysis as a method for “identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning ('themes') within qualitative data”. According to the same authors (ibid.) principles of thematic analysis can be summarised as follows:

- Familiarity with the data. The researcher becomes intimately familiar with the data they have collected through repeated reading or listening to it. At the same time, they note down the ideas that occurred to them during this phase. Familiarity with the data may begin to occur informally during transcription. If this is happening, it is certainly advantageous to record the thoughts already during transcription.
- Coding. Coding means marking essential, important or interesting parts of the data with descriptions that express their essence, summarize them and convey their meaning.
- Generating initial themes. Compiling clusters of code that have a common idea or concept. While codes capture a specific meaning, themes describe broader common meanings or categories to which individual codes can be assigned.
- Developing and reviewing themes. In this phase, the researcher compares the initial themes with the data, possibly expanding the themes, naming them more precisely, creating new themes or eliminating some, etc.

- Refining, defining and naming themes. In this phase, the naming of themes is refined. Each theme must be clearly defined and should fit into the context of the research and research questions.
- Writing up. Writing up is already recommended during the previous stages. The researcher takes personal notes, capturing their thoughts and ideas. However, this stage is a formal report of the research process and results, including a description of the analysis process.

Given that thematic analysis "offers a method – a tool or technique, unbounded by theoretical commitments – rather than a methodology (a theoretically informed, and confined, framework for research)" (Clarke and Braun, 2017), it can be combined with other approaches to analysis within a qualitative approach.

The main aim of my research was to find out how Quaker values are transmitted to children in Quaker Children's Meetings and whether or not these modes of transmission are in some ways the same as Mediated Learning Experience and why (see my research questions in 5.2). Given this defined aim, in consultation with my supervisors, I decided to also use the principles of grounded theory in my data analysis, which is defined by its authors Glaser and Strauss as follows:

> "The concepts out of which the theory is constructed are derived from data collected during the research process and not chosen prior to beginning the research. (…) In grounded theory, research analysis and data collection are interrelated. (…) Data collection and analysis continue in an ongoing cycle throughout the research process." (Corbin and Strauss, 2015, p. 7)

In developing a grounded theory, one does not start from the theory that is subsequently investigated but begins by investigating the area from which the theory emerges (ibid.). As stated by Charmaz (2006), the basic principles of grounded theory include the simultaneous integration of data collection and data analysis, the creation of codes and categories directly from the data, and the constant comparison of data during analysis. Charmaz (2006, p. 42-71) distinguishes the following types of coding:

- Initial coding – creating provisional, comparative codes defining or labelling individual ideas; these codes are close to the data and ideally encode the data as actions.

- Focused coding – using the most important and/or most frequent codes to create categories.
- Axial coding – determining the properties and dimensions of each category and creating subcategories.
- Theoretical coding – determining possible relationships between categories.

While grounded theory was used in chapter 6, where I discuss approaches to values education in Quaker Children's Meetings and their rational, I applied deductive thematic analysis and used it for triangulation in chapter 7, where I compare the results presented in chapter 6 with the principles of Mediated Learning Experience.

5.2.4.2 Carrying out The Analysis

In analysing the collected data, I followed the principles outlined above (see previous section). The analysis proceeded in several stages, of which there were two main ones: first, I analysed what was said and observed what themes emerged (see grounded theory); only then did I look at the data from the perspective of the MLE and observe whether any elements of it emerged. Thus, the analysis was not primarily from the perspective of the MLE, but from the perspective of the themes that the respondents brought.

As for the technical side, I analysed the interviews both 'manually', i.e., by writing notes in the printed interviews, and electronically using Nvivo software. The advantage of analysing manually is the flexibility of always having the interview document with me, being able to flip through it, underline it, colour-code it, write different notes and compare the interviews with each other simply by putting them side by side. The disadvantage is a certain lack of clarity if the paper is covered with many notes. The advantage of the Nvivo system, on the other hand, is the great clarity and the possibility of storing the ideas from all interviews under common nodes, which are then excellent to work with in subsequent analysis steps. The disadvantage is the dependence on the computer and the constant switching between files.

In accordance with the principles of grounded theory, I did not wait until I had collected all the data, i.e., conducted all the interviews, but started to code the interviews at the earliest opportunity after completion. This allowed me to add questions to subsequent interviews about ideas that emerged from the first interviews that I felt were important for further research and that I wanted to ask other interviewees about (e.g., as I have

mentioned elsewhere, the notion of participation, working with children with special needs, or the issue of rules in Quaker Children's Meetings, for example).

Already during the transcription of the interviews I was familiarising myself with the data and noting down the ideas that came to mind during the transcription. After transcribing each interview, I re-listened and reread, and I tried to perceive it as a whole and focus not only on what was expressed explicitly, but also on the implicitly expressed ideas (e.g. what the interviewee emphasizes, how the individual ideas and themes are interrelated, what could be the relationship between the interviewee's attitudes towards Quaker values and their way of working with children, etc.)

During the initial coding, I went through the interviews sentence by sentence, thinking about their meaning in context. I tried to label individual ideas through the initial codes. while trying to define and describe important data, I chose more descriptive codes, as can be seen in the example in Table 5.6.

Transcription of the interview	Initial Coding
Could you explain how you understand the Quaker testimonies? What do they mean to you? I think, they are like guidelines, I suppose.	defining QT as guidelines
So perhaps the one that looks the most, the deepest is simplicity.	P attitude to Simplicity
As I've started studying about simplicity, I was thinking more intensively also about sustainability.	relationship between Simplicity and Sustainability
When I went into it much more deeply,	P studying
I realized it's more about being true to yourself and about style of living, relationships and	Impact of Simplicity on P life
appreciating the sunshine for example so not rushing through the life without seeing anything.	Simplicity as slowing down in life
And I have changed, it's result of a study and reflection on my way of life.	P change as a result of studying QT
Rule is something which is externally imposed but	rules imposed from outside
Testimonies are something for me, it's to study and reflect on	x QT as object of study and reflection
and the change comes within.	inner change

Tab. 5.6 Example of initial coding (Int. 9)

As can be seen from the sample, I started using abbreviations for some terms (e.g. QT = Quaker Testimonies; P = personal, i.e. concerning the person in question; x = but, however)

In the next phase of coding, I switched to focused coding, where I compared the initial codes within each interview, as well as with each other between interviews, and tracked their importance and frequency. I then began to generate initial themes by creating groups of codes that were related to the same theme. For example, I have included the following codes in the 'Quaker values' theme:

- Equality,
- Respect,
- Truth,
- Peace,
- Integrity,
- Personal development of understanding Quaker values,
- Development of Quaker values,
- Simplicity,
- Quaker values in practice.

Gradually, I identified additional themes and categories, comparing them to the initial themes and observing to what extent the new themes expanded the existing ones or whether they were entirely new categories. As I mentioned above, some of the themes that emerged in the interviews already conducted I later deliberately included in subsequent interviews to learn more about them from other perspectives. I therefore used constant comparative method, the essence of which, as Charmaz (2006) explains, is to compare data, codes and categories. This method, despite having only one type of data (interview), allowed me to make sense of the field. An example is working with children with special needs, a theme that emerged from the first few interviews without my asking about it specifically. I identified this topic as important to my research because it provides partial answers to my research questions (*What approaches do Quakers use to teach values to children in Children's Meetings? Why do they use these approaches? How do they work to develop children's understanding of Quakerism and what it stands for?*). In subsequent interviews I asked about this issue specifically, unless the interviewee had already mentioned it themselves.

Finally, I identified the following categories as the most important:

- Quakerism and its values in general,
- Children's Meetings,
- Children's Meetings' Leadership,
- Teaching approaches,
- Other activities for children and young people.

As general as these categories may seem, for me they represented important points that formed the skeleton of my analysis. All of my research took place in the context of Quaker Meetings, so the ideas about how individual respondents perceived Quakerism and its values, and how they personally felt about them, were very valuable and important. The Children's Meeting category may seem redundant when all of my research concerned Children's Meetings. However, as I will show below, it primarily covers the organisational aspect, which is closely related to the content of individual sessions and which reflects the attitudes of the Main Meeting towards children and, implicitly, the application of Quaker values to children. An equally important category is Children's Meetings' Leadership, which provides insight into the attitudes, opinions and motivations of Children's Meeting Quaker leaders which has implications for children's values teaching. The Teaching Approaches category answers the question

of how Children's Meeting leaders work with children - how they specifically practice teaching values. The final category relates to activities for children and young people outside of Children's Meetings. This is a peripheral category within my research, but one that was often mentioned and therefore important within Quakerism, so I have also included it in the list and given it some consideration in the analysis.

When I defined the main categories, I moved on to axial coding, where for each category I identified its dimensions and started to create subcategories and often also subcategories of subcategories based on the initial codes. So, for example, the Children's Meetings category includes the subcategories and their subcategories in Table 5.7.

Subcategories	**Further subcategories**
Adults in Children's Meetings	Collaboration Parents Paid workers
Aims	Allowing parents to worship Building community Continuity Contribution for Adult's Meeting Discovering diversity Enjoyment Exploring Introducing to Quakerism Kindness and respect Experiencing Preparing for life Quaker values Safeguarding Showing children their value Spiritual development Stimulating children
Connection with Adult Meeting	
Dynamic	
Evaluation of Children's Meetings by Leadership	
Children not willing to come	
Children with special needs	
Children's decisions	Factors Older children Younger children
Children's room	
Children not willing to collaborate	
Number and age of children	Problems
Organization	
Plan	Examples of plans

	Routine Children's Meeting's journal
Rules	
Silence	
Topics	God and Bible Important people Listening Other faiths Quaker charity Quaker history Quaker values Seasons Social issues
What to learn	Materials
Zoom sessions	Age groups Aims Evaluation Frequency Adult's learning how to do it Plans Practical examples

Tab. 5.7 Subcategories of the category 'Children's Meetings'

The full list of categories and subcategories can be found in the Appendix (Appendix N).

During the theoretical coding I identified the links and possible relationships between the categories and subcategories. I compared them with each other within interviews and across them and observed what answers they offered to my research questions. I used memo-writing continuously to record possible connections and sub-results of the research. Based on the progressive analysis of the data, I recorded my thoughts based on the comparison of categories and sub-categories and drew preliminary conclusions. I compared these conclusions with my research questions to determine whether or not I already had enough evidence to answer them. The final research results are detailed in chapters 6 and 7. I include a worked-on interview transcript (see Appendix O) to illustrate the method of analysis.

5.2.4.3 Identification of MLE Features

Several forms (e.g., Mentis, Dunn-Bernstein, Mentis, 2008; Feuerstein Institute, 2020) exist for the identification of MLE criteria in 'Feuerstein Method' lessons and also in regular school teaching and are mainly used in supervision where an experienced mediator participates as an observer in another mediator's lesson and identifies the

elements of the MLE according to the items on the form. On this basis, the observer, then gives feedback to the mediator on the handling of the lesson. The premise of this procedure is that the teacher who is leading the lesson is familiar with the MLE criteria and makes a conscious effort to apply them.

This method of identifying MLE criteria in Quaker Children's Meetings could not be used in my study because my focus was not on working with trained mediators but with individuals who work with children in Children's Meetings based on their personal experiences and attitudes. None of my respondents were familiar with MLE. Nor was I interested in analysing individual specific Meetings. This would have been possible in the case of observations, which, as I have stated above, I did not carry out.

Thus, based on Sh. Feuerstein's claim that

> "MLE can be seen in the way in which values, ideas and feelings are transmitted and the environment is shaped by the individual" (2002, p. 27),

to identify MLE criteria in the interactions within Quaker Children's Meetings, I focused on both the content of the statements and the terms used by the interviewees. I compared the statements of my interviewees describing their attitudes towards child leadership and the children themselves and the ways in which they interacted with children with the characteristics of the individual MLE criteria (see chapter 2.4.5). I also compared my interviewees' statements with each other, observing which elements were recurrent and could therefore be generalised and which, on the other hand, occurred sporadically.

MLE is characterised through 12 criteria, of which 3 are key and the remaining 9 situational, depending on the context (see chapter 2.4.5). According to Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik (2014), one can only speak of an interaction as being of MLE quality if all three key criteria are present. If this is not the case, it may be a mediation, but not a Mediated Learning Experience. Therefore, in my analysis I also focused first on these three key criteria and only then on the others, asking the following questions:

- Can the interaction be of MLE quality, or a mediated approach with occasional elements in common with MLE, or can no MLE elements be identified?
- If it is MLE or at least some common features with MLE can be identified, is it possible to arrive at some generalisation?

- Can specific parameters of mediation be identified in Quaker Children's Meeting interactions that would only be valid in the context of Quakerism?

These three main MLE criteria were also the focus of my analysis of the materials used in working with children in Quaker Children's Meetings, which I present in section 4.3.1 (ˈJourneys in the Spiritˈ, ˈGodly Playˈ, ˈLiving our Faithˈ). In analysing these materials from an MLE perspective, the main issues examined are how the guidelines for Children's Meeting leaders are formulated, what activities are offered in the materials and how they are recommended to be presented to children.

5.3 Summary

In this chapter, I present my research methodology, describing and justifying the methods and procedures I used in my research, including the difficulties I encountered and their solutions.

The following two chapters present the results of the interview analysis in detail. As I stated in the introduction to this chapter, I first focus on the themes that emerged from the interviews regardless of the MLE (chapter 6). Only then do I look at the results of the analysis from an MLE perspective (chapter 7).

6. Findings from Empirical Research – Part I: Approaches to Values Education in Quaker Children's Meetings and Their Rationale

6.1 Introduction

I divide the description and analysis of the results of my empirical research into two chapters. In this chapter I discuss approaches to values education in Quaker Children's Meetings and compare them with the approaches to values education that I discussed in chapter three. In the following chapter (chapter seven) I explore the features of MLE in the approaches to values education that I have identified in Quaker Children's Meetings.

As I described in an earlier chapter on my research methodology (see 5.2.1), the results I present in this section are based on the analysis of the semi-structured interviews and they are the conclusion of the whole process of analysis. In order to support the reliability of my conclusions, I use quotes from individual interviews, and for each finding I usually quote from more than one interview. If I use only one quote, it means that the idea did not appear in other interviews, but I still consider it important and of meaningful value because of its relationship to literature or to the growth of my own sense of the field.

Firstly, I define the term 'teaching', based on the accounts of my respondents. I take as a definition of teaching their articulation of the principles underlying the different approaches of Quaker Children's Meeting leaders to children. As emerged from the interviews, there is not only one approach but rather a variety of approaches that are influenced by several factors, which I discuss in the next section of the chapter. I then describe examples of specific types of interactions with children that Quaker Children's Meeting leaders use in their approaches to children.

The aim of this chapter is to answer my research questions about Quaker approaches to teaching values in Quaker Children's Meetings, to explore how they work to develop children's understanding of Quakerism and how they transmit their values to children so that they become principles that can guide them in their personal lives (see 5.2).

6.2 Concept of 'Teaching' in Quaker Children's Meetings

Before discussing approaches to working with children, it is important to define the concept of teaching in the context of Quaker Children's Meetings. As evidenced by my interviews, Children's Meeting leaders do not consider themselves as teachers, but rather as facilitators or guides:

> "How would I describe myself? I suppose as a facilitator. And I think that role of keeping kids safe and where people feel they can contribute and offering some direction in terms of introducing children to Quaker values." (Int. 17)

> "I think often the adults are facilitators of a process, of explorations. They are creating the space in which something can happen." (Int. 25)

Therefore they also do not label their activity with the concept of 'teaching', as it sounds too authoritative for them and they associate it with the school environment, against which they define themselves:

> "We are not at school, I mean a teacher is somebody passing the knowledge, passing my knowledge to you, but in the Quaker Meeting, it's more sharing, where the children have to contribute as well and it's not about indoctrination, it's about asking the things, so maybe that's why we are leaders." (Int. 9)

> "I don't know whether I would call myself the teacher. I suppose I wouldn't really. Teachers sounds very like something that you are imparting from a person to another. Just we do it... Just I feel more we provide the story or whatever and children then respond to it and explore. But it's teaching, isn't it really? Yes. I wouldn't call myself teacher but I don't know what other word to use." (Int. 27)

As can be seen from the quotes above, the definition of activity with children in Quaker Children's Meetings is not clear-cut, but respondents agree that Children's Quaker Meeting is not a place where adults teach children in the sense of imparting facts that children have to memorize, rather it is a space for shared inquiry. Interviewee 21 illustrates this idea by comparing it with the approach in another faith community:

> "Our teachers, when we were in [another church][8], they wanted to push their values into me, so that the values are exactly the same in me as they were in them. They believed their values are unchanging. We want children to be in a safe environment in which they develop their own values." (Int. 21)

Interviewee 5 adds:

> "The children will be what they will be, and they are, who they are. And you just try and do your best and give them as much grounding and as much nurturing and love and security and guidance as you possibly can." (Int. 5)

Since the respondents define themselves against the term 'teaching', I do not use this term in my work either, replacing it with the term 'working with children' in relation to the activity of the Children's Meeting leaders. However, this does not change the fact that children are expected to learn something in the Children's Meeting (see 6.3.5).

I believe that this conception of the activity of Children's Meeting leaders is based on the Quaker value of respect for other individuals (see 4.1), whereby an individual can share their views and beliefs but cannot impose them on someone else, because each person experiences their beliefs individually. It also might follow from the fact that Quakerism is not based on a particular creed or fixed doctrine to be passed down from generation to generation, and thus Quaker Children's Meetings are not run according to a centrally prescribed curriculum. Yet there can be found many common features in the content and conduct of Children's Meetings that are based on other Quaker values (Testimonies; see 1.2.2). But it is not just Quaker Testimonies that influence the approach to working with children. In my interviews I identified several other factors that influence the activity of Children's Meeting leaders. In the following section I discuss these factors in more detail.

6.3 Factors Influencing Ways of Working with Children in Children's Meetings

As I mentioned in the previous section, the Quaker Testimonies are a major influence on the work with children in Quaker Children's Meetings. However, as the interviews I

[8] I have omitted the name of this church because it is not the subject of my work. I see the importance of the quoted statement in that it points to two different approaches to the transmission of values within church communities, one of which is inherent in Quakerism.

conducted show, the understanding, interpretation and application of Testimonies is very much an individual matter, and it therefore depends very much on the personality of each individual Children's Meeting leader what approaches to working with children they choose. Moreover, the Children's Meeting leadership is not the only determining factor in terms of the way of working and the content of Children's Meetings. Other factors that emerged from the interviews are:

- the objectives of the Children's Meeting,
- the age of children,
- the individuality and needs of children,
- the structure of the Children's Meeting and
- the topics discussed and materials used.

In the following subsections, I examine in detail these various factors influencing the approaches to working with children in Quaker Children's Meetings.

6.3.1. Children's Meetings' Leadership

The interviews show that since Quaker Children's Meetings are not governed by any set curriculum, prescribed pedagogical practices, or binding teaching materials, it is up to the adults leading the Children's Meeting to determine how they conceive of working with children:

> "No, there is not a curriculum in that sense, you would find it very flexible. It's often very driven by the interests of the young people themselves or by the adults working with them who've got very often particular things they enjoy doing or talking about, so there is no formal programme as such." (Int. 25)

> "We don't prescribe what to do, it's up to the leader of the Children's Meeting" (Int. 9)

> "First of all, you don't have a policy for Children's Meeting. We have eleven Meetings a year plus an All-age worship and a party, and each adult is completely free to do what they want to do." (Int. 21)

Therefore, the Children's Meeting leader is a key person who plays several important roles, from ensuring the safety of the children to opening space for the development of their spirituality. Usually, not just one person is involved in leading the Children's Meeting, but several people from the Meeting help, including parents of the youngest children as mentioned by the respondent 18:

> "The other aspect is, it’s not always the helpers and children being there, that’s parents as well because the parents might have a toddler." (Int. 18)

In some Meetings there is also a committee that decides the functioning of Children's Meeting, suggests possible topics, coordinates the work of leaders and their helpers, etc.:

> "We have a Children and Young People’s committee which meets probably once a year on a formal basis and maybe chooses a theme for the year but as it's the same group of helpers anyway we might suggest things to each other as the year progresses." (Int. 14)

> "Generally, you have a background structure, we meet every six weeks, we plan what we are doing." (Int. 18)

However, there are also Meetings where there is only one person who works with the children. Although the position of Children's Meeting leader should not be a lifetime one (Int. 8), especially in smaller Quaker Meetings it can happen that one person is dedicated to the children for many years without the prospect of being replaced. How such a situation might be experienced from the perspective of the Children's Meeting leader is mentioned, for example, by interviewee 13:

> "And I mean, to be honest with you, there’s nobody else who would do the Children’s Meeting and I’ve run it for years and years and years. I enjoy it, don’t get me wrong, but there is a limit to the amount of involvement. (…) So, I enjoy doing it but what I am saying, there is no one else who would like to do it in my Meeting. And I haven’t got the energy." (Int. 13)

Not only does the leader of the Children's Meeting get into a difficult situation where they feel that they would like to quit this role, but they don't want to lay the teaching down because there is no one else available to work with the children. At the same time, as Interviewee 8 points out, the rotation of adults in leading Children's Meetings contributes to community building by having the children get to know more members of the Meeting, who in turn get to know the children who attend the Meeting. If only one person is dedicated to the children, this mutual getting to know each other does not take place in the Children's Meeting:

> "Like other Quaker roles they are not for the whole life, they are for a limited time. Then you will have somebody else and that’s important as well because then the children have

> the chance to get know other adults in the Meeting – not always easy to achieve in a small Meeting." (Int. 8)

However, whether there is one adult in the Children's Meeting or more, it is they who primarily determine how the Meetings are run. Based on the interviews, I concluded that the fundamental aspects that shape their work with children are the adults' awareness of their roles, attitudes towards children, approach to Quakerism and religion and in some cases also their personal experience as child in Quaker Children's Meeting and their teaching experiences outside Quakerism. I discuss these individual aspects in more detail in the following section.

6.3.1.1. Attitudes towards Religion

From my 28 interviewees 5 were raised in a Quaker family, the rest came to Quakerism as adults. Most of them have a religious background and these persons agree that their family's church did not bring them satisfaction of their spiritual needs which led them to seek another religious denomination. It is interesting that they did not abandon the faith as such, but embarked on a search for another religious group:

> "Then I became rather disillusioned because there was quite a very big emphasis on liturgy, and I particularly appreciated the church I suppose but generally it wasn't at all interested in the surrounding community it seemed to me. So I was looking for something that seemed more 'faith in action', if I use the Quaker words." (Int. 8).

> "I was a kind of brought up to go to church but also to question why you would. And as a young teenager, I would be about 11, 12, 13, something like that, I started to question whether I believed everything, I was being told to believe in that church, and particularly I think, I found two things difficult. One was a sense that church was maybe just something where people went to and a, kind of, set of words on Sunday morning but it didn't necessarily have any meaning in the rest of their lives and the other was that there were not many words that had any meaning for me. And so I'd tried very different churches." (Int. 25)

> "I wanted somewhere where Christianity and God and politics were part of the same thing. So, I was looking around and then I wanted to improve my German and I wanted to go on a work camp in Germany and it was run through the Quakers and then after that I went to a reunion, and I went to my first Meeting for Worship and met Quakers, and this is what I was looking for." (Int. 12)

"I was brought up in [another church][9]. I started questioning that and I refused to be confirmed when I was fourteen." (Int. 18)

Here, then, we encounter both an openness to religion and a critical attitude that leads to questions about its meaning and the search for one's own place, which for my respondents became Quakerism. Although Quakerism has its roots in the United Kingdom, the Religious Society of Friends is not widespread enough to be widely known as a current religious option, although many more people would recognise the word ˈQuakerˈ as a historical group. People usually discover Quakerism more accidentally through friends, acquaintances or by joining activities that resonate with the individual's values and that are organized or co-organized by Quakers, as in the following examples:

"I met my husband because we both were working in the anti-nuclear movement. Particularly, the medical campaign against nuclear weapons, in the early 1980s. And we went on marches and demonstrations and …. and there we met Quakers. And they invited my husband to their Meeting. I went to the Quakers with him, and I found that it was my spiritual home." (Int. 27)

"I was looking for something that seemed more ‘faith in action’ if I use the Quaker words and I had a colleague that I discovered was a Quaker. And I was really impressed with her way of approaching issues that arose in the course of social work. So, when I found out she was a Quaker (I didn’t know anything about Quakerism before that), I thought I would go along to a Meeting to see how it was. And I found more about it and what they mean about faith." (Int. 8)

"I started coming to Quakers in my early thirties, which is about thirty years ago, through leaflets and then meeting a couple of people who were Quakers and they said, ‘Why are you not coming to Quaker Meeting?’" (Int. 23)

"I’d never been to Quaker Meeting or anything. My first information about Quakers, I got from going to a political or social meeting in B. Meeting House. And while I was there, I picked up some literature, just some leaflets and ‘Wow!’." (Int. 3)

[9] See footnote 14.

The fact that a person chooses to attend or become a member of such a community is closely related to that individual's value system and the values that Quakerism espouses. The interviewees describe how Quakerism appealed to them as follows:

> "I suppose, I was particularly drawn to the testimony on peace and so I was a part of a global peace campaign. (…) So it's a combination of these two things really. I am enjoying the silent Worship, finding that nourishing, and the aspect of faith in action I think." (Int. 8)

> "And of course, at the Quaker Meeting, there is just the silence, and nobody tells you what to believe. But they ask you what you believe particularly in 'Afterwords[10]', so I didn't know what I believed but when I asked the person who asked me what they believe, they didn't know either. And it was so refreshing, really, to find that there was a group of people who were on a kind of shared search for meaning but without the certainty about the answers; that was a lack of certainty that I think appealed to me and made me go back. But, also, the sense that it was OK to be quiet and not to know answers." (Int. 25)

> "For me, the value, I find, that speaks to me the most, is the fact that it's non-judgmental and there is respect for everybody. And it doesn't matter who you are, everybody is valued for who they are. And I like the pacifism. And I like many, many other things. Actually, I like the fact that it's kind of action-based." (Int. 5)

> "It is faith based on experience; a sense of aiming for community and acceptance." (Int. 19)

> "Being fair. And being tolerant. And it really means that you are not going to prejudge. Just the fact that I am sixty and you are ten doesn't mean to say I am right, but you have respect for one other. And I think everyone in a Meeting for Worship is equal. That's the power of the Meeting." (Int. 7)

> "When I was a child, I loved the fact that there was a Spirit in my life and spirituality and as an adult when I came to Quakerism, I wanted to pick that up, so people often say: 'You found a home in Quakerism.' And I did, I feel like that. I feel very comfortable. And I love the fact that it's not just about sitting in the church and listening to somebody telling you something." (Int. 15)

[10] 'Afterwords' is a time after the Meeting for Worship when participants in the Meeting have a space to express thoughts that, for various reasons, they did not say during the Meeting for Worship but would like to share with others.

In addition to being aligned with Quaker values and the Quaker way of Worship, the interviewees cited other aspects that attracted them to Quakerism, such as:

- **space for personal spiritual development and search**

  "I think for me it's the most great that my own spiritual journey has evolved and I have grown as a person. So, my beliefs have changed a little and have grown but that's always OK within Quakerism." (Int. 11)

- **community**

  "I would say sitting in silence together with others, but it's not a meditation, it's a community. Yes, sitting in silence with the community that also have a social action aspect to it within a Christian tradition and let you sort out your own thoughts and feelings." (Int. 18)

- **openness to different views and perspectives**

  "People don't think you have to be certain about things and people want to talk about issues, they want to talk about refugees or racism or poverty. Those conversations you can have." (Int. 12)

  "There are people who are still very much Christian and there are people who are in the middle and some people like me who are more at the other end. But it's that wonderful mixture of things, parts of the things which are spiritual without people watching where you are coming from. Because in our Meeting there is a wide range of beliefs, it's not a particularly Christian Meeting like some other Meetings but I think that there is a lot of talk about language among the Friends at the moment. It's all about language, the words you use to describe your experience." (Int. 13)

The experience of self-discovery and realization of why an individual has chosen a Quaker community and what they value about it is, in my opinion, one of the important factors that influence the way an individual conducts a Children's Meeting. It can be expected that their values will be both the inspiration for their work and the content they want to pass on to the next generation.

6.3.1.2 Motivation to Work with Children

Motivation to work with children usually comes from a positive relationship with children. This is also the case for the interviewed leaders of Children's Meetings. They

mainly describe their motivation as enjoying being with children or young people, playing with them, simply enjoying time with them:

> "I really enjoy being with children. I love them. I like opportunities to play." (Int. 8)

> "I do like being alongside children and young people. I enjoy them being grown. I enjoy their nurturing, and seeing them developing, being the next generation. I don't think it's much more than that. They are just amusing, free, it's just to be alongside and see them grow and develop." (Int. 23)

> "I find work with children fascinating; I just think they're never boring, always come up with new stuff and I think I am good with them. And I enjoy it and they [do] as well." (Int. 17)

I consider this statement to be very important in terms of the way they work with children, because the primary ambition here is not to teach the children something new, but to be with them and accept them in their natural way of being. Adults seem to be 'coming down' to children, not bringing them up to the level of adults.

> "For me, because I am a rather intellectual thinking person, I appreciate communicating with children and listening to them because they accuse me of not thinking enough and not being clever enough." (Int. 21)

Another motivation that emerges is a kind of gratitude – the Quaker Meeting helped an individual when they were young and alone in the Meeting, so now they continue to help, doing the same for the next generation:

> "So my motivation is, I benefited I think by having the Children's Meeting and other people helping and supporting me as a child, and I like to give something back because I think I benefited. So it's fair if I can reciprocate and help Britain Yearly Meeting grow the next generation. And I enjoy, I enjoy working with children." (Int. 4)

Related to this aspect is another observation, namely that the Children's Meeting leader is motivated to work with children because they simply want to give children the opportunity to come to the Quaker Meeting:

> "I think it's important that the children have the opportunity to come to the Meeting if they want to." (Int. 16)

Some leaders of Children's Meetings accepted this role because of their own children who were the only children in the Meeting and their parents started organizing Children's Meeting.

> "What motivates me? It started with wanting to give my own children and then my own grandchildren a feeling of belonging to the Meeting and wanting to give them a, sort of, value framework to grow up with. I have always like playing with, or looking after, young children and I think it's fun." (Int. 14)

In relation to the motivation to work with Quaker children, there was mention in several interviews of leaders being involved with children even though they would like someone else to take over because they have been doing this work for a long time (Int. 13 and 14) or because they are a parent who works with their own children (Int. 5).

> "I also think it can be a burden and as I get older, I think, really, others should take my place but at the moment I don't see anyone who really wants to take the lead – as they are busy parents – or have other roles – themselves." (Int. 14).

> "So I enjoy doing it but what I am saying, there is no one else who would like to do it in my Meeting. And I haven't got the energy." (Int. 13)

> "Allowing me to stay in the Meeting other people have to come out and stay with them [the children]. Yeah, that's been, kind of, talked about this for a year but never actually came to anything." (Int. 5)

In all of these cases, the motivation to continue working with children, in addition to the above, is that there is no one else available at the time to take over the role of Children's Meeting leader. So, these leaders who are reluctant to continue are experiencing a strong obligation to continue. They feel a duty to serve the children's interest over their own.

In conjunction with the other factors discussed here, I consider motivation to work with children to be an important aspect influencing the quality and method of work with children.

6.3.1.3 Experience of Teaching Outside a Quaker Setting

Teaching experience outside of a Quaker setting is not a requirement for becoming a Children's Meeting leader, but people working with children as teachers are often asked to take on this role:

> "I am probably influenced by the fact that my most recent work was with children in primary school and my experience was that following the child's lead is a very valuable way of working. So, I suppose that I carry that sense into the Children's Meeting as well." (Int. 8)

> "Well, [my partner and I] have been connected with children for our whole lives. We worked in a school; we lived in the complicated area in Northern Ireland. We were involved in peace projects, and we also were involved in adult education. So, when the possibility came to work with children in Children's Meeting, we knew we were sure we wanted to do it." (Int. 21)

> "I work in education, and I work with children who have additional needs, very special needs. And what I do is valuing everybody for who they are regardless of whatever challenges they have and however others in society might see them and however disabled they are. Yeah, it's about recognizing that everybody has a place in society and that everybody has a right to be valued and respected and have a role to play and be the best they can be and do the best they can do." (Int. 5)

As the quotes show, in a way, the leaders themselves see school teaching experience as an advantage, as they can relate their experience in the school setting to this out-of-school setting.

6.3.1.4 Role of a Children's Meeting Leader

The role of a Children's Meeting leader can be seen from two perspectives: official and personal. Officially, in Quakerism, adults in the Children's Meeting can have the role of leader or helper. One of the leaders usually also has the role of convenor of the Children's Meeting's committee. In smaller Meetings, as I mentioned above (6.3.1.2), there may be only one adult who is in charge of the Children's Meeting and is therefore both leader and convenor and performs their role without helpers. Of my interviewees, the most extreme case was that of Interviewee 5, who performs the role of convenor and leader and is also a parent of children attending Children's Meeting. The convenors call the Children's Meetings Committee together and coordinate the volunteers:

> "I am a convenor. I do practical coordination when I need somebody to help me with minutes and administration. I coordinate the committee and the volunteers, and I do a rota every three months." (Int. 8).

They also usually prepare the programme for the Children's Meeting, inform the families that there will be a Children's Meeting session, if it is not held regularly, and agree with the other helpers on how to help. Helpers help with the implementation of the programme, are on hand especially for smaller children, or children who need it, for various craft activities, or attend to children who, for whatever reason, do not want to participate in the joint programme.

> "Officially, I am the convenor of Children's Meeting. So I am the one who, if we have meetings of those who looks after the children, I would be the one who organises the meetings, who sends the emails, who organises the day, tidying up the resources and these sorts of things." (Int. 27)

Good cooperation and interplay between the leader of the Children's Meeting and the helpers seems to be one of the basic prerequisites for the smooth running of the programme. Interviewee 8 mentions an example in which a helper who was assisting a child with special needs offered an aid intended for that child to the other children, thus completely distracting them. The Meeting leader evaluates this intervention as follows:

> "it was new to them, I think, and it was unfortunate. It was difficult to get their attention really" (Int. 8).

This example shows that good cooperation between the adults involved in the Children's Meeting is an important factor in working together. In addition to the helpers, parents, especially of younger children or children with special needs, might also attend the Children's Meeting and take on the role of helpers. Again, good cooperation between all adults is necessary. An example of such cooperation is given also by interviewee 8:

> "Then I invited the mum of the little boy with the special needs to choose a book from their collection because he relates quite well to books, he already knows, and she likes to do that. So she read a story." (Int. 8)

Regarding the concept of the role of the Children's Meeting leader from the personal perspective of each leader, as I mentioned above (see 6.2), they see themselves as facilitators, guides or companions which covers many aspects of their work. For example, some mention that their role involves linking the Children's Meeting with the Adult Meeting in the sense that the children know the adults and the adults know the

children and they are interested in each other, thus creating relationships between children, with each other, and between children and adults:

> "I think the primary thing is the opportunity to get know the children and that they have the opportunity to know us a little bit more, so that they have some adults in the Meeting that they know a little bit better." (Int. 8)

> "In my Meeting – and I noticed in other Meetings – because the children are not a part of the big Meeting, the main Meeting, and they do not always come in [the Main Meeting] at the end or come into the Worship at the beginning, so I challenge every child or the adults in the Meeting to see how many children's names they know or how many of the children know the adults because I don't think there is as much communication and interaction between the main Meeting and the Children's programme. And it would be nice if there would be more all-inclusive, or All-age Worship, it helps break down these barriers." (Int. 4)

Other aspects of the facilitator or companion role, in the words of my respondents, include:

- Creating a space for exploration, discovery and inquiry

> "I am a spiritual leader, and I am modelling and giving an example and I also represent children in everything to do with the Meeting. So I try to make sure [there's] a perspective of the Children's Meeting in most things that Quakers do. And I promote children's spirituality and the importance of children's involvement." (Int. 18).

- Role modelling

> "The adult and the other adults involved with children offering them, hopefully, an authentic presence that will be with them in some way over the years. You always remember a good teacher. Well, I think a really vibrant or authentic person involved with children – that's and young people - that's another opportunity for them to be an authentic presence that Quakers would call pattern, to be a pattern to the world." (Int. 18)

> "I think, to some degree they are role modelling and supporting young people in taking responsibility for their own events." (Int. 25)

- Creating space for taking responsibility for one's own spiritual journey

> "It's about allowing to happen in an age-appropriate way, so that they are not overburdening the young people with responsibility but at the same time they are not just

> in a teacher relationship with them where you are telling them how to do things. It's about helping them how to explore, how to do it for themselves." (Int. 25)

I consider all these aspects of the role of the Children's Meeting leader to be important in relation to the way they work with children. They reflect the personal values of Children's Meeting leaders as well as the Quaker values that are implicitly communicated to children.

6.3.1.5 Summary

I described the leadership of Children's Meetings as the first factor influencing the way that working with children in Quaker Children's Meetings is run. Based on the interviews, I inferred that the conception of Children's Meeting leadership plays a key role in working with children, and that their approaches to conveying values to children depend on their attitudes towards religion, their motivation to work with children, and any experience of teaching outside of Quakerism.

6.3.2 Age of Children

The age of the children is another important factor influencing the way Quaker Children's Meeting leadership works. Most interviewees agreed that the age of the children plays a role in both the choice of topics and their presentation:

> "Definitely children of different ages need a different approach!" (Int. 14)

> "With very young children the Quaker experience and spiritual development is about connections to others, feeling safe and welcome. As they grow, more can be done in relation to relating out to others and to thinking about our place and impact on the world and then to actions we can take. Young people benefit from both being part of an age group of peers and with others of different ages and I would try to make sure both happened." (Int. 19)

While younger children are primarily exposed to Quaker values in Quaker Children's Meetings, the values are also discussed with older children. When working with stories, whether real or from a book, Children's Meeting leaders perceive a difference in the questions asked in the ensuing discussion – with younger children they stick more to the actual content of the story, with older children it is possible to discuss on a more general level:

> "What we tend to do once a month is to build two children's groups for the younger ones and the older ones. So, we can explore the things more deeply with the older ones. And also make it more valuable for them to continue coming and keep contact. Yes, we work in a different way with the younger ones and try to mix and match." (Int. 17)

Many Children's Meetings struggle with the fact that they are attended by a small number of children with a large age range. Not every Meeting can afford to run multiple children's groups at the same time, so it can happen that there is one common programme for all children at the same time, regardless of age:

> "It is often the case in Quaker Meetings that there are very few children, and they could be in a whole range of ages." (Int. 14)

> "Now, the children we have in our Meeting, there is one who is fifteen and we've got nine children in all but two don't come, they only come very rarely, so you could say we've got seven at all regular. And of these seven, one is fifteen, two are twelve, three are ten and one is six. We've got a very wide age range. And the fifteen-year-old comes and what she often does is she is half an hour with us and then she goes into Meeting." (Int 13)

In this case, the approach to working with the group is again different than when working with only one age group.

6.3.3 Individuality of Children

Another factor influencing the approach of the leaders of Quaker Children's Meetings to the children is the individuality of the children and their needs. This factor includes, in addition to the age of the children, which I discuss above, the fact that many Meetings are attended by children or young people with special needs, who are also included in the group:

> "We had just three children, but one has some special needs, so he has ADHD and is on the autistic spectrum and he recently had a sort of assessment, and his mother is helping us to take some implications. So, we knew some of the basic things that, for example, he doesn't have such dexterity, so he needs some help with crafts whereas the others two are sort of thoughtful and thinking about things. So that's a quite interesting combination." (Int. 8)

> "Some of the children we have at the moment have special needs, so autistic – autism – so they need special activities. So, for example, music would be inappropriate. And they need more care." (Int. 4)

Since few Children's Quaker Meeting leaders are special educators, working with these individuals is a challenge and they appreciate the help of parents or other Meeting volunteers who are willing to attend to children with special needs, as needed, during Children's Meeting to make the time as enjoyable as possible for all:

> "I found the way to deal with it was to have more than two adults and to have for each child who potentially was behaving badly to have one adult specifically helping them." (Int. 27)

It is not always easy to include children with special needs and not every Children's Meeting leader can cope with them:

> "We have had at least two other children who have been on the autistic spectrum, who had either autism or Asperger's. So, it makes it difficult for them to cooperate in an activity for a long time. And it meant some of the adults who were working with Children's Meeting, particularly the older ones, could not cope with that behaviour and some of them eventually stopped doing Children's Meeting." (Int. 27)

All of the above quotes show that the leaders of Children's Meetings are keen to respect and include children with special needs in the group of other children, even though working with such a group can be more challenging in terms of organisation and content.

6.3.4 Structure of Children's Meeting

For the Children's Meeting leader to fulfil their role in all aspects, a Meeting structure is necessary in addition to support from the Adult Meeting and cooperation with helpers and parents. Indeed, a fixed structure is perceived by Children's Meeting leaders as a prerequisite for creating a safe environment for children in which they know their way around and what to expect. When asked how important it is to have a routine, the respondents replied:

> "It is very important because they would be badly behaved if they don't have a structure." (Int. 27)

> "The children, and even the young people when they were younger, they liked knowing exactly what was gonna happen every Sunday morning. And they didn't want us to do lots of different exciting things. They wanted that structure. And we found that quite interesting. And they might not be there every month so for them to know what is gonna happen when I go in seems to be quite important." (Int. 12)

From my data I have learnt that a Children's Meeting often begins with news. The children sit in a circle with the adults and each in turn has the space to tell what they have experienced during the week or what is actually important, interesting, etc for them. If someone new is attending or if the children have not seen each other for a long time, they give their names at the beginning. The leader of Quaker Children's Meetings sees great value in this initial sharing: as well as children and adults tuning in to each other, it is an application of the Equality Testimony where everyone gets a chance to speak. The interviewees said the following on this matter:

> "At the beginning of each session, we sit in a circle all together – children and adults - and sometimes we have more children's chairs than adults' chairs because some of the children want to sit on an adult chair. But I think it's fine when the adults have to sit on children's chairs. It's showing that we are on an equal level. And if the children want the adult chair, they can. And sitting in the circle also demonstrates our equality. And when we start our session, we always introduce ourselves and we welcome everyone. So, we encourage every child to say their name and something else about what they like. In this way, we can hear the voice of each child and appreciate everyone. In this way, you appreciate every person in the room, and I think it's about equality and community." (Int. 11)

> "We all go round and say our names because the children change. There are not the same four children, so sometimes you have two children who might not see each other for a couple of months, so they do not know each other." (Int. 12)

Then comes the actual programme, which can include a variety of activities, but usually first some kind of stimulus from the leader (e.g. a story, a photo, a short film, an event, etc.) and then the children's reactions (discussion, game, craft activities, etc.):

> "We tend to have 'What is new?', because everybody is arriving, so you don't have anything to get starting. Ten minutes we fill with people telling what's new, how was the week and so on, and then we have a little bit of silence. And then we generally do our activities and then, for about a quarter of an hour, we go into the Main Meeting at the end." (Int. 17)

"I mean normally, when the Meeting starts, the children give news, and then we present them the topic. Usually, there is some craft or a game and then the children come to the Adult Meeting at the end." (Int. 9)

"Our sessions are usually a story of some kind followed by a practical activity." (Int. 14).

The programme usually includes a moment of silence either at the beginning or at the end. Some Children's Meetings start with the adults in the Main Meeting room together, where they sit in silence for about 10 minutes and then go to their room. The children from other Children's Meetings may go into the Main Meeting room at the end and share what they covered in their Children's Meeting after the end of the Adult Meeting for Worship:

"We stay for 10 minutes in the Main Meeting, often even 15." (Int. 5)

"And then we generally do our activities and then for about a quarter of an hour we go into the Main Meeting at the end. We used to go there at the beginning, and we now go there at the end. And I think for us, that's better. So, they have their fifteen minutes of quietness. And then at the end of the Meeting for Worship, we say what we did, and it is also said what happened in the Main Meeting or the Adult Meeting." (Int. 17)

"What we do, we spend the first ten or fifteen minutes in the Meeting, then the person taking the children takes them out and they do whatever they are going to do, which varies. We take them out and then, after notices, so they don't disturb notices, you bring them back in and then they tell Meeting what they've been making, what they've been doing." (Int. 19)

"Usually, we have 10 minutes [at the beginning] when the children go to the main Meeting and, when we feel that it's time, we go to the children's room and then we come back at the end, after the Meeting, and talk with the adults about what we've done." (Int. 15)

Experiencing silence, either in the Children's Meeting or with adults, is considered by some Children's Meeting leaders to be a very important spiritual experience for children as can be seen from the following quotes.

"I want to continue with silence because I think with the silence you find something. Because today, it's all about distractions." (Int. 6)

"If you gift to the child some minutes, a few minutes, I will say it's a gift of being able to be silent, it's a huge potential for trust, it's a huge potential for quieting the mind and knowing it's OK to do that, not keep running into the next activity and in some way running

away. It’s a stopping, quietening, listening to what’s around you. When I do it with children, I am giving them a huge potential for nourishment." (Int. 18)

"By the way, I just wanted to say that I left out in the description of the structure of Children’s Meeting that they spend the first ten minutes in the Main Meeting. I realised, I should say that. Because the experience of the silence of Meeting for Worship with adults is quite important, really." (Int. 8)

A slightly different structure can be seen in All-age Meetings for Worship in some Meetings. These All-age Meetings generally take place once or twice a year and, as the name suggests, are a Meeting for Worship in which children and adults from the Main Meeting spend more time together than the usual few minutes at the beginning or end of the Meeting for Worship. The organization of these Meetings is to some extent indicative of the attitudes of the adults towards the children in their community. While some adults welcome the All-Age Meetings as a pleasant change, others find them more of a distraction because they deprive them of sufficient space for silence. Individual Meetings are looking for solutions to such inconsistencies which might suit everyone:

"There have been in the past elderly Friends who wanted to have their Meeting for Worship so that we still give them half an hour to have the ordinary Meeting for Worship." (Int. 8)

"We have had All-age Meetings for Worship at the suggestion of Elders in the Meeting but, as they never suggested a theme themselves, we were left to choose whatever we wanted. The ideas were not always appreciated by the Meeting in general as we did some quirky things which the older people weren't very used to." (Int. 14)

However, as, for example interviewee 22 mentions, there are also adults who find All-age Meetings interesting and enriching for themselves:

"One thing we haven’t talked about is the All-age worship. So for each issue [of ˈJourneys in the Spiritˈ], there is always a supplement with suggestions for All-age worship which lots of Meetings don’t do very regularly. They might only do it once or twice a year, or something like that. But there is always the idea there. It could be anything from reading to craft activity or maybe a short film you can show in worship. There are adults who like it. Once when we had it, a 90-year-old lady came to me and said: 'I would like to have it every week in worship because it really helped me to think, and it helped me to focus.' And she thought it was great." (Int. 22)

As can be seen from the interviews, the organisation of All-age Meetings is primarily intended to contribute to building community and the realisation that there are not two separate Meetings (Main Meeting and Children's Meeting), but that all who come to Worship form a coherent group in which everyone has a place:

> "It’s necessary to feel a part of the whole Meeting, so we are looking for to have All-age Meetings from time to time." (Int. 8)

> "I think, it’s really important and I do think there is a tendency to be seen as Children’s Meeting and Adult’s Meeting. And we try really hard to bridge the gap. I do think sometimes the Children’s Meeting is seen as separated and not a part of the Meeting but there is a lot of support from them for elders to try to bring children in All-age Worship quite regularly." (Int. 17)

> "I think Quaker Meeting should be all-inclusive and not – it shouldn’t be Children’s Meeting and the Main Meeting. I would like to see more all-inclusive Meetings. Some people would say ʿAll-ageʿ, but I think it should all be one. But it’s very difficult; some people don’t like children making noise and running around." (Int. 4)

With the outbreak of Covid 19 (2020 – 2021), many Quaker Meetings moved to an online version, including Children's Meeting. Even in this form, the organizers of Children's Meetings were trying to maintain their normal form, although they were running up against various limitations of the online environment, most notably the lack of physical contact:

> "I just feel very sad that how it [lock-down] works now in our Meeting, certainly it’s very difficult. The young children have zoom meeting every week but what you can actually do on zoom is not the same as when you are physically in the room with people." (Int. 24)

> "And that’s [zoom Children’s Meetings] at the moment working well, but it means that the children are more fractured, and teenage is more fractured from the Main Meeting." (Int. 23)

Because the structure of the Children's Meetings provides a clear and safe environment for children and adults, the objectives of the Meetings, some of which I have already outlined and which I discuss further in the following section, can more easily be met.

6.3.5 Aims of Children's Meetings

Having defined and described the first four factors that shape the work with children in Quaker Children's Meetings – namely, the personality of the Children's Meeting leader (see part 6.3.1), the age of children (see part 6.3.2), the individuality of children (see part 6.3.3) and the structure of the Children's Meeting (see part 6.3.4), I come to the fifth important factor, which are the objectives of Children's Meetings. To some extent, these goals overlap with the roles of the Meeting leader. Since, as I have mentioned several times, there is no centrally given curriculum for Quaker Children's Meetings, the goals are defined individually from the perspective of each leader and their associates. From the interviews I have done, a number of objectives emerged which can be categorised as follows:

- experiencing Quaker values and spirituality,
- learning in the sense of acquiring information,
- having fun,
- building community,
- giving the opportunity to the parents to go to the Meeting for Worship.

None of the interviewees mentioned only one goal, everyone sees several, which is naturally reflected in their work. Usually, the leaders of the Children's Meetings say that they try to make sure that the children experience acceptance and respect throughout the programme, that they enjoy the programme, but also that they learn something, discover something new or realise something. How the leaders of the Children's Meetings achieve these goals will be discussed in the next section; for now I will focus on a more detailed description of each goal.

6.3.5.1 Experiencing Quaker Values and Spirituality

As I wrote above, the Quaker community is based on certain values (see chapter 4.1). Children's Meeting is a space where children experience these values, and this is because adults put them into practice. Not all children attending Children's Meeting have Quaker parents; some attend with their grandparents or have only one Quaker parent. They are also often, for example, the only ones in their school or class who attend a Quaker Meeting. The Children's Meeting leadership therefore considers the experiencing of Quaker values in Quaker Meeting to be crucial for children. They point out that this experiencing of Quaker values is not only important for children to be

aware of them, or to learn them, now at their age, but also with a view to their future life:

> "I would say, it's to provide a safe space to explore who they are in the Quaker context. And, often, not with a Quaker name on it. Children will learn by just being part of, and experiencing differences from, what they may get at school. I think, we also have children whose parents are not Quakers but whose grandparents are. Although, sometimes, their experience of being Quaker may be a bit different from their experiences at home. And I am sure that brings them a new dimension to it." (Int. 23)

> "I think, the aim is to help them to feel an accepted part of the Quaker community and give them the opportunity to experience Quaker values, I suppose, which are represented in the Testimonies. I do feel that having experience as a child, young person, of some faith, some kind of faith, [it] is a helpful thing for the future. They may move from it, may never practise it explicitly whatever their faith is but it represents a way of being in the world which I suppose is valuable." (Int. 8).

> "What they have is an experience, so that will stay with them always, like an appreciation of nature or the ability to relate fully to somebody." (Int. 18)

Another aspect of experiencing is the awareness of one's own value and place in a given community:

> "The goal of the Children's Meeting is making the children feel that they are a valued part of our Meeting, that we love them, that they are our friends, that they are important, that they are the Meeting. We don't have any great ambitions about what their spiritual path will be. The most important thing is their feeling of acceptance and welcome." (Int. 27)

> "I want children to feel they are loved and valued fully, so accepted as they are. It seems to me a fundamental human thing that really, really matters." (Int. 14)

> "I just want come back to values – it's about allowing children to explore them and discover their values." (Int. 21)

According to the interviewees, the experience of Quaker values, but also of the pleasant feeling one can get among people who accept one as one is, opens up the possibility of one's own spiritual development:

> "I think, if they have a good grounding in a Quaker Meeting, they will eventually find themselves exploring spirituality. They will be affected by it. They will be started on their path." (Int. 27)

> "I think children have a spiritual understanding and the need, actually, and I think it's important to acknowledge that and they don't necessarily get that in other areas of their lives. So it's an opportunity to let children actually explore that in a safe environment." (Int. 17)

As I described above, it is the practice of many Quaker Children's Meetings that children spend some time in Adult Meeting at the beginning or end of the Meeting for Worship. Some interviewees mention that there are children (usually children over the age of ten) who welcome the silent service and even seek it out themselves. However, an interesting comment was made in one interview (Int. 9) about how not every child can naturally experience the hour of silence as spiritually enriching. Children's Meeting is therefore a space that is adapted to children's needs:

> "But my daughter finds it very difficult to sit, I think she is able to sit quietly for an hour, but she is probably thinking about her book she is reading, so she doesn't get much spirituality from that. And I think it's difficult for adults as well." (Int. 9)

Enabling children to discover and experience the spiritual dimension of life is, in any case, seen by my respondents as one of the important goals of Children's Quaker Meeting and, as many agree, the goal is not to raise children to be Quakers but to open up to them the possibility of making free choices about their faith and further spiritual development as adults:

> "I think it needs to be done. I think we owe it to children. So that they have something to reject, they need to know what belief or religion – shared spirituality – what it is. They need to experience it." (Int. 3)

> "I hope to give children something, a seed that will grow if they want it to grow. It's not something that's new and alien to them if they want to explore it. There is something that they can come back to in their own way, so I don't personally think about teaching them about being a Quaker. I don't find I want my children to grow up to be Quakers. I want them to make their own minds. I hope to just give them a spiritual experience that they can respond to as they grow up as they wish." (Int. 15)

> "Our intention is not to make Quakers, being Quakers, we are trying to offer an experience and opportunity which hopefully might be valuable for them." (Int. 8)

Children's Meeting is therefore primarily a place where children can experience Quaker Testimonies and discover the spiritual dimension of life.

6.3.5.2 Learning in the Sense of Acquiring Information

However, it is not only experiencing Quaker values that Children's Meetings bring to children, but also the opportunity "to learn about the tradition which they are a part of" (Int. 25). This tradition includes Quaker values, Quaker history, significant or interesting figures of the past and present, and, in a broader context, the Christianity on which Quakerism was founded and the culture itself, which has been shaped by Christianity for many centuries.

> "I talk about Quaker Testimonies, that's what you are hoping is going to come out, they are going to be thoughtful about the things, the things that we talk about, taking it into the world." (Int. 13)
>
> "And it's also the history of Quakerism and how Quakers work, so Quaker culture, Quaker history. My granddaughter who is eleven asked me if we could do Quaker history. When she was younger, she wasn't interested in it but now, she is eleven and she is." (Int. 18)
>
> "To learn about history of the Quaker behaviour and belief, what sometimes, how difficult it has been standing up for your values in the larger society." (Int. 20)

Since Quakers do not profess a common creed, when different leaders take turns in Children's Meeting, children have the opportunity to learn about different approaches to faith.

> "They develop an awareness of and respect for the beliefs of people of other faiths. There is no need for them to be able to recall any details at all, but there will remain an awareness that there are many approaches to God, and we can each learn from each other's approach, if we are sincere seekers after truth and righteousness." (Int. 16)
>
> "They may discover the reality of different ways of experiencing the world and beliefs, allowing people to have different perspectives, different visions." (Int. 20).

Thus, in addition to experiencing Quaker values, children often take away from Children's Meeting certain insights and knowledge about Quakerism, as well as many other topics (I discuss the topics chosen by Children's Meeting leadership in more detail in section 6.3.6).

6.3.5.3 Having Fun

Another goal of Quaker Children's Meetings, according to my interviewees, is to have fun.

> "And at the end, they rush around in a separate room, and they like it, they like to chase each other and, for me, it is quite important because it's a part of Children's Meeting." (Int. 16)

> "So, we often do a little singing with them, telling jokes and things like that. What we did last Christmas, I wrote my own song, a silly song, it was something like 'Christmas shopping, Christmas shopping over all the time; Christmas is around' and then we sang like 'Marie, Marie what do you want to buy?' And then she said something like 'I am going to buy a new Christmas tie'. And it was so exciting these silly things. Doing silly things and having some jokes and then you can get the serious things in that." (Int. 13)

As can be seen from the latter quote above, besides the fact that fun is a natural need of children, it is also one of the ways to tune children to more serious topics and to build relationships not only between children, but also between children and adults, and also to arouse children's interest in coming to Children's Meeting.

6.3.5.4 Building Community

Community is built on several different levels. First of all, it is important that the children know each other and ideally have friends in the community. This fact is mentioned by several of my interviewees, referring to the fact that teenagers often stop attending Meetings precisely because they do not have peers – friends:

> "The aim is to create friendships, so that if they want to talk about something, they can, and when they grow older, to keep that friendship." (Int. 24)

> "For a lot of children from Quaker families, they might be the only child in their school who goes to Quaker Meeting, so it's a quite powerful thing if they can meet with other children and they might not be the only one there. You want them to feel this is a safe place and it's OK to be different here." (Int. 22)

> "There are families who come for this reason, their children are in state schools, and they come to the Meeting just so that the children have some friends outside school whose parents have similar values." (Int. 16)

The next level is the creation of relationships between children and adults. If the Children's Meeting and the Adult Meeting coexist without any major ties, it cannot be expected that the children will gradually find their way among the adults:

> "I do think there is a tendency to be seen as Children's Meeting and Adults' Meeting. And we try really hard to bridge the gap. I do think sometimes the Children's Meeting is seen as separated and not a part of the Meeting but there is a lot of support from them for elders to try to bring children in All-age Worship quite regularly. I mean, I spend a lot of time trying to integrate the children in as best they can. And also, they can stay in the Main Meeting if they wish; they might not come to the Children's Meeting all the time." (Int. 17)

Two of my interviewees explicitly cite one of the goals of Children's Meeting in preserving the continuity of Quakerism, despite the fact that, as I noted above and as some of the interviews suggest, the goal of Children's Meeting is not to make Quakers out of children.

> "The second aim is really to do with the size of the Quaker community and the fact that the children and young people are quite dispersed, they are quite disconnected one from another, so to provide them the opportunity to be a part of the community." (Int. 25)

> "I benefited, I think, by having the Children's Meeting and other people helping and supporting me as a child, and I like to give something back because I think I benefited. So it's fair if I can reciprocate and help Britain Yearly Meeting grow the next generation." (Int. 4)

The idea of continuity of Quaker Meetings is also implicit in other interviews, as interviewees agree that building a community in which everyone has a place and a voice, including children, is very important. This sense of belonging is usually built by sharing what the children have been doing during their Meeting, or by having a common meal after the Meeting for Worship.

> "Because the Children's Meeting is only once a month, always, after Children's Meeting, we have a brunch for everybody. And for lots of people that is the best time because they really feel we are a community, and they feel a part of the community. And for the children and young people, it's the highlight for them." (Int. 12)

> "They want to share what they did. It's always lovely and the adults really enjoy the children's presence. They tell us what they did." (Int. 21)

> "How do you build this feeling of belonging in children? By providing opportunities for their voices to be heard and for them to hear from friends, all-age opportunities like socials and meals." (Int. 19)

In some Meetings, there is an effort to involve children and young people in deciding the content of Children's Meetings, while in others young people are invited to discuss real issues together with adults:

> "The first step was that I asked the children what they want to do, what are their ideas about Children's programme. Then we worked with their ideas. I think that next time, the older children could be more involved in facilitation as well." (Int. 2)

> "So, for example, I was involved in planning [a Meeting][11] where we considered the issue of whether same-sex couples should be allowed to marry and it was very important that children and young people were also part of that discussion, that their voices and their views were heard." (Int. 25).

Another interesting way to build community is by adapting the part of the Adult Meeting, that children attend, to them:

> "I think the adult Meeting is boring sometimes so, actually, some Friends have been very good when the children go in. They will minister by telling a story to keep the children interested. There are two Friends in the Meeting, two men who are very good at that. Because when we asked the children how do they find going in the Meeting, they answered: boring, boring, boring. So, we started that with the stories." (Int.13)

It is evident from the above quotes that community building is emphasised in the context of Quaker Children's Meetings and various ways are used to convey to children that they are welcome and part of the Meeting.

6.3.5.5 To Give the Opportunity to the Parents to Go to the Meeting for Worship

The interviews show that Children's Meetings are not only for children, but also for adults themselves. In the case of parents, it is an opportunity to experience the silent

[11] To conserve anonymity of the interviewee, I do not write the name and type of the Meeting. Because of this change of the authentic statement, the word 'Meeting' is written in brackets.

Meeting for Worship in peace without having to take care of their children (unless of course the children are too young and need the presence of their parents).

> "And it's also for the parents, that they can participate in the Meeting. Especially for parents of young children, the one hour is a very special time." (Int. 11)

> "In the past, there were some parents that took care of their children during [the Meeting] but it doesn't make sense because [the Meeting] should be a full family experience and not those children with one parent are excluded. I am convinced that this model of [the Meeting] including Children's Meeting allows more families to take part." (Int. 1)

> "And the other thing which I think is a big one, particularly for young parents; they think they have to stay with their children, and they never get any chance to go in [to the Meeting] for their spiritual development. So I do try to, whenever I can, release them for the Meeting for Worship: 'You go in, I'll look after them' - so they get that sort of spiritual nourishment. It's a big thing because there are parents who never go to the Meeting for Worship because they always do Children's Meeting. So, I think it's integrating them as well." (Int. 17)

> "The parents can go to the Meeting if there is the Children's Meeting – it was my particular aim that they can take part in the Meeting for worship." (Int. 16)

From the above quotations, it is clear that this sub-objective of Children's Meetings overlaps to some extent with the previous point, i.e., community building. Children's Meetings help to make everyone - children and adults - feel accepted in Quaker Meeting

However, some parents, due to the age of their children, attend the Children's Meeting. There are Children's Meeting leaders who realize that when a family is new to Quaker Meeting and a parent is forced to be with their child among the children, Children's Meeting is the place where that adult learns about Quakerism. This fact is mentioned by one of my respondents, who is also co-author of the ˈJourneys in the Spiritˈ material that is often used in Quaker Children's Meetings (see chapter 4.3.1). When this author writes her contributions to ˈJourneys in the Spiritˈ, she is referring, in addition to children, to new parents who may initially spend more time in Children's Meeting than in Adult Meeting:

> "I guess, the aim is to share something of Quakerism with the children but also with their families as well. Because when people come to the Quaker Meeting for the first time with

small children, that's quite often the first contact they have with somebody. When the children are very small, they go with them to the Children's Meeting and because the Adult Meeting is quite often silent or they might not have very much ministry at any one time, it's quite often the chance for the adults to learn something of Quakerism as well. So, when I am writing materials, I am thinking of the children, but I am also thinking of their parents, and I am thinking about the people who are going to be facilitators of the Children's Meetings because it's quite often one of the first roles that you may be asked to undertake as a new attender." (Int. 22)

So, through Children's Meeting, adults can learn about Quakerism and nurture their spirituality even if they are unable to attend Adult Worship.

6.3.6 Themes and Materials

The topics discussed and the supporting materials used are closely related to the objectives of the Children's Meetings but also to the personality of the Children's Meeting's leader. The respondents named several topics, which I have ranked by frequency of occurrence in their statements in Figure 6.8:

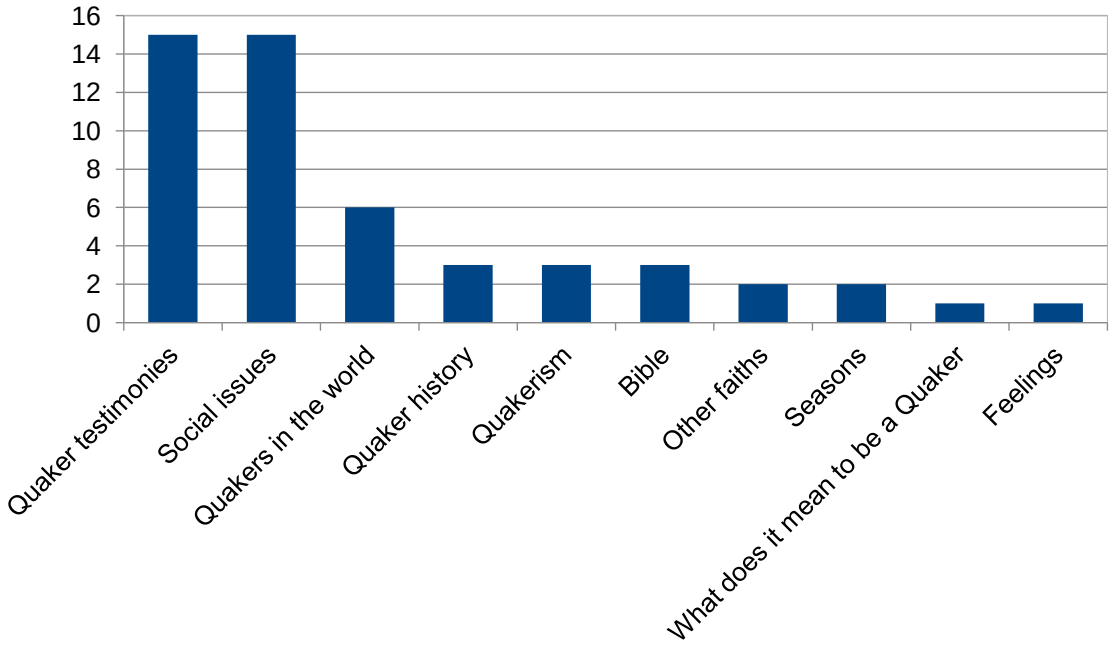

Fig. 6.8 Topics discussed in Quaker Children's Meetings (findings based on my interviews)

As can be seen from the chart (Fig. 6.8), the most common topics are Quaker Testimonies (e.g. Peace, Simplicity, Sustainability, Equality and Silence), which are handled or discussed in different ways across age groups, and social issues, which

are more likely to be discussed by teenagers, as they include topics such as racism, sexuality, climate change, the environment, medically assisted dying, drugs, alcohol, and refugees. Another topic mentioned quite often is Quaker personalities, whether those from the history of Quakerism or from the present day. This topic is related to another, which is Quaker history in general and Quakerism in general, which includes questions such as how Quaker Meeting actually works, how the Quaker system of shared decision-making works, or what is specific to the Quaker way of doing business. Related to this topic is the question of what it means to be a Quaker. In addition to Quakerism, some Children's Meetings also discuss various other faiths and beliefs. Bible stories are read or dramatized, especially with younger children. Sometimes activities related to the current season are included.

This selection of topics for Children's Meetings raises the question of why Quaker Testimonies and social issues are the most common ones and not, for example, the Bible, given the Christian foundations of Quakerism. I would argue that the answer to this question must be sought both in the person of the Children's Meeting leader, since, as I have already noted above, it is most often they who decide the content of the programme, and in the beliefs of the children's parents.

> "Some people who run the group would be much more Christian oriented and others would not be. And so, I think that range of different beliefs reflects itself in not talking very directly, a lot of the time, with the children about what's going on. So maybe it's not so faith-focused, maybe it's more Testimony- and value-led, what we are doing in our particular Meeting." (Int. 15)

> "Sometimes you have to be careful with regard to parents. I have to be careful how much and what you say. (…) You can have a potential clash of approach. I know a father who doesn't like to see any cross, you know as a Christian cross, in our room. So, we were given a wooden one, a little one, I am not sure who gave it, it might be from a visitor from Africa. The father had made a comment about that, and we had realized that you have to be careful about assumptions to do with where the parent is coming from in their religious experience." (Int. 28)

From this point of view, Quaker Testimonies and social issues appear to be 'safe', neutral topics that unite the community, while on issues of faith as such, perception or understanding of God or the Bible, there are diverse opinions among Quakers.

In terms of support materials, if the leaders of a Children's Meeting need inspiration on how to set up a Meeting for children, they usually turn to ˈJourneys in the Spiritˈ or other online materials published by Friends House (Quakers in Britain, 2022) (see also 4.3.1 and 7.4).These materials are not considered textbooks to be read from cover to cover, rather they serve as a source of ideas, often due to the fact that Children's Meeting leaders, as I mentioned earlier, let the interests of the children and young people they work with guide them in their choice of topics.

> "[Friends] House in London put out this very useful series monthly of a what is called Journeys in the Spirit. Yes, ˈJourneys in the Spiritˈ, with themes and stories and things to take from the Internet and things about what to discuss. So, lots of very good ideas. So, especially when we had more children, I would use those a lot and they were very good." (Int. 27)

> "I think a good base is the publication ˈJourneys in the Spiritˈ and adapting that, so not using it all the way through but taking something from it." (Int. 23)

> "I quite like ˈJourneys in the Spiritˈ. I always use it as a starting point. There was, also, a long time ago, a wide age-range pack, or something, which was a quite nice thing as well which wasn't too Quaker, it was slightly in the field – there were things like nature, or something, and you just go in that way. And then I do this stuff with teenagers and then this ˈLiving as a Quakerˈ pack, and others which Friends House had. Yeah, there are valuable resources." (Int. 17)

In some Meetings they also work with ˈGodly Playˈ material, which is especially suitable for younger children but can be used with the older ones as well (see 4.3.1 and 7.4 for more details), and they often lead Children's Meetings using various children's Quaker books or books about nature, films etc. Some also work according to the Philosophy for Children programme. Others look to the Bible for inspiration.

> "ˈJourneys in the Spiritˈ, ˈPhilosophy for Childrenˈ, ˈGodly Playˈ, ˈFaith and Playˈ, all sorts of books and films and etc." (Int. 19)

> "We look at Bible stories as well and values. The good Samaritan is a nice example that they like because they can learn that he was being caring, kind of helping people, so that we, we try to use the Bible as well." (Int. 4)

> "We have various booklets that are written by Quakers that come from Friends House for children. They are at their level. One of them is written by [a person] from our Meeting.

> He has written a lovely booklet about calmness and stillness and silence. And so, we can read that with them." (Int. 15)

> "We have also done 'Godly Play'. We did have a training weekend when somebody came from Friends House, and we did 'Godly Play'. And there are people in the Meeting who are really good at it. And it is all-age anyway. We have done it within the All-age Meeting for Worship." (Int. 24)

I present an overview of selected materials used in working with children in Quaker Children's Meetings in section 4.3.1. In section 7.4 I analyse one lesson from each of these materials in terms of the approach to teaching values and in terms of the MLE.

6.3.7 Summary

The aim of this section was to describe the main factors influencing the work with children in Quaker Children's Meetings, i.e. the personality of Children's Meeting's leader, the age of children, individuality of children, structure of Children's Meetings and materials and topics which are used and discussed in Children's Meetings. The analysis shows that, if the aims of Children's Meetings are to be met, the work of Children's Meeting leaders is very responsible and complex. My interviewees suggested that, at its heart, it is about finding a balance between delivering specific content and being responsive to the needs of children in order to open up space for them to explore freely the topics that interest them. All this in the context of a given religious tradition. Interviewee 8 expresses it as follows:

> "Well, to some extent, I feel, you have to, yes, sort of, in essence, be clear about what you are hoping children, on the one hand, might gain from Children's Meeting or a particular session or whatever but, on the other hand, balance that with being open to what they bring, to somehow getting that balance between those two things and trying to learn from that what seems to make the best combination, really." (Int. 8)

How the leaders of Children's Meetings meet these objectives is explored in the following section.

6.4 Working with Children in Quaker Children's Meetings

6.4.1 Introduction

According to my analysis of the data, Children's Meeting leaders see it as their mission to introduce children to the values of the Quaker community, but they do not see

themselves as teachers who teach the values directly in the sense of imparting ready-made information about what the community values are and how to apply them in their lives as for example interviewee 21 makes evident:

> "If you take children seriously, listen to them much more than you talk to them, it's not difficult to share with them whatever: how you feel today, what you did and why – whatever. And they can be passionate about these things. We have to respect them, not just lay things on." (Int. 21)

As shown in this quotation, the motivation for such attitudes towards children seems to be respect. A respectful approach to children is an application of the Quaker value of Equality. Adults are open to talking and discussing with children, listening to their views and at the same time guiding them to be able to listen to others around them, both children and adults. In this way, they try to make the Testimony of Equality evident and to let children experience it.

> "You want to listen to each child. It is indicating we all have value." (Int. 16)

> "We respect each other and what we say by listening." (Int. 13)

According to respondents, achieving the ideal state where children can listen to each other is a long-term process. In their interaction with children they feel a certain tension, where, on the one hand, children are treated as partners but, on the other hand, they need to be led to some rules that are not yet their own.

In practice, respect for children is demonstrated, not only through mutual listening, but through a range of other interactions, such as asking children for their ideas and knowledge, sharing, respecting all children (including children with special needs), letting children be active, building on children's needs, etc. I deal with all of these in turn in the following sections.

6.4.2 Implicit and Explicit Levels of Work with Children

The work with children in the Children's Meetings takes place on two levels which are intertwined: implicit and explicit. In particular, the transmission of Quaker values is often implicit as the following quotes from the interviews show:

> "I think my own children are the best example. For example, my oldest daughter, she does not listen anymore. So, I think, by living values that's something for her. She can see that; I can't tell her anymore." (Int. 9)

> "I think a lot of it is in our action, what we do, how we live, how we treat the children and demonstrate our Quaker values. I think it's not so much what we say but rather it's what we do. If you talk to children about how Quaker testimonies are, you will talk about peace, equality, truth but I think it's how we behave with the children and what they feel about how we live our life. It is the best teaching about Quaker values." (Int. 11)

> "I share the values through my behaviour and through the activities we are doing. It is not necessary to speak about a concrete Quaker value, in my opinion, it is enough if some thoughts, some ideas about what we did remains in their [children's] minds." (Int.1)

Children's Meeting leaders, along with the other adults present, are role models for children: they listen to children, value what children say, take children's needs into account, and treat children with respect. In this way, as I wrote in the introduction to this section (see 6.4.1), they put into practice the Quaker Testimony of Equality.

> "I mean, the core thing is that the child should feel accepted and that could be demonstrated in various ways: being really open to listening to them, to valuing what they say, to thinking about what they might need, thinking if they have some particular needs that you have to take into account in planning the Meeting, so being inclusive and helping them to respect each other. For me it's a kind of valuing that of God in them and helping them to respect that in the others." (Int. 8).

In addition to the aforementioned mutual listening, a practical example of this approach to working with children is sharing during snack time or craft activities. In some Meetings, it is the practice for the Children's Meeting leader to prepare fruit or biscuits for a snack on a shared plate or bowl, especially for the younger children, and then share the food together. Similarly, for joint craft activities, sometimes there is a limited number of materials, crayons, glue sticks, etc. The Children's Meeting leader then observes how the children are treating each other and again intervenes gently if necessary, guiding the children to wait or ask the other person, etc. setting an example.

> "I mean, it just depends on the age of the children. So, at the moment, it's about sharing properly, about having consideration for other people, so how they are together, when one person has the blue pen and another person wants the blue pen, about thinking about each other." (Int. 12)

On the other hand, the explicit level includes the introduction of a specific topic and its elaboration:

> "We try to let them think about things. If we talk, for example, about simplicity, then I introduce the theme, Simplicity might concern lifestyle, simple living aspects. I hope I am not saying you have to do that, that and that, I say, you need to consider probably these aspects and we discuss their ideas." (Int. 9)

Sometimes, the introduction of the topic is followed by a question about what the children know about the topic. Interviewer 8 explains why this is important:

> "We decided we would see, if you are asking what peace means, what they bring up, what is in their minds because I think with children in that age [five years old], you have to be quite sensitive to what you introduce, so I think we wanted a sort of follow their lead really on that." (Int. 8)

These words imply the openness of the leader of the Children's Meeting towards the children and their opinions or knowledge. The session is therefore not conducted strictly according to a pre-prepared plan, but there is room for flexibility and adjusting the programme according to the children's reactions. Thus, we encounter a very important approach that is often mentioned in the interviews where the leader of the Children's Meeting builds on what the children themselves come up with.

> "It’s very important how you do. The importance of listening to children while they are doing something. While they are doing something they may start talking about something that has not at all to do with the activity, but which is important to them." (Int. 27)

> "It has a focus, but we don’t – impose our focus, if they actually want to be somewhere else or they’re not in mood for it. There is no sense for a curriculum. We try to respond on children’s suggestions. Sometimes, we have said, someone wants to do this and that’s great, we’ll do this; we have planned that – what would you like to do? And then the group can decide, or discern, what they want to do." (Int. 23)

> "Usually, I plan an activity but very often, the content isn’t at all what I planned. It’s what the children want to talk about." (Int. 16)

The explicit expression of the content of a given Meeting can therefore be expressed by the leader of the Quaker Children's Meeting as well as by the children themselves. The specific treatment of the topic then also depends on the approach of both parties.

6.4.3 Kinds of Interactions

In addition to the factors I described in the previous section (see 6.3), approaches to teaching values are characterised by different kinds of interactions between adults and children, and between children themselves.

The way of working with children in Children's Meetings is very much based on discussion and sharing ideas with each other, which contrasts somewhat with the Quaker concept of Silent Worship but is understandable given the natural need of most children to talk with others, to explore, to play.

Each Children's Meeting has its own dynamics, which are determined by its members. A specific feature of many Children's Meetings is the fact that they do not meet regularly or that they struggle with a small number of children who, moreover, attend irregularly. Thus, it can happen that a group comes together that does not know each other very well and therefore the children react to each other with embarrassment or do not engage very actively. The art of the Children's Meeting leader is to recognize and respond to such a situation which can be done in various ways. One example of how to help children to feel good and be prepared for a discussion can be seen from interview 25:

> "So you might build in time for a game which is about building trust or about encouraging people to collaborate or to cooperate with one another. And then flow from that into the discussion of the subject you actually want to talk about, or the group wants to talk about, because you have to prepare the group and then you can prepare the subject matter and then you can have a discussion itself." (Int. 25)

The dynamics of the Children's Meeting are also related to the age of the participants (see 6.3.2). The preparation of the programme of the individual Meetings should depend, among other things, on the age group concerned. While with young children it is usually necessary to have a good plan of what is going to happen, with older children improvisation is often possible (and desirable) because they more often come up with their own ideas, questions or thoughts that require the attention of the Children's Meeting leader.

> "With small children, it’s possible the adults decide what the activities are, but the young people make their decisions, and you can do more of that as they get older. That’s

> probably the main difference – that they have more autonomy in deciding what their activities are." (Int. 22)
>
> "With very small children, generally you need quite a good plan, and you need to have in mind what you are going to do and what you are going to put across. Whereas with teenagers, they would take responsibility for themselves. So you've got to tailor that to the age of the child." (Int. 25)

As can be seen from the above, the older the children get, the more space they have to raise issues for discussion or decide on the programme. In this way, the leadership of the Children's Meetings responds to the natural needs of children, for whose development they try to create conditions within the Meeting.

As I wrote above, the two basic types of interaction encountered in Quaker Children's Meetings are discussion and sharing. However, these interactions are not the only ones. In the following sections, I summarise all the kinds of interactions that emerged from my interviews. It is often difficult to separate one type of interaction from the others, as they overlap in different ways and often several of them are used at once. Nevertheless, I have decided to try to describe them individually to show the variety and diversity that Children's Meetings offer in the context of values education.

6.4.3.1 Discussions

Discussion or conversation with the children seems to be the most common way for the Children's Meeting leader to interact with the children when communicating Quaker values. As shown above, in order for the conversation with the children to take place, the children need to be prepared and attuned to each other. The leaders of Children's Meetings do not see their task as leading the children to a particular conclusion, but rather to give them stimuli for thought, to broaden their perspectives, to lead them to look at the problem from different perspectives, as mentioned, for example, by respondent 25:

> "It's interesting to hear about a particular issue and you can engage them [the children] and question them and help them develop their own thinking without necessarily needing very much plan at all." (Int. 25).

The types of questions children are usually asked, correspond to this goal. In this respect, it is not the age of the children that makes a difference, but rather their

experience. Younger and older children are mainly asked open-ended questions that give room for their imagination, creativity and deeper thinking.

> "The questions I would ask would be mainly open questions or invitations to speculate, such as:
>
> How does this make you feel?
>
> I wonder what your favourite part of that story was.
>
> What would you do in this situation?
>
> Why do you think this matters?
>
> Imagine what it feels like to…" (Int. 25)
>
> "(Answer to the question: What kind of questions do you use if you engage in dialogue with children?)
>
> I wonder if……
>
> Why do you say that……?
>
> Do you think….
>
> Have you any experience?
>
> Do you think that it could be……. (seeking an alternative point of view)?" (Int. 19)
>
> "When we had older children, we did the Quaker stuff and we tried to have some more formal questions for example: How do you feel about that? Why do you think that person did that?" (Int. 12)

To help children reflect and take their thinking further, Children's Meeting leaders may also use some provocative questions:

> "...for example, young people are tending to reach quite a firm conclusion very rapidly about transgender people, and so sometimes you can take a deliberately slightly adverse opposition to try to push them to explore questions in greater depth." (Int. 25).

Another way to get children to think more and discuss more deeply is to have them take a position on an issue and then explain their opinion:

> "With older children I might use an agree/disagree statement, and then invite them to position themselves in a line across the room from strongly agree to strongly disagree and then to justify where they have chosen to stand." (Int. 25)

The leaders of the Children's Meetings see it as very important that everyone has a voice in the discussions. I see this as linking the implicit representation of Quaker values with an explicit approach – offering everyone the opportunity to express themselves is a manifestation of the Quaker value of Equality.

> "Some children have less contributions and some talk very much. I try to give everybody opportunity to talk by asking them if they want to say something or not. Some children are loud and dominant, and I want to give options to speak to all children. I try to involve everyone." (Int. 9)

Although not all children are equally communicative, it is to be expected that if the conditions are set for safe discussion and the atmosphere in the Children's Meeting is pleasant and open, discussion will develop. Some interviewees have the experience that children enjoy discussing very much:

> "Children nowadays are much more forthcoming than they used to be. They love to talk. They love to give you their opinions, they love to respond. So, I am definitely interested in their ideas, their opinions." (Int. 27)

Children's interest in actively participating in the discussions may also be related to the fact that the leaders of Quaker Children's Meetings try to relate the topic of Quaker values to children's personal experiences and their actual lives.

> "We really try to discuss with children what, for example, peace means for them, for example, on the playground, so in their real situations. Rather than discussing somebody in the 19th century, you know, how do they deal with conflicts on the playground – if somebody has a fight, or somebody upsets you. So making it at their level." (Int. 9)

> "In Children's Meetings, we have discussions about refugees, we talk about homes and what would you have in a home for example, we get them to talk about what simplicity means for them." (Int. 4)

In addition to the topics prepared for discussion by the leaders of the Children's Meetings, it also happens that the discussion arises during a completely different activity, usually a craft activity. One interviewee reported that they had found it useful to introduce:

> "an activity, whether it's looking or painting or drawing and then allowing conversation together to come through sitting and doing [something] together." (Int. 28)

The interviews show that the leaders of the Children's Meetings appreciate such situations and give space to such discussions. The children's own initiative, questions and interest are welcome.

6.4.3.2 Sharing

Sharing is often mentioned in the interviews, in a variety of meanings, from sharing food when eating together, to sharing tools for craft activities, to sharing ideas:

> "I remember for example one Meeting, it was an all-age group and I just talked about the Bible and how the Old Testament and the New Testament were written in a different way. And then I just say go choose people and talk with them about it and then come back and tell what you chose. And it was so amazing to hear who and what they chose. I was only encouraging them to have discussion, to share." (Int. 24)

> "We do like to have shared meals in our Meeting: bring and share lunches, as an example but on alternate months when we have Children's Meeting we sometimes start with a shared breakfast; this used to be quite popular but less so now." (Int. 14)

While sharing tools or food is mainly about the willingness to give to others, when sharing thoughts or feelings, a certain openness is needed, for which conditions need to be created. As we previously saw, respondent 21 sees taking children seriously and being able to listen to them as an essential prerequisite for this kind of sharing:

> "If you take children seriously, listen to them much more than you talk to them, it's not difficult to share with them." (Int. 21)

They suggest that if adults accept children with respect, which manifests itself in their genuine interest in them and their opinions, they develop a relationship of trust with them that allows for mutual sharing. The adults listen to the children's ideas and they in turn listen to the adults' ideas.

Interviewee 3 makes an important point about sharing when they talk about the importance of distinguishing between situations when sharing in a group is appropriate and when, on the other hand, a child needs to share something, but not in front of the whole group:

> "If a child is unhappy, I wouldn't make him or her share it with the whole crowd. I might say, 'Let's go to the corner and talk about it', or something like that." (Int. 3)

The sensitive approach of the Children's Meeting leader or their helpers in such situations is an important sign of respect for the children.

6.4.3.3 Role Modelling

I mentioned role modelling in the previous section (6.4.2), where I talk about the implicit and explicit levels of working with children. I return to it here because the interviews show that it is one of the most important kinds of interaction with children in Children's Meetings. Children's Meeting leaders strive to model Quaker values for children throughout the Meeting, both in their interactions with children and adults. Many respondents attach more importance to role modelling than to the words they say (see the quotations in 6.4.3.3). I suggest that this position mirrors the Quaker Testimony of Integrity (see 4.1), the belief that words and behaviour should be in harmony, as discussed e.g. by interviewee 4 in the following quote:

> " I guess, in my private life at home, I am trying to let my life speak and not show violence with my children and try to live a simple lifestyle myself, not eating too much, not buying too much, so they can learn by my example. And by being truthful as well with what I say and keeping my word when I say, 'If you do this then you will be rewarded', 'If you don't tidy your room, you cannot watch television'. So, integrity. So, yes examples like that." (Int. 4)

While these words refer to their private life, i.e., their role as a parent, not their role as a Children's Meeting leader, the important thing about their statement is that it represents a practical aspect of the Integrity principle. It can be assumed that if they follow the Testimony of Integrity in their daily life, it will be no different in their role as a Children's Quaker Meeting leader. A similar example is given in interview 2. This example is also from everyday life:

> "Now, I am mostly with my grandchildren. As they are very young (3 and 6 years old), I share the values in daily activities (playing, education activities, conversations, creative activities). I show them integrity in daily life, I try to be a real example for them, which is very challenging. It is not about planned lessons; it is about the real life. I try to connect my conviction with my life." (Int. 2)

Interview 21 emphasizes the importance of Integrity, i.e., consistency between words and actions, even within the Children's Meeting:

> "We want children to be in a safe environment in which they develop their own values. It's not only about what we say. The children are watching us – what we do – and if the teacher's behaviour is very different from what they say the children are aware of that." (Int. 21)

Children are sensitive to adult behaviour and that's why it's in the adult's interest to set the best possible example for the children.

6.4.3.4 Playing

Play is primarily concerned with young children, for whom it is a natural activity. However, interviews show that play in Quaker Children's Meetings has its own rules. One of these is that children do not disturb their older friends with their play if it is a mixed age group.

> "We sit around at table and if the younger children do not want to sit at table, as long as they are not disrupting, they can play with something." (Int. 18)

In this case, it is completely free play, where the children use the toys available to them, and the aim is to keep the children occupied when they are unable to participate in a joint programme. If children have such an opportunity, it is likely that they feel comfortable at the Meeting and like to come because their needs are respected, as illustrated by the quote from the next interview:

> "Yesterday, it was the first time after many months, that a girl came because she was in the hospital and her mother said when they arrived: 'Oh, she was talking about playing with the toys here.' She was enjoying it to be here all the time, she just wanted to play with her toys but she didn't distract the others who knew she's a little girl and she wants to play with the toys." (Int. 16)

Another aspect of free play for young children is learning to cooperate and get along with others, as reported by another respondent:

> "With the younger children in creche, they are there with their parents because of breast-feeding or changing nappies but some parents are keen to leave their children. But obviously we don't have any topic of discussion with them, it tends to be a free play. And I don't think there are any violent toys to play with and there are children's books with Quaker values and Christian values for them to play with. There is not teaching or asking them to give examples, it's usually free play for them to learn how to cooperate with other children if there are other children there." (Int. 4)

Moreover, the above quote shows that the selection of toys and books for Quaker Children's Meetings is not random but reflects Quaker values as well.

Another kind of play is various purposeful games, for example to bring children together, especially if they do not know each other well, which is not uncommon especially in small Quaker Meetings, since children come to Meeting irregularly and visitors from other Meetings may also appear.

> "Sometimes we play ice breaking games, for example sunshine game -: ˈthe sunshine is going on all who like pizza.ˈ and people who like pizza would stay in the middle, so immediately there is a connection. Because the children are from different schools, from different classes. So some simple things if they might see each other regularly or occasionally, just getting to be physical and also knowing that somebody likes pizza, somebody doesn't like pizza, stuff like that, that's just another way into listening to each other." (Int. 18)

Playing such games, as is evident from the above quote, is not only a means of getting closer to each other, but it is also a kind of communication leading to the development of listening to each other, which is one of the aims of Quaker Children's Meetings (see 6.4.2.5)

Games can also be a good means of entering into discussion, as the following example from interview 17 shows:

> "Once, we had quite a few behaviour issues. We did a game which is put out by Friends' House. You have a piece of paper in the circle and there is a set of statements about 'is it acceptable for someone to sing in the Meeting?' for example, and people talk about it and decide 'yes, always' or 'never' or 'maybe sometimes'. We did a lot of similar ones, but we completely rewrote them really trying to get the children to think about where their behaviour was not being helpful and where it was and how they would deal with it, so things like 'is it OK for you to talk when someone else is talking?' and so on. And it was useful because we had a kind of discussion, and it was interesting. I think it helped because the children, some children, are very frustrated about behavioural issues, and it helped them to a kind of realization without being confrontational." (Int. 17)

The game might thus become a means of getting children to think about issues that may concern them.

6.4.3.5 Exposure to Other People's Experiences

Another type of interaction with children in Children's Meetings is inviting a guest to tell the children about their life experiences. Children learn to listen and are enriched through experiences of someone else. Particularly, lived experiences shared across generations seems to be very valuable for children.

> "One of the other interactions is to invite another person to our Meeting, another adult, to come on Sunday and talk about their own experience what was happening through their own life – because they might be elderly people. A person is blind, he has a guide dog, so he came, and he brought a Braille machine. Another time, an adult interacts and shares about their life and is open to questions, and so when the children go for five or ten minutes in the Main Adult Meeting, there has been a little connection made with one of the people, so we are trying to do that if they are open to come for an activity." (Int. 28)

As the above quote shows, this kind of interaction is not only about sharing experiences that convey to children a world they have not experienced or are not experiencing themselves, but it is also an opportunity to fulfil another of the aims of Children's Meetings, which is to build the community (see 6.4.2.5.4).

Another benefit of having especially older guests at the Children's Meetings, according to respondent 25, is the opportunity for intergenerational encounters, which in their opinion are not very common for young people today:

> "I think one of the distinctive things about Quakers but also about faith communities in generally is that there are relatively few settings in society which are genuinely intergenerational. So young people spend a lot of free time with young people, and they also spend a lot of time with people in their parents' generation who treat them like children, but they are not often in situations where they are on equal terms with people who are perhaps two or three generations older than them." (Int. 25)

Another respondent confirms this idea:

> "We also invite older members of the Meeting to come and be interviewed to find out more about them. It could be people who are new Quakers or people who haven't been for a long time. So, I suppose, they are learning from them." (Int. 24)

Here is an example that illustrates the value of such meetings:

> "I remember from my own childhood meeting Quakers who had worked in Germany with the Friends Service, there were two women in my Meeting, both died recently in their nineties, but who had worked in Aachen serving soup to homeless people after the bombing of Aachen by the airlines, and so they had an extraordinary perspective on peace which they were able to share, from their perspective of having been in Germany as young women working as volunteers in that situation. And then being in the UK and then at that time I met them, they were elderly, perhaps in their seventies talking about something that was before I was born and so, it was so fascinating to be interconnected with that history but also to be challenged thinking about the sort of attitudes that were around in Britain when I was growing up, around, how the war is seen from the British perspective 30 or 40 years after it ended. And hearing that perspective from people who had been in Germany at that time which would be a very unusual thing for British people to go and do in that time, unless they were military. So, extraordinary connection with the history but also then a discussion about what it takes to build peace and the real experience of people who had been there were for me as a teenager growing up in the time of the cold war what did make peace quite different." (Int. 25).

I am reproducing this part of the interview in full because it very clearly expresses the different levels of such intergenerational encounters as a source of enrichment. Through the sharing of these two women, the listener was taken into a past that they had not lived through, exposed to experiences that they did not know from his or her own life, led to think about the connections to the present, and probably gained a new perspective on the issues.

Children in Children's Quaker Meeting are not only exposed to people one or two generations older than themselves, but also to people from other cultures, which can also be an interesting and enriching experience for them, as interview 23 shows:

> "We've sometimes had a Friend who comes from a different Yearly meeting, we had a Friend from Uganda, she was a professor of theology in Uganda. She was fantastic, she became involved with children's group and teenage group and the thing they all remember is she was very beautifully dressed. And she took this huge – we found the biggest bucket we could, which she filled with things and then she just would cross the room with it on her head and she said this is what happens at her home. 'In my family home is like this, but actually I am a professor at the university in the capital of Uganda and I move between these cultures'. So she was brilliant. All the boys remember that." (Int. 23)

Meeting Quakers from other cultures show children, in addition to information about how life is lived elsewhere, that Quakerism and its values are not the preserve of the Meeting or their country, which they probably know has more Quakers, but that it has spread to other countries and continents, which again can strengthen children's sense of belonging.

6.4.3.6 Participation

Participation is another type of interaction that is used in Quaker Meetings, both at the local and at the national Meeting level. The idea is that the children or young people lead their Meeting themselves. They learn to take responsibility in this way, and at the same time they learn how the various functions in Quaker Meeting that are carried out by adults work in practice.

An example of participation at the level of local Meetings is the involvement of children in the organization of their own Meeting or All-age Meeting, where they prepare part of the programme for adults:

> "Today we also planned together with the children the programme for the next Meetings. It's not always like that, but now that the children are older, we involve them more in the planning." (Int. 10)

> "Then we have All-age Meetings, only a couple of times a year, but they are really special. And on Christmas, we only had one child, my granddaughter. But when that happens, we try to get the children to lead it and the children have an activity and they are assisting the adults to take part." (Int. 18)

At the level of National Meetings, according to respondent 24, the idea of participation began to emerge in the late 1990s when the organizers of these programmes, which were designed for all ages, realised that young people should be involved in the organization in order to learn to take responsibility and, at the same time, learn how the various functions in Quaker Meeting are carried out. They try, for example, to arrange for the organization of an event, to organize a Meeting for Worship, but, perhaps, also a programme for younger children.

> "The message then was that within all activities, young people would take part in the planning, be clerks and do minutes. Always supported by the adults. It was very important. It wasn't talked down, it was definitely that the young people would be participating. I suppose in the past, that would be the adult Friends, the adult Quakers

> organizing everything. The whole emphasis is now on young people at every stage taking part. And I think it has been really important. Obviously, they have mentors. They have made decisions in the Quaker way. So it was a very important part for them." (Int. 24)

The role of the Children's Meeting leaders in such cases is, then, to help the children or young people, if necessary, for example, pointing out to them what could be done differently. Adult volunteers would be in the background but with the aim of helping children or young people without doing it themselves, allowing them the space to think about the Meeting, helping them to plan it, to reflect on what happened, and to learn from it.

> "For example, at Junior Yearly Meeting, they would have Business Meeting in the Quaker style and to consider particular issues and they would write minutes of that Meeting, again minutes in a Quaker Business Meeting are agreed by everyone who is present so it's not just a question about note taking. So, the Meeting appoints clerks to run that Business Meeting, and there is an adult alongside these clerks helping them to understand what a role involves, helping them to reflect on how well events, perhaps offering them advice if there is a difficulty, how to resolve that and similarly, there would be young people who take responsibility for social activities, or for holding the Meetings for Worship." (Int. 25)

Respondent 22 describes the same experience from another type of Quaker Meeting, which is a regular Meeting of young people from local Meetings in a particular area.

> "I am involved in a group for young people, there are probably 20 young people coming together regularly from those Area Meetings[12] and that has its own structure: Somebody chose a story and read it to the others, and they always like to end with epilogue, and they have some time for worship. They have a speaker, and they make their own suggestions about which speaker they might have. So there is more autonomy there. And the adults there make their support happen rather than leading." (Int. 22)

From these quotations, it could be inferred that the older the children get, the more responsibility they are allowed to take for the organisation and running of the Meeting. Age, as a decisive factor in the approach to working with children or young people, therefore plays an important role here (see also 6.4.2.2). In this way, young people are practically introduced to the running of Quaker Meetings, which is certainly important

[12] For the sake of anonymity, I have omitted information about the area in question.

for them when deciding later whether to stay or leave the Quaker community, but on the other hand, it also reinforces the sense of belonging, because generally speaking, the more one is actively involved in a programme, the more one is aware of one's place in the community and the more one feels connected to it.

6.4.3.7 Leading by Children

Among the approaches to working with children, I also include leading by children, although in this case the roles are partly reversed – the children are not led by the leader of the Children's Meeting, but the leaders let themselves be led by the children. Unlike participation, this is not interconnected with the overall organisation of the Meeting, but this happens within the Children's Meeting, when the children come up with their own suggestions or ideas, or with an opinion during the discussion. The age of the children plays no role in this case. The essential prerequisite for leading by children to be implemented is the openness of the leaders of the Children's Meetings to the children's suggestions and needs, made public explicitly or implicitly, and their flexibility and willingness to abandon the pre-prepared programme and modify it according to what the children come up with:

> "This Sunday Meeting is an important part of their lives because they are not at school behind a desk, they are not with their parents, they can relax, so we very much are tuned to how the children are feeling and what they want to talk about. We want them to feel part of the Meeting and feel loved and feel that we are their friends." (Int. 27)

> "Usually, I plan an activity but very often, the content isn't at all what I planned. It's what the children want to talk about and what they want to do." (Int. 16)

It is evident from the above quote and other interviews that openness towards children, their interests and needs is inherent in the leaders of the Children's Meetings.

> "I'm very used to a kind of looking out for what motivates the child and what interests them, what makes them tick and then go with that obviously, with their guidance and with, hopefully, kind of similar to what I want to do." (Int. 5)

A similar idea appears in the next interview:

> "It has a focus, but we don't impose our focus, if they actually want to be somewhere else or they're not in a mood for it. There is no sense of a curriculum. We try to respond on children's suggestions. Sometimes, we have said, someone wants to do this and that's great, we'll do this; we have planned that – what would you like to do? And then

> the group can decide or discern what they want to do and on one occasion, it took so long to discern, what they wish to do but that's the Quaker process. So, at that moment, they implicitly get the Quaker process. Sometimes, it becomes a big surprise." (Int. 23)

Although I stated above that this kind of interaction is different from participation, this quote points out that even in this case there may be elements in common with participation, such as the Quaker decision-making process, which is entirely consistent with the sub-goal of Quaker Children's Meetings to introduce children to various aspects of the nature of Quakerism (see 6.3.5).

In addition to spontaneous ideas and suggestions coming from children in response to what they are experiencing, or what is happening around them, the leaders of Children's Meetings often try to elicit these ideas and suggestions in a purposeful way. When they come up with a topic to discuss with the children, their first interest is often in what the children already know or imagine about the subject. Based on the children's responses, they then develop the topic further. In this aspect, this kind of interaction is intertwined with discussion (see 6.4.3.1). This happens especially with older children:

> "You can sit down with teenagers over pizza and discuss almost anything and have an interesting evening and it doesn't really require much preparation at all. It's interesting to listen to them on the topic and you can engage them and ask them questions and help them develop their own thinking without necessarily needing a big plan." (Int. 25).

Nevertheless, the following example illustrates that leading by children is not only reserved for older children, but can also take place with younger ones:

> "We might be indoors and the smaller boy, the boy who is just about six, he might like to work with a big selection of bricks to build a house or to build a farm or to build a pig house and we talk about the security of home and being friendly and welcoming people in. Or all sorts of values, we talk about why we are making these things with him. So it's not only play, it's also we try to bring in a relevance and values." (Int. 27)

As the quote implies, Children's Meeting leader was inspired by the boy's game and used it for a follow-up talk. They tried to reconcile the purpose of the Meeting (introducing them to Quaker values) with the children's need to play.

6.4.3.8 Projects

In many Children's Meetings, children are involved in various charity projects or projects aimed at helping nature. This kind of interaction is again related to participation

and also to leading by children, because the organisation of such projects is often left to the children themselves, from the choice of the project to its implementation. Sometimes the children are guided by the adults, sometimes they come up with the idea of helping on their own, influenced by the topics covered in the Children's Meeting or by other stimuli:

> "We gave them suggestions, but they chose, we didn't correct them, they chose and then we collected money." (Int. 21)

Although children are encouraged to help, their decisions may come as a surprise to adults, as Interviewee 21 adds:

> "We were impressed, when we were discussing about which project we could support, that already so young children have a sort of social conscience and they really are open and they really understand what is important, that's lovely." (Int. 21)

In any case, children might be an inspiration for adults because in most cases they do not implement the idea themselves in the Children's Meeting, but involve other adults from the Main Meeting:

> "The idea [to help refugees] was suggested by the adults, but the children actually took it and made it their own and then passionately spoke to the adults about the issue and what they wanted to do and what the adults could do." (Int. 20)

> "The children wanted us to collect for charities for kids that were bombed out from their houses and these kids are survived kids. And they wanted to ask the grownups to raise the money for this." (Int. 21)

A by-product of these activities is again the building of community and developing the sense of belonging, as children feel that they can make a difference both at the Meeting level and at the global level, and as they work together with the adults to achieve a common goal.

> "One of the things we did was toilet twinning. There is a website and there is a list of about fifteen countries around the world, in the developing world, where you can put some money for the village or the community creating their own toilet. We decided that we would think about some project in our Meeting where people were involved in, and we would take the idea for the children. We told them about the clean water and about sanitation, we thought about our lives, we talked about their lives, we had photos and then they raised a lot of money, and the money was sent to the project, and they built

> some toilets. They sent photos back and the children really had the sense that they can be active and have a voice and be able to affect change." (Int. 15)
>
> "During the last three years, it was mainly some projects. So, for example, we made hundreds of pencil cases for refugee children. In doing that, the children had to find out what was needed, gather the stuff together, pack it together and arrange for it to be taken. So it was a project, and we were working together." (Int. 24)

As can be seen from these quotations, examples of the implementation of charitable projects include the collection of money for children from war-affected countries (Int. 21), aid for refugees (Int. 10 and 20) or financial support for a specific community in a developing country (Int. 15).

Another type of project that the leaders of the Children's Meetings mention are projects related to helping nature. Here too, children can be inspired by adults and at the same time become an inspiration for other adults:

> "We talked to the children about waste and the effect of plastics in the oceans, they've got very excited by what was killing an albatross. They initiated how we should show the adults about that." (Int. 20)

Practical activities mentioned by interviewees are gardening or wild gardening.

> "However, we have a very nice garden with a sort of memorial and burial ground, it's a very nice garden. And a couple of seasons a year we plant plants, we go outside to plant flowers." (Int. 18)
>
> "We did wild gardening; we found some little spaces near the Meeting house and they're starting planting plants." (Int. 24)

In addition to respect for all life, I suggest that guiding children to undertake various projects reflects the Quaker Testimony of Integrity (see 4.2), the belief that words should be backed up by actions.

6.4.3.9 Creative Activities

Other very frequently mentioned types of interaction in Children's Meetings are creative activities, which are again used as a means of fulfilling the aims of Quaker Children's Meetings. The most common of these are craft activities, which were mentioned by almost all of my interviewees. Other creative activities mentioned by my respondents

include drama or singing and music. In what follows I will present these in more detail based on the accounts of individual interviewees.

6.4.3.9.1 Craft Activities

Craft activities are included in the programme both because most children like to draw and make things and because it is a way of responding to the topic under discussion.

> "I also let them do craft, it's a lot of fun for the kids." (Int. 10)

> "If you let them get their hands involved, in an activity related to what we started, then you might have a discussion, or just ‘crazies’ or comments come out, comments about what’s going on between them. You know 'Oh, this is rubbish what I have done'. There is no right or wrong way of doing it." (Int. 28)

As can be seen in the quote above, not only does the topic discussed usually result in a craft activity, but the craft activity can also spark further discussion or just comments from the children on their own work, which in turn contributes to mutual communication and relationship building, which is one of the aims of Children's Meetings.

> "When we work with children now, we use many crafty stuffs, so it’s not so much talking but drawing, cutting, sticking etc. We try to do activities, which may be planting something in the garden or pots, making things, using activities as a means to build connections with the children." (Int. 23)

Craft activities open up a space for children to express themselves in a way other than words, to let the topic reverberate, to become aware of perhaps even more context. At the same time, it allows for collaboration alongside individual expression.

Interviewee 15 gives a nice example of a craft activity that is based on children's interest, gives space for all ages, elaborates on a certain topic, but also leads to further questions and subsequent discussion. Each child was able to create individually but, at the same time, they all produced a joint work together, which they could also use to reach out to the other adults in the Main Meeting:

> "I used a book which is about the creation of Bournville where the Cadbury factory is. This lovely book is about two brothers and the chocolate factory. I read the book to the children and then we thought about the ideas in it, and I tried to give space for the older ones as well as the little ones. I knew that they all love chocolates but there was also the idea how we create a community. We were thinking about everybody and how we can redress poverty and inequality. I brought materials and little figures and little town

houses, trees, and materials that they could cut, and they created a village or a world really, a little world on the big table in the Children's room and I said: 'What do you think is important when we live together, what is important about how we play and how we work?' The older ones were able to think about valuable facts of creative business and the younger ones said: 'I want a swimming pool; I want a playground.' And then we invited all the adults come and look at it." (Int. 15)

Children often become so involved in the craft activity that they become completely quiet and calm, and thus a certain spiritual experience can take place.

"Sometimes, especially the teenagers sometimes come with their ideas or questions which they want to discuss. We had here for example three teenagers – a boy and two sisters who were very creative and we were discussing spirituality. One of them was more listening than speaking but because they liked drawing, and they were very, very creative; you just could be silent for ten minutes and they were thinking and drawing. Just sitting with the grownups in silence could be difficult but if they were drawing it was comfortable." (Int. 16)

Craft activities can not only be a source of joy for the maker, but also for other people who can be delighted by the product.

"I took crayons, and I asked them to make cards. You just put whatever, and you can colour it in or not colour it in. And I said to them, 'Do cards for someone you love' and I said 'Give it to them.' So, they made little cards." (Int. 6)

The period of Covid has not stopped the craft activities in the zoom-led Children's Meetings, but, as Interviewee 20 points out, it has impoverished them from the element of collaborative sharing:

"I enjoy the creative side of the physical presence of the children, of them doing an activity and them creating something that they can take home. That kind of shared activity isn't possible to do on zoom. They do separate things. That's the kind of difficulty that Covid has made. Having that shared activity that we can grow together has been seriously prevented." (Int. 20)

However, as the same interviewee adds, this impoverishment can only be apparent because children can take advantage of situations in different ways and can add new dimensions not only to face-to-face but also to online Meetings:

> "One of the stories that we did was about a whale and a boy. The activity for children was making a mask of the beast. I gave them the possibility of a mask and how to make it. And the aim was obviously to get them making it but one of the children preferred making a crown. And the next three session we had; he has been wearing his crown. So he has provided the continuity thanks to his mother helping him make it. So that is something that he has continued and the other children in the zoom could see he was still wearing his crown." (Int. 20)

The child created something completely different from what was expected, but, as the leader of the Children's Meeting interprets the situation, with their product they created a kind of fixed point that was important for the other children in the moment.

6.4.3.9.2 Drama

Drama is mentioned by only two interviewees. It is a way of demonstrating a story to children or drawing them into the story:

> "I also plan things about Quakers or Bible. We do puppet play about a Bible story and that sort of thing." (Int. 16)

> "They also love drama so sometimes I let them do acting, I let them play roles and then we speak about their feelings in the role. " (Int. 9)

As can be seen from the second quote, role-playing, similar to playing games (see 6.3.5.3), is not just an activity designed to entertain the children or enliven the Meeting but can be used by the Meeting leader as a basis for discussing the topic they want to address with the children.

6.4.3.9.3 Singing and Music

Singing and performing music also seems to be rather marginal in Quaker Children's Meetings according to the accounts of my respondents, which is probably related to the fact that there is generally no singing in Quaker Meetings. Interviewee 13 mentions that they often sing with the children, in order to create a pleasant atmosphere and to share joy and fun with the children (see 1.1.5.3).

Interviewee 22, in turn, mentions singing and music in the context of sharing the experiences of adult visitors to Children's Meetings who come from a non-Quaker tradition:

> "In the UK, the majority of adult Quakers have come from another faith tradition. So, some of them come from different Christian tradition, where there was a lot of singing and we might bring musical instruments or make the children their own instruments, find the Quaker songbook and do some singing." (Int. 22)

Regarding the objective of such an activity, the respondent agrees with interviewee 13:

> "You have just to give them some freedom to do what we think the children would enjoy." (Int. 22)

However, they also add the comment that there may be people in Main Meeting who disagree with the singing and music, which brings us to the question of the freedom and openness of Children's Meetings compared to Main Meetings, a very interesting question, but beyond the focus of this thesis.

> "There is the sense of perhaps more freedom to do things in Children's Meeting that wouldn't be acceptable to some of the adults that might not be involved in the Children's Meeting." (Int. 13)

Nevertheless, it seems that creative activities including singing and drama have their place in Children's Meetings and can be a way of fulfilling the aims of Children's Meetings as well as other kinds of interaction.

6.4.3.10 Peer Interactions

All the types of interactions mentioned so far are primarily among adults and children. However, as some interviewees point out, equally important are the interactions between the children themselves. Interviewee 27 explains why:

> "I think at the moment, it is a shame that there are not more children because when you have a group of children, then they interact with each other. And it is also very nice for them, it helps them to share, not to be shy." (Int. 27)

Respondent 23 adds that Quaker Testimonies, especially Equality, also play a role in peer interactions:

> "In fact, with the teenagers in particular, we try to sit back and leave them to have the peer interactions rather than a leader interaction. Because, obviously, with equality, we try not to be leaders, I would rather think, we have additional responsibility for enabling the group to be a safe and supporting and trusting group." (Int. 23)

Unfortunately, many Meetings nowadays have few children, so peer interactions often cannot occur. However, when it is possible, it is usually easier for children to open up for discussion, as can be seen in the following quote:

> "I often try to let them work in small groups, so they can talk in threes, discuss ideas. They may say what is the most important, what is tricky in the story, how would they deal with it, but they may discuss different things, they can choose. And after discussing in groups, we share all together and we write things on the board or on a sheet." (Int. 9)

The interaction between the children is not only explicit in discussions or joint projects, but, as interviewee 28 notes, also implicit in the fact that the children are together, observing and learning from each other:

> "We have never had a big amount of children, but we had sometimes a range of about 12 children of various ages. On the one hand the older children were understanding about the younger children and the younger children just looked up to the older children and that's a really positive aspect." (Int. 28)

Peer interactions are further targeted to young people who have grown out of the Children's Meeting. For these young people there are various weekend or holiday events and retreats where they can meet peers with similar values, which, as e.g. respondent 24 explains, is very important to them:

> "When they go to the residential weeks, they meet people from other Meetings, and they see what is the same and what is different. And they find friendships for life there and they really value that. Especially those who go to schools where they are the only Quakers, so mixing with others is very important." (Int. 24)

Based on my interviews, the importance of friendships among young people in the Quaker community appears to be one of the important factors in deciding whether or not young people will continue to attend Quaker Meetings. This is a phenomenon that would certainly be worthy of deeper study, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis.

6.4.4 Summary

The analysis of the interviews shows that the fundamental principles of the adults' approach to children in the Children's Meetings is respect, on which the interaction with children is based. Even though Children's Meetings do not follow any curriculum and the ambition of their leaders is not to make Quakers out of children, they enter into interactions with children with certain intentions and goals that they want to fulfil. Adults

have something to pass on to children (Quaker values, knowledge about Quaker history, love for other people, animals and plants etc.) and want to offer it to them, but they do not want to impose it. They want to show, give opportunities and let children be influenced. They try to lead children to think, share and develop their natural curiosity. The way of fulfilling these intentions is by presenting thought-provoking questions, for example, to which there is no one right answer. This opens up the possibility of discussion, sharing of views and ideas, but also the possibility of refraining from responding. The fulfilment of the objectives is also led through role modelling by adults. Throughout the Children's Meeting, children are thus exposed to a certain way of behaviour from adults that should inspire them to imitate. The children are also given space for their own silence and reflection on the topics discussed, in different ways: either by being silent together or through a craft activity or a combination of both. Emphasis is also placed on peer interactions, through which children can get to know each other better and make friends with similar values.

Approaches to working with children, as I have already mentioned, are individual and depend on many factors. During the Children's Meeting, they intertwine, complement or build on each other in various ways, or even run concurrently (especially if it is an age-heterogeneous group with significantly younger and older participants). A respectful approach involves each individual regardless of age or specific needs.

Since Children's Meetings have no central curriculum or prescribed way of conducting them, I would suggest that leading Children's Meeting is a rather demanding and very responsible function, which is certainly made easier by the support of the Meeting (interest in children's activities, willingness of members to help out as helpers, etc.) and also by The Children and Young People's department of Quakers in Britain, which publishes support materials (e.g. ˈJourneys in the Spiritˈ) for Children's Meeting leaders to use as a guide (see 4.3.1).

6.5 Comparison of Approaches to Working with Children in Quaker Children's Meetings with Approaches to Values Education

6.5.1 Introduction

In chapter 3.5 I introduced three basic approaches to values education: the cognitive developmental approach based on the theories of Piaget and Kohlberg, character

education as promoted by Jubilee Centre in Birmingham and the socio-cultural approach, which is based on the theories of Vygotsky.

In this section, I compare the approaches to values education in Quaker Children's Meetings described above, based on my interviews, with these three approaches to values education in order to highlight common features and differences.

6.5.2 Features of Cognitive-Developmental Approach

The main feature of the cognitive developmental approach to teaching values is the emphasis placed on the natural rational development of the individual, with which the development of moral reasoning is linked (see 3.5.1.1 and 3.5.1.2). The essence of the cognitive-developmental approach to values education is the stimulation of children's thinking about moral issues and the attempt to help children move through a hierarchy of increasingly adequate moral stages.

Although various controversial topics are discussed, particularly in Quaker Children's Meetings with older children (see 6.3.6, for example equality or diversity), I did not encounter in my interviews that Children's Meeting leaders purposefully expose children to moral dilemmas and discuss them with the aim of exposing children to higher stages of moral reasoning. Rather, the topics are chosen because they are matters of interest to the teenagers, with the aim of the discussions being to offer a space for sharing or showing other aspects and perspectives and to make connections with Quaker Testimonies. Thus, although the primary aim is not to lead children to higher levels of moral reasoning, this may unintentionally happen through the sharing of the attitudes of individual participants who happen to be at different stages of moral maturity.

6.5.3 Features of Character Education

Character education focuses on teaching individual ethical values and virtues so that the individuals become more autonomous and reflective in practising the virtues (Watts et al., 2021). It includes a variety of approaches that differ both in the values they focus on and in the ways in which these values are presented to pupils (ibid.)

Since Quakerism is values-oriented and Quaker values (Testimonies) are a frequent topic in Children's Meetings, as mentioned several times in my interviews (see 6.3.6),

one would expect Quaker approaches to working with children to coincide to some extent with character education. Both teachers of character education and leaders of Quaker Children's Meetings want to introduce and ideally pass on the values to children, knowing that they will improve their lives or the lives of others through them. At the same time, both character education teachers and Children's Meeting leaders seek to be role models for children in applying the values in practical life.
Despite this significant similarity between the two approaches, I argue that the Quaker approach to imparting values to children that emerged from my research cannot be fully identified with character education because while the main aim of character education is to build good character in children through a variety of approaches (see 3.5.2), the leaders of Quaker Children's Meetings speak in terms of Quaker values as opportunities for experiencing them rather than children being systematically led to adopt them (see 6.3.5.1)..

6.5.4 Socio-Cultural Approach

The socio-cultural approach is based on the assumption that the development of morality does not follow a biologically determined pattern, as the cognitive-developmental approach claims, but is a process that depends on the culture and historical and social context of each individual (see 3.5.3). Individuals' values are mediated through the language and experiences they are exposed to, so that they first come to them externally from the people around them and they gradually internalise them.

My interviews suggest that Children's Meeting leaders emphasise role modelling, both in terms of behaviour and talk, and try to present Quaker values to children as best they can without, as I have already indicated above, seeking to persuade children to adopt these values (even though they wish them to do so). Behind this effort, I believe, is the belief that the behaviour and words of the adult to which children are exposed have an effect on children. I argue that this way of approaching children is consistent with the socio-cultural approach.

Also the topics discussed in Quaker Children's Meetings, such as Quaker history, various important Quaker personalities, and facilitating children's encounters with members of Adult Meeting or members from other Meetings, are elements that are

consistent with a socio-cultural approach, which emphasizes cultural context and social interaction.

6.5.5 Summary

A comparison of the approaches to working with children in Quaker Children's Meetings with approaches to values education shows that the Quaker approaches most closely align with the socio-cultural approach, although elements of the cognitive-developmental approach and character education approach can also be identified.

6.6 Conclusion

Chapter six presents in detail the results of the analysis of the interviews with Quaker Children's Meeting leaders, focusing on their approaches to teaching and kinds of interaction.

The analysis of the interviews suggests that the concept of teaching in the Quaker Children's Meeting setting is influenced by both the Quaker's typical respectful approach to other individuals and other factors that emerged from the interviews: Children's Meetings' leadership, age of children, individuality of children, structure of Children's Meetings, aims of Children's Meetings, topics discussed, and materials used. The chapter also presents specific kinds of interactions that Children's Meetings leaders use to achieve Children's Meetings' goals, both on an explicit and implicit level.

A comparison of approaches to working with children in the Quaker Children's Meeting setting with other approaches to values education that I discuss in this thesis highlights the characteristics of the socio-cultural approach.

In the following chapter, I present the results of the interview analysis, focusing on the elements of MLE in the Quaker approach to working with children in Children's Meetings.

7. Research Findings – Part II: Teaching Approaches in Quaker Children's Meetings from an MLE Perspective

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this part is to answer the question about which features of MLE can be identified in teaching approaches in Quaker Children's Meetings. As I explained in section 2.4.5, MLE represents the quality of interaction between individuals, being more about 'how' than 'what' (Howie, 2020).

As I stated in chapter 3.6.2, Sh. Feuerstein's study shows that MLE has its roots in Jewish culture, which is based on "profound respect for each human being and the value of human dignity, one of the core values in classic and modern Jewish literature and commandments" and which is characterised by "the process of transmission of both values and conduct" (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002, p. 21 and 25). The transmission of commandments takes place in Jewish culture in a mediating manner, a key element of which, according to Sh. Feuerstein, is the high quality of interactivity. The transmission of values from generation to generation is a matter of course (ibid.). He explains the emphasis on mediation as follows:

> "the higher the quality of mediation, the greater the individual's flexibility, and the more pronounced the ability to benefit from a more encompassing and profound mediation, as well as from unmediated direct exposure to stimuli and events. This circular movement is also a key factor in the process of value transmission in Judaism" (ibid., p. 87).

Although Sh. Feuerstein sees the roots of the MLE in Jewish culture, he admits that mediation in the transmission of culture and its value system takes place in other cultures as well. Respect for human beings and the values that Jewish culture holds are one of the connecting points between Judaism and Quakerism. If, as Sh. Feuerstein suggests, the ethical and moral value of human dignity is at the heart of the mediation process (ibid.), then we can expect that, in Quakerism, whose core belief is that there is 'that of God in everyone' and the resulting respect and reverence for human beings (see 4.1), the mediating mode of value transmission will also be applied.

Moreover, Falik (2021), concerned with psychotherapeutic practice, presents one more important description of MLE when he writes:

> "The MLE criteria have been termed parameters because they are framed to present the mediator with directions and options for intervention rather than specific prescriptions for action. MLE is a process interaction, with all its potentials for creative, innovative responding. It is not a cookbook of recipes to be applied according to some predetermined criteria. In this sense, MLE is a process rather than a methodology." (Falik, 2021, p. 34)

I suggest that this view of MLE is universal, as evidenced by the range of uses of MLE from (to give just a few examples) everyday interactions between parents (or other family members) and children, through the use of MLE in school teaching, targeted interventions aimed at developing individuals' cognitive functions, to psychotherapeutic interventions. If MLE is considered as a process with certain characteristics, rather than a methodology[13] with fixed procedures and rules of work, any interaction between individuals can be viewed from its perspective and the extent to which the interaction approaches the parameters of MLE can be observed.

An analysis of the interviews I have conducted with the leaders of Quaker Children's Meetings reveals the extent to which the previous reasonings are valid, whether and, if so, which elements of MLE are present in adult-child interactions in Children's Meetings, and the rationale for their use.

7.2 Key MLE Criteria in the Approach to Teaching in Quaker Children's Meetings

According to Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik (2014), the key criteria of MLE are intentionality and reciprocity (taken together as one criterion), meaning and transcendence. As I have described in detail in section 2.4.5 these criteria ensure that the child is not just a passive recipient of information but actively participates in the interaction. The meaning of the interaction is also conveyed to the child, i.e. why the topic or activity is being engaged in, and the overlap of the topic or activity outside the current context is not missing.

In practice, the interaction in MLE quality implies a keen interest on the part of both the mediator and the learners. Ideally, everyone is tuned in to working together, no one

[13] Methodology in sense of a system of methods, rules, procedures etc.

hesitates to ask questions, and they seek answers together. The mediator provides further suggestions for thought, if necessary, helping the children to look at issues from different perspectives, to look for different connections.

7.2.1 Intentionality-and-Reciprocity

From the accounts of my interviewees, it is clear that their interaction with children in Quaker Children's Meetings is primarily about giving children a voice, but at the same time children are encouraged to learn to listen to others, both children and adults (see 6.2). Interview 19 describes it as follows:

> "(How do you interact with children during the programme and why? Please give me concrete examples.) Modelling the way in which communities function well, sharing listening, reminding of expectations of these things. We are alongside the children, literally on the floor or next to them in chairs or walking, participating in their activities and learning from them as much as they learn from us." (Int. 19)

I believe that such approach meets the criterion of reciprocity, and I see an important value in the emphasis on listening that, while it exists in Feuerstein's theory, is not as emphasized as it is in the context of Quaker Children's Meetings.

Another aspect of reciprocity that we encounter in Quaker Children's Meetings is that not only are the children enriched by the adults, but the adults also feel enriched by the presence of the children and often learn much from them themselves, as seen in the following quotes:

> "We can introduce the idea and then they [children] can think about their ideas by themselves and explore. And it is very enriching for me as well and that is why I have stayed with it so many years:). I love children." (Int. 27)

> "I learnt many things from children. For example, about simplicity. I mean, in some ways Quakers are not simple. Many of them are looking for a deeper meaning behind everything. Children can teach us a lot about simplicity!!! There is a mutual relationship, it's refreshing to me." (Int. 1)

At the same time, intentionality is also part of the criterion of reciprocity. All of my interviewees agree that Quaker Children's Meetings have a goal, an intention, which I have described in more detail in section 6.3.5. The content of each Meeting then depends on this goal (or rather goals). It is clear from the interviews that the pre-

arranged programme does not always come to fruition because, for example, the composition of the children's group is different from what was anticipated, or because of the mood of the children, or other factors, but it is evident that the leaders of Quaker Children's Meetings come to the Meeting with both short-term and long-term goals and intentions. In addition, the flexibility they show when they are forced to deviate from their original intention is also a feature of reciprocity – the facilitator is able to respond to the current needs and situation as it arises:

> "There is no sense for a curriculum. We try to respond on children's suggestions. Sometimes, we have said, someone wants to do this and that's great, we'll do this; we have planned that – what would you like to do? And then the group can decide or discern what they want to do." (Int. 23)

> "Sometimes it's clear that the children have a direction that they are interested in, and they will say, 'Should we have this Meeting being about that?'" (Int. 15)

As I explained in section 5.2.4.3, when analysing the interviews in terms of the MLE criteria, I also take into account the expressions used by the interviewees in their statements. In the interviews, there are explicit expressions of intention such as:

- the adults want to share with children (Int. 1),
- the adults have to respect, not just lay things on (Int. 21),
- the adults want children to be in a safe environment in which they develop their values (Int. 25),
- the adults are prepared to listen, to ask questions, to encourage everybody to take part (Int. 24).

Intentionality is also reflected in the so-called role modelling, which many interviewees also talk about (see 6.4.3.3). The interviews show that Children's Meeting leaders are aware of the importance of being role models for children. Important in this is that children are not only exposed to role modelling, but also have the opportunity to share with adults about behaviour and its importance. Which, as the interviews show, is happening in Quaker Children's Meetings during all the various interactions (see 6.4.3).

7.2.2 Meaning

Mediation of meaning means that the mediator either makes the meaning of the activity explicit or deliberately leaves it implicit as leaders of Children's Meetings talk to children about the meaning of going to Quaker Meeting or the activities children do in Meetings, although, in some cases, some responded that they do not. For example, interviewees 9 and 11 agree that they do not explain to children why they come to Children's Meeting because they go there with their parents or grandparents and so it can be assumed that the relatives talk to the children about it.

> "The parents go to the Meeting, and they can discuss it with children." (Int. 9)

Interviewee 27 mentions that he does not talk about meaning with young children, but he does with older children. Interviewees 2, 3, and 23 agree that they do talk about the importance of going to Meetings or the importance of doing various activities with children, and for interviewee 3 as well as interviewee 27, the age of the child is the deciding factor in this regard:

> "Yes, definitely, we always speak about the meaning." (Int. 2)

> (Do you speak with children about the meaning of Children's Meeting and about the individual sessions? Why yes or not?) "Yes, to a degree depending on their ages and development and so they know why they are there and so we can share with adults." (Int. 3)

> "Yes, I mean, we might have questions about why it's quiet in Quakers, and we do that time of quiet." (Int. 23)

Also interviewee 15 talks to children explicitly about the importance of activities:

> "I always try to do that [to explain the meaning of the activities]. I try to link to their own lives, and what they are doing so they think about their own gardens at their home if they have one, so, kind of, live out what they have learned about in their world, in their own way as children, and so they can appreciate what they have and how we help others who don't have the same." (Int. 15)

These words speak not only of the mediation of meaning, but also of its connection to another MLE criterion, namely transcendence, which I discuss in more detail below.

Interviewee 16 uses children's books to convey the meaning of going to Quaker Meeting and why children do certain things there:

> "We read books about going to Quaker Meetings, I read stories of first Quakers and there is also a modern book about British little children going to the Meeting." (Int. 16)

I would sum up on the basis of my interviewees' accounts that the mediation of meaning is probably not very intense at the explicit level but is very intense at the implicit level. The interviewees agree that they are trying to be role models for the children thereby conveying intentionality and, at the same time, the meaning. Their behaviour is not intentional in itself but represents both certain values and their importance. I see the implicit mediation of meaning in the overall approach to children, where adults show respect and interest in their views, thereby conveying their own importance and meaning.

7.2.3 Transcendence

Transcendence means, as Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik (2014) put it, going beyond the activity, projecting what we are doing or learning into other situations and contexts. From my interviews, it appears that transcendence in this sense is applied very often in Children's Meetings, in a variety of ways. One of these is the attempt to deepen the topics discussed and to lead children to other points of view that do not spontaneously occur to them, as interviewees 5 and 17 discuss:

> "I've begun a kind of deepening things and challenge them [the children] a bit more, make them think beyond their own circumstances, make them think about the environment or global conflict." (Int. 5)

> "It’s quite easy to do things like sustainability or peace but actually, it comes out from a deeper sense in Quakerism, that’s sustainability. It’s not just to say I can conserve the environment, it’s coming from something deeper. I just want them [the children] to think about why, what’s the deeper reason of this without being preachy." (Int. 17)

Both respondents express how they try to take children beyond their ordinary perceptions, to become aware of deeper and wider contexts. At the same time, these two quotes show both intention (the leaders of the Children's Meeting want or desire to show the children something more) and meaning. Both interviewees are aware of the importance, or meaning, of what they are trying to convey to the children and although they do not make it explicit, they are very likely to convey the meaning during their interactions with the children. I infer this from the urgency that comes through in their words. I also consider the words of interviewee 17 to be an important note when

they say that they want the children to think about the issues without preaching about them. So, it seems that children are encouraged to think and search with the support of adults in order to arrive at their own knowledge, rather than taking ready-made ideas from adults.

Another method of transcendence is simply looking for examples of a particular idea, such as developing the idea of ˈsimplicityˈ mentioned by interviewee 27 or the idea of ˈpeaceˈ mentioned by interviewee 4:

> "One example I can think about is talking about how the children get to Meeting whether they come with public transport, whether they cycle, whether they walk, whether they use the car. And extend that to using those modes of transporting in any other aspects of their lives, a sort of simplicity." (Int. 27)

> "We ask them to give examples [of] when they have a conflict, when they feel unhappy about how they have been treated. We are trying bring it to their lives and how it influences them in their life at school or at home." (Int. 4)

A similar example is given by interviewee 23. In this case, the children did not talk about different aspects of the Simplicity Testimony, but developed the theme of ˈlightˈ:

> "I mean, at the moment, the children's group I am dealing with, is looking at light. So they are reading a story about creation. They've done how light is in other faiths. What light is, the sense of light in the Quaker context. They're currently doing light in different first nation traditions and they're building a totem pole. Each one will have made it and have it on their table, or wherever, in their individual homes. So that's the topic of lights." (Int. 27)

In addition to exploring the meanings of ˈlightˈ in different religious contexts, the children also got to do creative activities that respond in some way to this exploration. This too is an exemplary application of the principle of transcendence.

All the examples given correspond to the concept of transcendence criteria according to Feuerstein's MLE theory. When MLE is practised in the context of schooling, therapy, or the home environment, children are encouraged to ˈbridgeˈ i.e., to look for analogies of both principles and different concepts (Howie, 2020; Mentis, Dunn-Bernstein and Mentis, 2008).

7.2.4 Summary

To answer the question of whether or not the approach of Children's Quaker Meeting leadership can be considered MLE, I use Feuerstein's description of MLE from the book 'Beyond Smarter' (2010). In the table below (Tab. 7.8) I summarise these descriptions and include the results of my research to answer the question of whether or not the approach of Children's Quaker Meeting leadership can be considered MLE.

MLE	Quaker Children's Meetings
The mediator places themselves between the stimulus and the child's response so that the child is given the tools to process the stimulus.	Leaders make evident how they approach suggestions and give children space to think about them; they do not present children with ready-made solutions but help them to arrive at solutions.
The goal of the mediating interaction is to increase the child's ability to learn and promote modifiability.	The aim is to get children to think about certain values and their application in their own lives.
The criterion for the success of MLE is the modifiability of the child and their ability to become their own mediator.	The criterion for success is the acceptance of Quaker values as principles that improve one's own life and the lives of others.
The mediator, the mediatee and the task are in constant interaction with each other, the emphasis in learning is on process rather than outcome.	Emphasis is placed on mutual interaction, allowing everyone to express their position, to engage their skills.

Tab. 7.8 Comparison of MLE and approaches to working with children in Quaker Children's Meetings; adapted from Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik (2010, p. 60 – 61) and supplemented by my research findings.

The above summary shows that the approach to working with children in Quaker Children's Meetings overlaps in many aspects with the MLE. Although the ambition of Children's Meeting leaders is for children to learn something, what is important to them,

rather than the outcome, is that children are going through a process and they (the leaders) can inspire them in that process with their experiences, attitudes and opinions, but also encourage and direct (i.e. point out what is working well and what could be different).

It will be self-evident that this approach is not always applied in all situations. At times, the children in Quaker Children's Meetings are left entirely to their own exploration, with no adult intervention or commentary. Of course, children need to learn by direct contact with the environment as well (Mentis, Dunn-Bernstein and Mentis, 2008), but an interesting comment on this was made by respondent 21, who believes that the task of the leaders of Quaker Children's Meetings is neither to teach children dogmatically what to believe nor to leave them entirely to themselves, but to look for some kind of middle way to guide the children in a certain way.

> "If the adults say to the teenagers exactly what to think and what to do, they will get a sort of zombie person or a sort of rebellion. On the other hand, if you leave your children completely without guidance, you are not serving them either. I have to find a place in the middle between the totally dogmatic 'I know best' and on the other hand, as Quakers do in Britain, let the children think and do what they want. Somewhere in the middle there is a place where you can bring up the children." (Int. 21)

Although this respondent mentions that there is a tendency in the Quaker setting to let children think and do what they want, there was only one respondent in my interviews who works in this way with children, the others show deliberate guidance as I have described above.

7.3 Situational MLE Criteria in the Approach to Work with Children in Quaker Children's Meetings

As for the remaining nine MLE criteria, Feuerstein (2014) refers to them as situational, i.e. those that are only applied in certain circumstances when the situation requires it (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik 2014). Thus, their application is not a prerequisite for a given interaction to be, or not be, of MLE quality. This is guaranteed by the key criteria described above. In what follows, I will focus only on those situational criteria that I have identified from the interviews in Quaker Children's Meetings.

7.3.1 Mediation of Regulation and Control of Behaviour

Mediating the regulation and control of behaviour means guiding children to

> "Create insightful, self-regulatory processes so that the learner knows and takes responsibility for the adaptive behaviours that are needed, achieved and mastered." (Feuerstein et al., 2006, p. 77)

Regulation and control of behaviour involves thinking through responses or reactions, i.e. conscious self-direction.

There are moments in Children's Meetings when children need a particular kind of behaviour to be mediated. The most obvious example is when children are taught to listen to each other and that, when someone speaks, they must wait to speak their thoughts. Another example is when children behave in a way that disturbs others. It was mentioned several times in interviews that the adults in Children's Meeting try to direct the children in a so-called Quakerly way:

> "Sometimes, their [the children's] behaviour is too wild, and we have to keep everyone safe. So, if the behaviour is too wild, we have to call the parents. And we are not like teachers at a school, we don't want to shout at them, we try to treat them in our Quaker way, we try to be as gentle and loving as possible. It's not always easy." (Int. 11)

> "….and yet, be aware of respecting their individuality, so when we are sitting around the table and a person starts acting up, being disruptive, then we have to, say, just in a Quakerly way: 'That's not sharing with people. What we do is listen to people and we share things, and we treat others like we want to be treated.'" (Int. 28)

As is evident from the words above, a Quakerly way of regulating behaviour does not mean a directive instruction, but rather the naming of a problem and an effort to find a way to solve it. Interviewee 17 offers a practical example that captures the mediation of regulation and control of behaviour in this way:

> "Sometimes you've actually to say something to children who really aren't participating, […] you may say, 'I'm used to the experience of being together and to us all listening to each other and all putting in our contribution, and actually, at the moment, I'm not feeling that happening. Can we have some quiet? Can we think about that?' Generally, that works. And so, hopefully, you just try to quieten them down and generally they go quiet which is quite a nice difference from the teaching environment, the standard primary and secondary school where all kids want to do is giggle." (Int. 17)

The mediation of regulation and control of behaviour in the Quaker context is also included in the Quaker decision-making process. This is a specific discernment process, which I will describe in more detail and with examples given in the interviews in the following section on specific mediation criteria for Quakerism (see 7.5).

7.3.2 Mediation of Sharing Behaviour

Mediation of sharing behaviour means, in Feuerstein's concept, the sharing of ideas and experiences. The goal of mediation of sharing is socialization and the creation of a shared experience (Feuerstein et al., 2006). As described above, sharing is one of the popular and frequent interactions in Children's Meetings (see 6.4.3.2). Children's Meeting leaders want to share with children, are interested in their views and offer their own. Sharing takes place not only between the adults in the Children's Meeting and the children, but ideally also among the children themselves, and they also seek to share with the Main Meeting what has taken place in the Children's Meeting or, conversely, to invite guests from the Main Meeting or other Meetings to the Children's Meeting.

Through the mediation of sharing, relationships are formed that are important to the individual and to the group as a whole. However, the mediation of sharing also involves another aspect, which, as interviewee 17 shows, is the awareness of oneself and one's spiritual experiences:

> "Spirituality is a huge part of the human condition, and it is deeply important. All Quaker values come from that sense of spirituality, to achieve God. I, as an agnostic and atheist, have a slight problem that I tend not do the God thing, other people do. But I really want children to be able to talk about anything they believe and to support them." (Int. 17)

This respondent leads children to share with the aim (intention) of being aware of what they are experiencing internally and how it relates to what is happening around them in the Quaker environment or how the Quaker environment works. Through sharing, they aim at one of the main goals of Children's Meetings, which is to nurture children's spiritual development (see 6.3.5.1).

7.3.3 Mediation of Individuation and Psychological Differentiation

Mediation of individuation and psychological differentiation is often presented, in a sense, as the opposite of mediation of sharing (Feuerstein et al., 2006; Feuerstein,

Feuerstein and Falik, 2014). Whereas sharing is about shared experiences, individuation and differentiation emphasises how an individual differs from others. I suggest that sharing is also a means of becoming self-aware, because by sharing one's thoughts, opinions and experiences and listening to others' sharing, one becomes more aware of who one is in relation to others, what one experiences or perceives the same as others and what one perceives differently. Therefore, I consider the two criteria to be closely linked.

The mediation of individuation and psychological differentiation is perfectly natural within the Quaker environment. At the core of the Quaker community are shared values, the understanding and application of which depends on each individual (see 4.1); in Quakerism there is not uniformity but rather diversity in the way Quakers understand and approach faith. As I have stated elsewhere (see 1.2.2), the fact that Quakerism does not profess any dogma, as my interviewees also often point out (see 6.3.1.1), it is a fellowship of people with different attitudes not only to spiritual issues and questions concerning the actual running of individual Meetings, but also, for example, to social issues.

Based on the interviews, children encounter certain types of diversity in Children's Meetings relatively frequently. Many of my interviewees talk about the inclusion of children with special needs (see 6.3.3), groups of children are often age heterogeneous. Sometimes Children's Meetings are attended by adults, either from their Main Meeting or from other Meetings, including those abroad. Children's Meeting leaders are often a generation older than the children's parents (I base this figure on my sample of respondents). These are all situations where diversity is quite naturally mediated to children.

Feuerstein et al. (2006) argue in this context that

> "[mediation of individuation and psychological differentiation] emphasizes the legitimacy and value of the individual’s differences, places them in a context of importance, recognition, and integration." (Feuerstein et al., 2006, p. 79)

Building on this claim, I suggest that this criterion also includes respect for the views and attitudes of others, which, as I have mentioned several times in this thesis, is one of the core values of Quakerism. In this context, Interviewee 20 points to the relationship between diversity and respect:

> [In response, to ‘In your opinion, what are the aims of Children’s Meetings?‘] "(…) to discover the reality of different ways of experiencing the world and beliefs, allowing people to have different perspectives, different visions. To be tolerant of, to listen enough to each other. And to allow each other to have different views. So, respecting the equality of ideas as well as personality and capability." (Int. 20)

In addition to the above, leaders of Children's Meetings include diversity among the topics they discuss with children or young people, such as religious diversity (Int. 2), national diversity (Int. 1), sexual diversity (Int. 25).

7.3.4 Mediation of Feelings of Competence

The feeling of competence is usually mediated when a child is faced with a task or challenge that they are not sure they can handle because they are not aware of their abilities or do not trust themselves enough (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014; see 2.4.5.1).

Based on the interviews, I conclude that the mediation of a sense of competence in Quaker Children's Meetings occurs in many interactions and activities such as discussions or sharing ideas:

> "We encourage children to share what they think and share their journey." (Int. 21),

craft activities, preparing snacks for adults, sharing with adults in Adult Meeting, and doing projects:

> "Another thing is that we take ideas from them [from the children]. So, if they´ve got an idea, something they want to do, so we encourage them in that sense of participation." (Int. 24)

Children are not forced to actively participate, but are encouraged to get involved, while adults provide the necessary support.

7.3.5 Mediation of Goal-seeking, Goal-setting and Goal-achieving

This criterion helps children to perceive the interconnectedness of time (present with future and past) and to understand that if we focus our efforts towards a goal, the future can become something that can be changed (Howie, 2020).

The mediation of goal-seeking in Quaker Children's Meetings takes place in the case of project planning and implementation (see 6.4.3.8) and participation (see 6.4.3.6). Although it was not made explicit in the interviews, some of the interviews suggest that in some Children's Meetings, in the case of charitable projects, children are guided by leaders to select projects, think about what will be needed to implement the project and gradually implement the project independently or with adult help. An example is the statement quoted in section 6.4.3.8:

> "During the last three years, it was mainly some projects. So, for example, we made hundreds of pencil cases for refugee children. In doing that, the children had to find out what was needed, gather the stuff together, pack it together and arrange for it to be taken. So it was a project, and we were working together." (Int. 24)

In the case of participation, children plan, for example, the course of individual Meetings, as stated e.g. by interviewee 10 in the quotation I also mentioned above:

> "Today we also planned together with the children the programme for the next Meetings. It's not always like that, but now that the children are older, we involve them more in the planning." (Int. 10)

It can be expected that at the same time there is also mediation of a feeling of competence (see the previous part), although this is not explicitly shown in the interviews. Nevertheless, in my experience, these parameters tend to be quite naturally intertwined in practice, which is also what Feuerstein claims:

> "This parameter of MLE is linked very closely to other situational variables including competence, challenge, individuation, and the capacity to change." (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014, p. 80).

7.3.6 Mediation of a Sense of Belonging

Feuerstein includes the mediation of a sense of belonging among the criteria of the Mediated Learning Experience out of concern for the tendency of modern society to individualise, the risk of which, he says, lies primarily in the fact that

> "considerable individualisation affects in many ways the willingness to join the larger community and those aspects of the personality that are developed by the experience of community. The increasing isolation of individuals from each other within the structure of modern social conventions (rules, customs) and the experience of difference create a

> sense of personal alienation and disconnectedness even in the nuclear family." (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014, p. 93).

Individuals who do not experience a sense of belonging are deprived of meaningful emotional attachments that are important for their development and functioning in society (Feuerstein et al., 2006). An individual's awareness of his or her place in society leads to more responsible behaviour, teaching them to both give and receive (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014).

The aim of the leaders of Children's Meetings is to create an environment for children that makes them feel comfortable and aware that this is where they belong. However, this is not just about Children's Meeting per se, but the overall Quaker environment. As I mentioned above (see 6.4.2.5), the leaders of Children's Meetings do not see it as their mission to guide children in their decision to become Quakers, but on the other hand, they see the value system of the Quaker community as so worthy that they want to present it to the children in the best possible way and to convey to them that this value system is not something that they alone, or a small group of people, subscribe to, but is the concern of the larger Quaker community.

The mediation of a sense of belonging happens in Quaker Children's Meetings in many different ways: through sharing with each other (see 6.4.3.2), through spending time with adults in their Meeting for Worship (see 6.3.4), through visits to Children's Meetings by adults from local or foreign Meetings (see 6.4.3.5), and through participation (see 6.4.3.6).

7.3.7 Mediation of the Search for Optimistic Alternatives

The mediation of the search for optimistic alternatives I find in the interviews is again implicit rather than explicit, but I think it is a very important aspect of Quakerism that is evident in the interviews. The essence of the criterion of seeking optimistic alternatives is an approach whereby an individual consciously chooses between a negative and a positive alternative (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014). In this context, Feuerstein notes that

> "seeking optimistic alternatives leads the learner to interact with the world in a positive and constructive way to solve problems." (ibid., p. 83).

I argue that the very fact that the Quakers not only discuss current social issues with the children in the Children's Meetings, but also lead them to action (see Projects in section 6.4.3.8) indicates an effort to convey optimistic alternatives to the children, i.e. to make them both aware of problems and that problems can be solved and that there are ways to change things for the better.

7.3.8 Summary

The analysis of the interviews shows that, focusing on situational MLE criteria, the mediation of regulation and control of behaviour, mediation of sharing and mediation of a sense of belonging play a really important role. I argue that this is so, given the nature of the community in which the research took place. I suggest that for the same reason there is a frequent application of both the mediation of individualisation and psychological differentiation. The mediation of a sense of competence, goal-seeking and search for an optimistic alternative emerged only in vague terms from the interviews, but it can be assumed from some of the activities that they occur from time to time in Quaker Children's Meetings. On the other hand, it is surprising that the mediation of awareness of the human being as a changing entity, i.e. conveying the fact that each individual is constantly evolving and changing due to the influence of their environment and the knowledge they acquire (see 2.4.5.1), which in my experience also fit the Quaker setting, could not be explicitly identified in the interviews, although presumably the possibility that children will evolve and change is at the heart of the idea of Children's Meetings. A possible explanation for this fact is the oft-mentioned fact that Quakers greatly respect the individuality of each person and thus, although they inwardly desire that children adopt Quaker values in their lives, they do not feel called to comment on or point out growth or other changes in the spiritual lives of individuals. However, this is merely speculation that would need to be tested by further research. Thus, the list of situational criteria that can be identified from the interviews in the interactions that take place in Quaker Children's Meetings is probably not exhaustive. However, further observation would be more likely to be needed to identify other criteria.

7.4 The Teaching Materials from MLE Perspective

7.4.1 Introduction

In this section I return to the materials used for working with children in Quaker Children's Meetings, which I have already briefly introduced in the section 4.3.1. Here I focus on their analysis in terms of the MLE. I have selected one lesson from each publication as an example to show the extent to which MLE criteria can be identified in it. The full texts of each lesson are in the appendix (Appendix B to D).

7.4.2 Journeys in the Spirit

From an MLE perspective, it can be concluded that the materials cover all three essential MLE parameters. Each lesson has a clearly defined goal (intentionality), reciprocity is promoted through open-ended questions and by providing ample space for children to express their thoughts and listen to each other. Topics are purposefully linked to children's everyday lives, and analogies (overlap) are sought. At the same time, the topics are chosen in such a way that they appeal to the children and therefore have meaning for them. As an example, here is a lesson on Gardening (the whole lesson is in Appendix B):

Intentionality and reciprocity: The lesson is introduced by listing the areas to be covered and discussed, in this case specifically

- how gardens bring people together,
- how gardens grow not only plants but people,
- how gardens help healing and bring hope,
- the need to nurture plants we need to nurture each other, our friendships and relationships.

The first part of the Meeting ('gathering') leads to intentionality and reciprocity, when after an initial moment of silence, the children are told what the theme of the Meeting will be (thinking about gardens and how gardening and gardens build hope, communities and healing) and are invited to share their experiences with gardens. Various pictures, photographs, garden tools, etc. are provided as support material for the children to be inspired by. Reciprocity and intentionality are then encouraged throughout the lesson by inviting children to ask questions:

- Can the children think of any ways that gardens and gardening help people?

- Ask if the children know of any gardens that are helping to bring people from different cultures, backgrounds or circumstances together.
- Ask the children how gardens make them feel? (p. 1 – 2)

In the spirit of reciprocity and intentionality, the final part of the lesson (ˈreflectˈ) also invites the children both to share what they took away from the lesson and to remind the Children's Meeting leader what the goal was:

- Ask if any of them want to share what they have done.
- Talk to them about what have they have learned.
- Has it changed the way they think about gardens?
- Invite them to think about the season ahead – what might they be doing in the garden at home, school etc?
- What about further ahead - is there something they might like to plan for in the future e.g. creating a small garden, holding a seed swap, have a plant sale.
- Remind them that gardens are places to find peace, nature, community etc. and places where they can meet God and that of God in everyone (p. 4).

The importance of the theme is conveyed to the children through activities and discussions, and they are led to realise the different meanings that gardens carry - what gardens can look like, what gardens can do, how they can help. Discussions focus on two key meanings - community gardens, and gardens and healing (see p. 2).

The criterion of transcendence also permeates the whole structure of the lesson - children are invited to talk about their experiences with gardens, and in the ˈreactˈ section there are a number of suggestions on how to develop the topic further in practice (e.g. landscaping the garden of the Meeting House, planting plants in their own garden or in pots, creating games based on the theme of the garden, etc. - see p. 3). Also, the "reflect" part, which I mentioned above in connection with the parameter of intentionality and reciprocity, leads to the connection of the discussed topic with the everyday life of children.

However much the material fits the parameters of the MLE, what is crucial in the actual work is how the leader of the Children's Meeting grasps it and whether they can work with it in the spirit of the MLE, which is the question on which my practical research is focused.

7.4.3 Living our Faith

This material also offers a mediated approach in line with the principles of the MLE. Each lesson focuses on a specific topic to be conveyed to the children through various activities, with children being active participants in the learning process by having the opportunity to answer questions, express themselves verbally or through craft activities or singing (intention and reciprocity). The meaning of each of the Testimonies is also discussed and passed on. Questions as well as other recommended activities lead to overlap. As an example, I give Lesson 1.1, which is entitled Inner Peace (the full lesson is in Appendix C):

The lesson is introduced by the following discussion question:

- What does peace mean to you? What can disturb your peace?
- How do you find peace of heart?
- Why do you think God tells us to “be still and know that I am God”?
- What happens inside you during the silence and stillness of worship?
- What have others shared with you about what happens inside them when they worship?

These questions not only introduce the topic, but also lead to thinking about the different meanings of peace and how each individual can experience peace in a different way. Other activities from which the leader can choose are various art activities, meditation and singing. For example, it is suggested that the children paint together on paper, with one painting and the others waiting in silence. The children are then encouraged to think about how this activity is similar to silent worship, where everyone can contribute something and co-create community. All these activities offer different perspectives on peace in addition to the perception of peace through different senses.

From an MLE point of view, the aim of this lesson is to get the children to think about the concept of peace. Reciprocity is induced through discussion questions as well as other related activities. For example, bridging the concept of ˈpeaceˈ with the Silent Worship.

7.4.4 Godly Play

The ˈGodly Playˈ material differs somewhat from the previous two materials in the way the lessons are conducted, and there is also a significant difference from an MLE perspective in that not all of the essential MLE criteria can be identified in this approach.

If we look, for example, at the lesson entitled Creation (see Appendix D), we observe how the children are welcomed and attuned to the common theme. In this introductory section, children are prompted by several questions to think about the topic of giving. Thus, reciprocity is induced and, of course, the intentionality of the leader, who is pursuing a goal with the lesson, is also evident. After that, however, the lesson proceeds purely as an explanation of the topic by the leader, without the children being invited to actively participate. Only after the explanation is over are there so-called wondering questions, which anyone can answer. It is customary not to comment too much on the answers, but rather just to let them be heard, or the leader will add a relevant passage from the story. At the end, participants are asked to choose an activity that they want to pursue in the remaining time and to process the ideas that have appealed to them in this way.

From an MLE perspective, intentionality and reciprocity can be identified in this approach, but the criteria of meaning and transcendence do not appear explicitly. Rather, this approach is based on the idea of direct learning, that is, it is up to each individual to understand the ideas that have been expressed and how they connect them to their lives.

7.4.5 Summary

The aim of this section was to analyse the teaching materials designed and used for Quaker Children's Meetings from an MLE perspective. In two of these materials, the three basic criteria of MLE (intentionality and reciprocity, meaning and transcendence) are identifiable; in one of them, not. However, it is important to note that the conduct of classes according to these materials depends primarily on the Children's Meeting leader and his or her understanding of the material. If we link the analysis of the materials with the analysis of the interviews (see chapter 6), we can conclude that the lessons are often very likely to be conducted in a mediated way, although space, is of course, left for direct learning.

7.5 MLE Criteria Specific for Quakerism

MLE is not a closed system, but, rather, it can be likened to a living organism that evolves and is modified based on research and newly discovered areas where it can be used (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002; Howie, 2021). Inspired by Sh. Feuerstein (2002), who describes specific MLE criteria for Judaism (see 3.6.2.1), in this section I focus on specific emphases in Quaker Children's Meetings that I have identified through my analysis of the interviews and that become a type of situational criteria in Feuerstein's conception.

Similar to the criteria defined by Sh. Feuerstein, these situational criteria specific for Quakerism express primarily the relationship to the faith and practice of Quakerism. In this respect they differ somewhat from the generally valid MLE criteria, which focus on the relationship between mediator and mediatee (mediation of intentionality and reciprocity) or on the relationship of the individual (mediatee) to their environment (e.g. mediation of sharing, mediation of individuation and psychological differentiation, mediation of a sense of belonging) or to oneself (mediation of regulation and control of behaviour, mediation of goal seeking, mediation of optimistic alternatives).

However, unlike the criteria defined by Sh. Feuerstein as specific purely to Jewish religion and culture, there were criteria that emerged from the interviews with my Quaker respondents, which are specific to the Quaker context and which I will show in more detail below.

7.5.1 Mediation of Silence

Silence is a means to become aware of oneself and one's surroundings, a tool to calm down, to induce concentration, to relax. Quakers see silence as a means to encounter the Inner Light, which can be an inspiration for personal life and community life (Religious Society of Friends, 2013).

Unlike in adult Meetings where silence is predominant, in Children's Meetings silence does not occupy as much time, yet attention is paid to it and silence is mediated to the children – in listening, or in actual being silent together, or in visiting the Main Meeting.

In Children's Meetings, children are just getting acquainted with silence and are given the opportunity to experience how silence affects them. Children's Meeting leaders

believe that an authentic experience of silence can become a spiritual experience for children, even though it may only be a relatively brief moment:

> "We tried for many weeks to have a little bit of quiet for one or two minutes and I think that's a part of our values because that's about being still and letting the children go inward and it's about children's spiritual space." (Int. 18)

Another aspect of the importance of silence for children is described by interviewee 6 as follows:

> "I want to continue with silence because I think with the silence you find something. Because today, it's all about distractions. (…) People say you can't keep children quiet but I think you can. If they can do it in India, if they can do it on the west coast of Ireland, why not here? Kids are kids. It's just your expectation of them I think." (Int. 6)

Silence is understood here as something necessary in a culture that offers constant sensations and compels constant action. Moreover, I consider the interviewee's belief that children can be led to quietness if the leader themselves believe it is possible to do so, to be a very important note in this quote. On this point, the interviewee completely identifies with Feuerstein's approach, which is based on the mediator's belief in the child's possible change.

Interviewee 28 confirms, in other words, that it is the responsibility of adults to offer children opportunities for silence, but also points out that silence may not be comfortable for everyone at first:

> "I would say it's a gift of being able to say it's OK to be silent, it's a huge potential for trust, it's a huge potential for quietening the mind and knowing it's OK to do that, not to keep running on to the next activity and in some way running away. It's about stopping, quietening down, listening to what's around you. When I do it with children, I'm giving them a huge potential for nourishment. Some children can't tolerate it, for whatever reasons. And that's OK because you then realize that they are not able to tolerate it, but if there is a quiet effect and they feel OK, it's good." (Int. 28)

As can be seen from the quotes above, the mediation of silence plays a very important role in the context of Quakerism. However, I would argue that there is significant transfer outside of Quakerism as well, as silence and inner calming are something that children of Western culture rarely encounter in everyday life. The importance of silence for pupils in schools is discussed, for example, by Helen Lees in her book 'Silence in

Schools' (2012), where she writes about the 'astonishing qualities silence offers for school education' (p. viii).

7.5.2 Mediation of Listening

I mentioned listening above from different angles. The interviewees talk about it mainly in the relationship between adults and children, where they consider it important to be able to listen to children in order to respond to children's needs (see 6.4.4.3) or to be enriched by children's opinions (see 6.4.4.4.7). However, they also talk about the need to mediate to children that they too should listen when someone else is speaking.

In the context of Quakerism, listening plays an important role, both in Meeting for Worship, which is based on speaking from silence as well as silence, and, for example, in the Quaker decision-making system, which I describe in more detail below as another MLE criterion specific to Quakerism. Listening in Quakerism is not only focused on the other person but is also practised as ˈdeep listeningˈ to the inner voice, i.e. the Spirit or God (Dandelion, 2007).

However, the facilitation of listening to children is not only essential to their understanding of, and inclusion, in the community, but I would argue that there is again an overlap into everyday life, where the ability to listen to others is an important skill contributing to building good interpersonal relationships and sound decision-making.

7.5.3 Mediation of Respect

I address respect in detail in chapter 6.4.4, but I think it is important to include mediation of respect in the list of MLE criteria specific to Quakerism, because, according to many of my interviewees, it seems to be understood as a core value on which Quakerism is built.

> "For me, the value, that speaks to me the most is the fact that it's non-judgemental and there is respect for everybody. And it doesn't matter who you are. Everybody is valued for who they are." (Int. 5)

> "I would hope that they learn something about kindness and how to have respect for other people even though they are different from ourselves." (Int. 22)

Interviewees emphasise respect from adults towards children above all, however they also lead children to respect each other, respect adults, respect differences, respect nature. Based on the interviews, mutual respect seems to be an important attitude for

a Quaker environment, which is often characterised by great diversity, although the term of respect is not prominent in Quaker writings about its own core values. I suggest that for my interviewees respect is an interpretation of the Quaker Testimony of Equality. I argue that the mediation of respect also has carry-over into everyday life, where the skill of respecting again can be beneficial in interpersonal relationships.

7.5.4 Mediation of Decision Making

The essence of the Quaker system of shared decision-making is 'unity in the spirit', achieved not by voting, but by sharing and reflecting on ideas. A decision is made only when all those present agree with it (Dandelion, 2007).
The mediation of decision-making was mentioned by several of my respondents:

> "Once I worked with children or young people in the age of 15 – 17 years. We were observing a church, a synagogue, a mosque and a meeting house and then we were looking for similarities and differences using Venn's diagram. There were more than 10 people and they had to agree what we would put in every part of the diagram. The work lasted about one hour but it was really enriching. Using this activity, I wanted to show them and to let them experience the Quaker's way of decision making." (Int. 2)

> "We try to respond on children's suggestions. Sometimes, we have said, someone wants to do this and that's great, we'll do this; we have planned that – what would you like to do? And then the group can decide or discern what they want to do and on one occasion, it took so long to discern, what they wished to do but that's the Quaker process. So at that moment, they implicitly get the Quaker process." (Int. 23)

As can be seen from the above quotes, the Quaker way of decision-making is time-consuming – decisions often take longer than a vote would, which is also demanding on the psyche, as the decision is not made immediately, but must be waited for. I suggest that in this respect children are also mediated control and behavioural regulation. On the other hand, however, as interviewee 2 argues, the experience of Quaker decision-making can be an enriching experience for children and young people, leading them to listen to others, reflect on their own arguments and respect those of e others.

7.5.5 Summary

All the MLE criteria specific to Quakerism are closely related: silence is intertwined with listening, listening with respect, respect with diversity and decision making, which is

not possible without silence and listening. I argue that it is only in this interdependence that they make the sense that is characteristic of Quakerism.

However, as I have suggested for each of them, they all open up the possibility of reaching out into other social connections outside the Quaker setting, which can be seen as another of Quakerism's significant contributions. Many of my interviewees agree that they do not want to make the children Quakers in the sense of formal membership of the Quaker community, but they are keen to impart Quaker values to children that would improve their lives and the lives of those with whom they come into contact (see 6.4.2.5). The mediation of silence, listening, respect, diversity and decision making are examples of just such values.

7.6 Mediational Ways in Quaker Children's Meetings Compared with Mediational Ways in Torah Study

In section 3.6.2.2, based on Sh. Feuerstein's study, I mention mediational ways used in the Torah and in Torah study. These are questioning, texts and figures, history and acts or the celebration of Jewish festivals, which Sh. Feuerstein describes as examples of the ways in which values are mediated in Judaism. As my research shows, there are also various mediational ways of transmitting values in Quaker Children's Meetings (e.g., discussions, role modelling, exposure to other people's experiences, participation, craft activities and others, see 6.4.3).

These different ways show that the mediation of values can take place in a variety of modes depending on the nature and needs of the community, but the principles of mediation remain the same - children are exposed to values whether through adult behaviour or words, are encouraged to reflect on them and apply them.

7.7 MLE from the Perspective of Teaching Approaches in Quaker Children's Meetings

7.7.1 Introduction

In this section I will offer a perspective on MLE from the point of view of the teaching approaches used in Quaker Children's Meetings. Since none of my interviewees are trained in MLE, I did not ask them for their view of MLE. Some asked me to explain Feuerstein's approach, others did not ask about it in detail, but no one felt the need to compare it with their own approach to children, nor did I ask my respondents to do so

during the interviews for that reason. Nevertheless, I believe that in order to provide a comprehensive view, the topic of MLE from the perspective of teaching approaches in Quaker Children's Meetings is relevant. My aim in this section, therefore, is to look at the MLE in terms of the findings from the analysis of my interviews.

7.7.2 Comparison of Quaker Approaches to Teaching with MLE Principles

As I described above, approaches to working with children in Quaker Children's Meetings vary, depending primarily on the personalities and interests of the adults who lead Children's Meetings, but also on the ages of the children, their numbers, and other factors, which I describe in the section 6.3. What unites these approaches is the idea of respect and a desire to pass on certain values to children. The leaders of the Children's Meetings do not want to be authoritative in the sense of teachers who force children to learn specific facts and information; instead, they aim to encourage children to think and search for themselves. From this point of view, the MLE may seem to be one possible way to achieve the goal.

However, the Quaker environment is also significantly open to self-exploration, what Feuerstein calls ˈdirect exposure'. Although Feuerstein does not deny the importance of direct exposure and considers it important for child development (Feuerstein, Feuerstein and Falik, 2014), for him, MLE is what maximally opens children's potential and moves them forward in their cognitive and emotional development. Children's Meeting leaders do not mediate in every situation that a trained mediator would use. They often offer prompts and leave it up to the children to process them for themselves. An example of this might be various games that, although they have a purpose, it is entirely up to the children what they learn from them. This is probably similar in some discussions, craft activities, or experiencing the Quaker way of worship. While, on the one hand, silence is mediated to children as opposed to the usual overwhelm of stimuli (Int. 6), on the other hand it is not always conveyed how to experience silence internally, what to do with one's thoughts (Int. 9; Int. 16; Int. 18). Everyone is left to find their own way. Therefore, I argue that there are situations where an MLE approach would be beneficial because there is knowledge that may not be sufficiently mediated.

7.7.3 Summary

In summary, then, from the point of view of teaching approaches in Quaker Children's Meetings, the MLE seems in principle to be an appropriate way of imparting values and knowledge about Quakerism and other issues (see 6.3.6), but on the other hand, in some ways, it may be too intense and limiting the scope for self-discovery, which is also of great value in Quakerism and is afforded to children.

7.8 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to present the results of the analysis of the interviews focusing on the criteria and principles of MLE in the practice of Quaker Children's Meeting leaders and the analysis of three selected teaching materials used in Children's Meetings. In addition to exploring approaches to working with children from an MLE perspective, I also offer the opposite perspective, that is, an analysis of MLE from the perspective of Quaker approaches to teaching.

From this analysis, it emerged that MLE appears to be a natural and often spontaneous approach to working with children in Children's Meetings. However, it is certainly not the only approach. An interesting finding is that, just as Judaism has its own specific criteria of mediation and mediational ways, we find specific criteria of mediation and mediational ways in Quakerism which, moreover, offer significant overlap with education outside Quakerism.

8. Discussion

8.1 Introduction

In this section I discuss the meaning, importance and relevance of my findings with respect to my research questions. I first summarise the most important findings of my research, then discuss their interpretation and implications in the context of MLE theory and values education. I reflect on the limitations of my research and suggest further areas in which the research could be continued.

8.2 Summary of the Most Important Research Findings

I pursued two main goals in my research. First, I wanted to determine the extent to which mediation is used in Quaker Children's Meetings and to compare the Quaker use of mediation with the MLE approach. Second, I focused on exploring teaching approaches in Quaker Children's Meetings, focusing on the principles of working with children and placing these teaching approaches in the context of values education. My main research question was therefore: To what extent are the principles of MLE manifested in the transmission of values in Quaker Children's Meetings? The sub-questions that were to help me find answers to the main question were:

- What approaches do Quakers use to teach values to children in Children's Meetings? Why do they use these approaches?
- How do they work to develop children's understanding of Quakerism and what it stands for?
- How do Quakers transmit their values to children so that they become principles?
- Are there any features of MLE in their teaching and education approaches? If yes, which ones and why these in particular?
- How are these MLE features generally operationalised in practice – if there is any generality?

The following answers to these sub-questions emerged from the research. Quakers use both an implicit (role modelling) and explicit (values presentation, discussion and other activities) approach to learning values (see 6.4.2), which are influenced by the Quaker Children's Meetings concept of teaching, the essence of which is sharing not imposing (see 6.2). Values are represented as principles on the basis of which an

individual decides how to behave in particular situations. Children are encouraged to think about how to apply various Quaker values to their own lives (see 6.4).

An understanding of Quakerism and what it stands for is developed through a variety of activities, which I describe in detail in section 6.4, and which most often include discussions, craft activities, various projects, but also the practice of the Quaker way of worship, which is based on silence and speaking from silence.

The last two sub-questions about the elements of MLE in the approaches of Quaker Children's Meeting leaders to working with children are closely related to my main question. In this context, the research confirmed the initial hypothesis that the approach to children in Quaker Children's Meetings contains features of MLE and even all the basic MLE criteria that the author of the method believes are necessary for an interaction to be characterised as MLE. Indeed, all these elements can be traced in the practice and reported practice of Quaker Children's Meeting leaders, even though they are not trained in the MLE method. However, it should be emphasized that MLE is not used consistently and constantly in Quaker Children's Meetings. Children's Meeting leaders also use direct learning without mediation (see the difference between mediated learning and direct exposure to stimuli in Feuerstein's conception in 2.3). Intentional mediation appears especially in the transmission of Quaker values, whereas when it comes to the development of the grasp of faith, children are rather left to independent, unmediated exploration. It is also a significant finding that, like the Jewish religion[14], Quakerism has special elements upon which it places importance and which the Children's Meetings leaders are seen to emphasise, so they become a kind of situational criteria in Feuerstein's terminology. These are mediation of silence, listening, respect and decision-making. They are conveyed to children in Children's Meetings, and they have important overlaps and applications beyond Quakerism.

With regard to values education, the results indicate that the approach to working with children in Quaker Children's Meetings is very much in line with the principles of the socio-cultural approach to values education, as outlined by Tappan (see 3.5.3), but

[14] I mention Judaism because, as I noted in the theoretical section of this thesis, Judaism played a key role in shaping MLE theory (see 3.6).

there are also elements of other approaches like character education (see 3.5.2) and the cognitive developmental approach (see 3.5.1).

8.3 Interpretation and Implications of the Research Findings in the Context of Values Education

8.3.1 Introduction

In this section I gradually interpret, explain and discuss the individual findings of my research, which I presented in detail in chapters 6 and 7 and briefly summarised in the previous section (see 8.2).

8.3.2 Issues of Mediation in Quaker Children's Meetings

8.3.2.1 Connection between Quaker Approaches and MLE in Terms of Values

Examining the work of Quaker Children's Meeting leaders in terms of MLE theory confirms my initial assumption (see 1.2) that there is a natural connection between the two approaches based on the values that underpin them. The leaders of Children's Meetings consider it essential to treat children with respect (see 6.2), and in the context of Quakerism they reject the approach to teaching whereby ready-made information is given to pupils, preferring instead to have children (age appropriately) think about the topics, discuss them if possible and draw their own conclusions. I would argue that the Quaker understanding of their own values as principles is itself a prerequisite for a mediating approach to teaching them. My respondents agree that they consider Quaker values to be one of the key themes of Children's Meetings (see 6.3.6), and their concern is not just that children gain knowledge of these values, but that they experience them as widely as possible in the joint programme, as well as become aware of how they apply, or can apply them, in their everyday lives. Therefore, Children's Meeting leaders include a variety of craft activities and projects alongside discussions, and the teaching of values in Children's Meetings is based on the blending of explicit and implicit approaches.

Feuerstein also based his approach on respect and openness towards the individuals he worked with, which he explained by his own value system (see 3.6.1). However, it should be stressed that there is an important difference, which is that while Quakerism has its values clearly defined and are what Quakers agree on, MLE is an approach used across cultures (Feuerstein, 2010) allowing each mediator to bring their values

to their interactions with students, and thus in the extreme case, MLE could be misused to convey values that are not in line with the well-being of humanity. This fact is also pointed out by Tannenbaum in his introduction to Sh. Feuerstein's ˈBiblical and Talmudic Antecedents of Mediated Learning Experience Theoryˈ (2002), emphasising that

> "the mediator between stimulus and organism - who shapes, frames, interprets, justifies, and lends excitement to the learning challenge - needs to be not only human, but humane as well. MLE can be administered by sinners no less than by saints. Consider, for example, the loyalist contemporaries of Hitler, Stalin, Mao, and Pol Pot who managed to persuade their children and grandchildren, sometimes via mediational means, that genocide is often a virtue." (p. 6)

I argue, therefore, that Feuerstein's contribution to humanity lies not only in finding a way to develop the cognitive capacities of individuals, but above all in bringing to his method values that are essential to humanity and its well-being. Quakerism is another example of an environment that is built on certain values that are conveyed to children.

8.3.2.2 The Significance of MLE Elements in Quaker Approaches to Teaching Values

Even though I assumed that there was a similarity between the Quaker way of working with children and MLE principles, the finding that MLE criteria do indeed appear in a Quaker setting where none of the interviewees were trained in MLE theory is a very significant finding. For it confirms Feuerstein's statement that mediation is a natural interaction mode for human societies (see 2.4.5). On the basis of this finding, I argue that it can be hypothesised that educators whose values align with those behind MLE theory are more likely to spontaneously use MLE principles in educating children, even without training in its theory. However, familiarity with MLE theory and all the implications that consistent use of this approach to teaching values brings, is undoubtedly a significant enrichment of the educator's work and an important support for children's cognitive development. Therefore, I believe that an opportunity to be trained in the principles of MLE and their use in teaching would be a useful addition for Children's Meeting leaders.

Given the similarities found between MLE and the approach to working with children in Quaker Children's Meetings, it can be claimed that adult work with children in a

Quaker setting has an impact not only on the formation of children's value systems but also on their cognitive development, particularly in the case of regular participants. This idea is supported, moreover, by the approach to teaching values of Piaget and Kohlberg, who also emphasised the link between moral and cognitive development (see 3.5.1). I consider this finding to be particularly important because Quaker Children's Meetings, as I have noted elsewhere (see 1.1), stand somewhat on the periphery of research, but nevertheless appear to have significant potential for children's moral and cognitive development. This idea could be a topic for further research.

8.3.2.3 Intentional Mediation and Direct Learning

However, the question is why intentional mediation occurs in Quaker Children's Meetings more in the transmission of Quaker values and knowledge about Quakerism, while adults leave space for children to build their faith (what to believe) on their own. I explain it mainly by the fact that children come to the Quaker community with different religious backgrounds given by their families, which the leaders of Children's Meetings respect. Given that what unites Quakers is not creeds but Testimonies (see 1.2.2), it seems a logical consequence that it is Testimonies, along with social issues, that are the most frequently mentioned topics that adults address with children in Quaker Children's Meetings (see 6.3.6). In this context, Collins (see 4.3) points out that we can teach children about religion, but we cannot teach them faith. Sh. Feuerstein (2002), on the other hand, lists among the parameters of mediation typical of Judaism the mediation of Kiddush Hashem (see 3.6.2), which implies exclusive belief in one God. Thus, in the context of Judaism one can speak of mediation of faith (i.e. what to believe), whereas in Quakerism one cannot. I argue that this is so because each of these religions approaches questions of faith in a different way. While for liberal Quakers faith is something purely personal that depends on inward revelation (Dandelion, 2007), for Jews faith stems from the tradition and history of the Jewish people (Newman and Sivan, 1992).

The issue of what to mediate and what not to mediate is also related to the question of, why the Christian roots of Quakerism remain a rather peripheral topic. As I mentioned above (see 6.3.4), to some extent this stems from the fact that leaders take into account the religious background of children. Some children come from atheist or non-Christian families. However, I would also argue that this is consistent with the

overall development of liberal Quakerism in the 20th-21st centuries, which is the context of my research (see 5.2.3.1). Dandelion (2007) reports the results of a survey of British Quakers in the early 21st century, which found that only 45% of respondents considered themselves to be Christian (p. 136). Dandelion (ibid.) also refers to the so-called liberal-Liberal Quakers, a religious group within Quakerism, of which he says

> "This kind of Quakerism is held together by an adherence to form, by the way the group is religious, not by what it believes. There are Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, and Buddhist Quakers (Huber 2001), theist and non-theist (Rush 2003), agnostic and atheist." (p. 134)

On the other hand, it should be pointed out that Quaker materials designed for work with children in Quaker Children's Meetings, of which I provide an overview in section 4.3.1, include chapters on Christian tradition and biblical stories. However, working with these materials is not mandatory in Children's Meetings and leaders are free to choose any topics they wish.

8.3.2.4 Comparison of Characteristic Criteria of Mediation in Quakerism and Judaism

In addition to the mediation of the above themes, the leaders of Children's Meetings also emphasise the mediation of certain Quaker practices (mediation of silence, listening, respect and decision-making, see 7.5) through which children are given ways in which they can develop their spirituality. These emphases are to some extent intertwined with the situational criteria of the MLE, i.e. criteria that are not all used all of the time in mediation but are selected by the mediator according to the situation or cultural context (see 2.4.5.1). For example, the MLE criterion of mediating regulation and control of behaviour[15] includes the mediation of listening and respect. The mediation of respect is also intertwined with the criterion of mediating psychological difference, i.e. the tolerance of diversity so typical of Quakerism (to which I will return below). Despite these connections, I think it is justified to highlight the features of Quakerism that I refer to in this thesis as mediation criteria, and to separate them from the situational criteria of the MLE, because in addition to being something that is characteristic of Quakerism, they bring a more specific, expanding point of view to a

[15] The aim of mediation of regulation and control of behaviour is to teach the individual to evaluate what behaviour is appropriate in a given situation and to limit their possible impulsiveness. The goal is achieved when the mediatee understands their behaviour and is able to take responsibility for it.

given situational criteria, which is fully in line with the theory of the MLE, which is considered to be an open, ever-evolving system (Feuerstein, Sh., 2002). Moreover, these Quaker emphases are indeed used as criteria in mediating other matters as well (e.g., problem solving, see below). If I were merely to assign these features to individual MLE criteria, their significance would not be apparent.

While the criteria of mediation characteristic of Judaism defined by Sh. Feuerstein (see 3.6.2.1), focus on the sharing of ideas and experiences, the aforementioned emphases in Quaker Children's Meetings, which become criteria as defined by R. Feuerstein, tend to focus on certain expressions of an individual's attitudes toward themselves and the world around them. I argue that this finding reflects to some extent the character of both communities. Whereas Judaism is characterized by faith sharing, community, communal discussion and learning, Quakerism emphasizes individual understandings of faith and respect for the individuality of others, even if it takes place within a local or wider community. While research has shown that sharing as a natural mode of communication also plays a very important role in Quaker Children's Meetings (see 6.4.3.2 and 7.3.2), I see a difference between Quaker and Jewish approaches to sharing. Whereas in Jewish teaching communication and sharing are directed specifically towards sharpening the mind, developing reasoning and logical justification (Feuerstein Sh., 2002), in Quaker Children's Meetings the emphasis in sharing is again on mediating respect, listening and silence. Children are thus guided to apply the values given, while at the same time adopting the practices of adults in Meeting for Worship and other forms of Quaker Meeting. Characterisations of the two communities based on a comparison of mediation criteria are certainly not exhaustive, but they do capture some of their significant features and emphases.

In contrast to the mediation criteria specific to Judaism, the criteria specific to Quakerism appear to be more universal, and therefore can be considered for use outside the Quaker context. Separately, they are certainly encountered in various educational systems - for example, Montessori pedagogy emphasizes the mediation of silence alongside respect, which is a core value promoted and developed in the educational systems of, perhaps, all democratic states. However, the combination of all four criteria adds a new dimension: silence, which in Quakerism is bound up with listening to the ˈinner voiceˈ, the leadings of the Spirit, helps people to become more aware of themselves, but also of the community to which they belong. Only through

silence is it possible to listen to the others, which can contribute to understanding and respecting them. Silence, listening and respect are the preconditions of the Quaker way of decision-making, which is also based on corporate listening to the leadings of the Spirit (see 7.5.4).

In addition to the mediation criteria characteristic of Quakerism, the research has also highlighted other emphases in Quaker Children's Meetings that I have classified as practical examples of situational MLE criteria, and which, like the mediation criteria, have a transcendence beyond Quakerism. These include the previously mentioned tolerance of diversity (see 7.3.3) and the approach to problem solving (see 7.3.1). Awareness of diversity and its benefits, as well as the ability to solve problems as calmly and thoughtfully as possible, certainly corresponds to the idea, mentioned more than once, that the impact on children in Quaker Children's Meetings is primarily to enrich their ordinary lives, even with an open view to the future (see 6.3.5.1). The consistency of these emphases with the criteria of the MLE suggests their universality and possible transfer beyond the Quaker setting.

8.3.2.5 Summary

In this section I discuss the most important findings of my research concerning the extent to which the criteria of Mediated Learning Experience are used in Quaker Children's Meetings. The research suggests that mediation is one of the main approaches used by Children's Meeting leaders to transmit Quaker values to children. Unlike Judaism, in matters of faith, children are left to their own exploration. Quaker emphases, which include the mediation of silence, listening, respect, and decision-making, can be characterized, based on Feuerstein's theory, as mediational criteria that are transferable beyond the context of Quakerism. The use of MLE principles, although not targeted and consistent, is very likely to have an impact on the development of children's cognitive skills, which are important prerequisites for moral reasoning.

8.3.3 Approaches to Teaching Values in Quaker Children's Meetings in the Context of Other Approaches to Teaching Values

In section 6.5 I compare the approaches to teaching values in Quaker Children's Meetings with the cognitive developmental approach, character education and the

socio-cultural approach, concluding that Quaker approaches show the greatest similarity to the socio-cultural approach. This conclusion is also fully consistent with the conclusions regarding the MLE elements in Quaker approaches, as MLE represents a form of the socio-cultural approach (Silver, 2009). In this section I interpret the significance of this conclusion.

According to Tappan (1998), the socio-cultural approach stresses the importance of social interaction and communication, incorporating cultural, historical and institutional settings (see 3.5.3), which Children's Meeting leaders work with when they introduce children to the functioning of the Quaker environment, present its history, or talk with them about current social issues. Moreover, the socio-cultural approach emphasises the role of the adult in communicating values to children, and one of its basic ideas is the belief that communicating values to children through language and actions leads to the gradual internalisation of those values, and that the world can become a better place if adults are able to communicate appropriate values to children (see 3.5.3). Here I see a connection with the aims of Children's Meetings, which include experiencing Quaker values (see 6.3.5), and the concept of teaching in this setting, where the purpose is not to teach certain facts, but rather to offer children principles whose application can improve their lives and the lives of others (see 6.2). In addition, in their approaches, the leaders of Children's Meetings use a range of different types of interactions (see 6.4.3) which, in my opinion, show not only their creativity but above all their openness towards children, their perception of children's needs and their desire to bring values to children in a way that appeals to them.

Moreover, research shows that Quaker Children's Meetings are an important space for children to meet other people with similar values to those they are led to share in their families (see 6.3.5.4.; 6.4.3.10). Here they are not just thinking about values on a theoretical level but are exposed to their practical application and are led to apply them themselves. The ways in which this is done are very likely to have an impact on their cognitive development, as well as imparting important skills for use in practical life outside the Quaker environment. In section 3.3, where I discuss the concept of 'values', I introduce Hiltin's idea concerning the relationship between the formation of an individual's identity and values. This means that embracing values is going to influence individual´s identity. Building on this idea, I argue that the environment of Children's Meeting, through its targeted focus on values, opens up a space for children and young

people to reflect on their own values and consider whether the values they are experiencing in Children's Meeting are those they wish to embrace.

As for the other approaches to values education, which I discuss in the theoretical part of my thesis (see 3.5.1 and 3.5.2), elements of the cognitive-developmental approach and character education are purely peripheral to the Quaker approach to working with children in Quaker Meetings (see 6.5.2). The main reason, in my view, is the difference between the aims of these approaches and those of Children's Meetings. Whereas the aim of the cognitive-developmental approach is to promote the natural development of children's moral reasoning (see 3.5.1) and the aim of character education is to develop certain virtues in order to build good character (see 3.5.2), one of the primary aims of Children's Meeting is to experience Quaker values in such a way that they become an inspiration to the child in their present and future personal life (see 6.3.5).

I see this Quaker approach to teaching, including the range of different interactions that show the specific possibilities for its application, as presented in the research, as a possible source of inspiration for others working with children in the area of values development.

8.3.4 Comparison between Principles of Quaker Formal and Informal Education

In sections 4.2 and 4.3, I draw on the literature to examine the principles of Quaker formal and informal education. Among the principles of contemporary Quaker formal education, the emphasis on maximizing the connection between what is taught and the everyday lives of the learners (priority of experience and integrity), the involvement of all learners (invite all voices), and non-violence are cited. Although these are principles associated with formal education, I would argue that these principles are consistent with the work of Children's Meeting leaders. I suggest that this is due to the nature of Quakerism, which, as I mention several times in this thesis, is based on values (Testimonies, see 4.1), which are not simply expressions of what Quakers consider important, but they are rather their way of life. This is evidenced by the witness of Quaker teachers who do not work in Quaker schools and yet incorporate their values into their teaching (see 4.2.1)

In terms of the principles of informal Quaker education, in section 4.3 I consider the ideas of Collins (1994) who looked at the issue of Children's Meetings in some detail, particularly in terms of the acceptance of children by adults. Collins emphasises that the primary aim of Children's Meetings should be to build a community in which everyone feels accepted, and to nurture spirituality. Practising the Testimony of Equality toward children is essential, she says. The results of my research show that both community building and the nurturing of spirituality are goals that the Children's Meeting leaders I interviewed are trying to meet (see 6.3.5.4. and 6.3.5.1). However, according to some interviews, the acceptance of children by adults is still not the norm in all Quaker Meetings. Some interviewees emphasise the all-inclusive concept of Meetings (see 6.3.4), by which they mean that it will be an environment where everyone has a place, both adults and children. Surprisingly, nearly twenty years after the publication of Collins' book, the issues discussed by the author persist in some Meetings. One explanation for this may be the fact, which also emerged from my research, that many Meetings are struggling with a lack of children (see 6.3.2) and therefore may not be used to, or prepared for, their presence.

Whilst Collins (ibid) is primarily concerned with the principle of preparedness for the presence of children in Quaker Meetings, the principles of actual education can be inferred from the teaching materials designed for working with children in Children's Meetings (see 4.3.1). In all three of the materials I analyse in my thesis, the adults who work with the children based on these materials are characterised as those who guide the children through the topic, opening up topics and using questions to focus the children's attention and activate them. The lessons are structured from introducing the topic through quieting the children down, discussing the topic and elaborating on it afterwards. My research revealed the same concept of leading a Children's Meeting (see 6.3.4) Given that my respondents often reported working with some of the aforementioned teaching materials, it is very likely that they developed their way of working and the structure of the lessons based on inspiration from these materials. I consider important the remark made by some of them that the expected lesson structure is one of the elements that guarantee a safe environment for the children, in which they are familiar, and which will also make it easier for them to visit other Meetings.

The teaching materials also emphasise the personal spiritual preparation of adults for the lessons (see 6.3.4), which my interviewees do not explicitly mention in their interviews, which is, most likely, due to the fact that I did not ask about it myself. However, given the spiritual foundation of the leaders of the Children's Meetings (see 6.3.1.1), it can be assumed that in preparing for the lessons, they prepare for the topic not only materially, so that they have all the tools, but also specifically in terms of spirituality. This topic could certainly be the subject of further research.

8.4 Validity and Limitations of the Research and Suggestions for Further Research

8.4.1 Validity and Limitations of the Research

The research focused on the work of Quaker Children's Meeting leaders and therefore the perspective it brings is that of the adults who work with children. As I have explained elsewhere (see 5.2.3), it was not possible due to the global Covid pandemic to carry out observations in addition to interviews, which would have provided an additional perspective and would have been a useful complement to the interviews, both in terms of adults' interaction with children in Children's Meetings generally and for identifying elements of the MLE. Nevertheless, I argue that my analytical methods were robust and replicable in this context. However, there is no generalisability beyond Quakers, as the research was conducted within British Liberal Quakers. While I took a great care to have an appropriately sized sample, it is also possible that applying the same methods in different Quaker Meetings at different times might have elicited further responses of minor details. But since the answers were consistent with broader understandings of Quaker values, it is unlikely that the main ideas would have differed.

8.4.2 Suggestions for Further Research

The research completely omits the perspective of the children themselves so, for further research in this area, I would suggest interviewing children who attend Quaker Children's Meetings about what they think about participating in them and how they perceive adults working with them. In addition, interviews with parents or grandparents who bring children to Meetings and who inherently influence the children in their daily lives would also be an appropriate complement to the overall benefits of Children's Meetings. Interviews with young people who have chosen not to continue attending

Quaker Meeting on the influence of Quaker values in their personal lives would also be beneficial.

In terms of the MLE, my research focused on adults' spontaneous use of MLE principles in their work without explaining the MLE in detail. For further research, I would suggest giving Children's Meeting leaders a detailed introduction to its principles and then asking them to comment on how much they personally identify with them and why. Furthermore, I would be interested to know whether or not a detailed introduction to the MLE would have any significant impact on the way Children's Meeting leaders work and, if so, what.

Further research, in my opinion, could focus on the use of MLE principles in other faith communities and investigate the correlation between attitudes to faith and levels of mediation in working with children. Equally beneficial would be research focusing on the targeted use of MLE in teaching values in school settings and comparing its impact on children with other approaches to teaching values.

8.5 Summary

The aim of this section was to summarize the most important results of the research, to put them in the context of the theoretical part of my thesis and to offer their interpretation and possible implementation in the field of MLE theory and values education. Like all research, it has its limitations, which I have also presented, and I have introduced possibilities for further research in the area of both Quaker Children's Meetings and the theory and practice of Mediated Learning Experience.

9. Conclusion

The aim of my thesis was to situate the work of adults in Quaker Children's Meetings within the context of values education and to look at it primarily from the perspective of the Mediated Learning Experience as defined by Feuerstein. Both areas (i.e., Quaker Children's Meetings and Feuerstein's approach to teaching) were already familiar to me prior to the research, given that I am a teacher trained in the Feuerstein Method and I also have experience of running Quaker Children's Meetings within Central Europe. These experiences benefitted my work as a researcher since I was used to the listening, probing and clarifying that are necessary in the conduct of semi-structured interviews. My analytical methods ensured that this experience did not have the effect of limiting or skewing my perceptions.

In the theoretical part of the thesis (chapters 1-4), I introduced Quakerism and its values, Feuerstein's approach to teaching in the context of other cognitive approaches, and the Mediated Learning Experience both in terms of its formation within Jewish culture and from the perspective of its use in values education regardless of the cultural setting in which it is applied. The second part of the thesis (chapters 5-8) details and discusses my practical research, which provides significant insights into Quaker Children's Meetings and can be considered unique of its kind, as I was unable to find similar research in which someone has examined what goes on between the adults and the children from a pedagogical point of view or in the light of current theories of moral education. Normally, what goes on in Children's Meetings is viewed from internal or self-referential perspectives. In this study, I have opened up these approaches to a wider range of analytical standpoints, allowing comparisons in both directions.

My semi-structured interviews were primarily focused on the way in which children are worked with, but other valuable insights emerged regarding both the importance of Children's Meetings and the challenges that many of them face (e.g. lack of children, irregular attendance or limited numbers of adults willing to work with children). In addition to the inspiring work with children that I describe in detail in chapter 6, I want to highlight the commitment, creativity and dedication of the adults who work with children. It is clear from the interviews that, although they are not always in regular and frequent contact with the children, they see themselves as trying to contribute to the development of children’s spirituality and values systems. Quaker Children's Meetings also contribute to the integration of children into the Quaker community. A significant

contribution of the research is the listing of many different types of interactions (see 6.4.3) that may inspire other leaders of Children's Meetings.

The findings on the elements of MLE in the Quaker setting are also crucial, pointing to the universality of this approach and its applicability not only in the context of targeted treatment of deficient cognitive functions, where it is currently used most (see 2. 4), but also in ordinary interactions between individuals, confirming R. Feuerstein's initial idea that MLE is a natural way for humanity to interact (see 2.4.5). Sh. Feuerstein explains and illustrates this fact by looking at Judaism, in which he claims to see the roots of MLE (see 3.6). My research contributes to this discussion by supporting R. Feuerstein's idea that mediation is a universal characteristic of human interaction and by presenting the MLE in the context of teaching values. It also introduces new criteria arising from the Quaker setting (see 7.5) that are transferable to other settings.

The research also makes a significant contribution to the debate on values education. On the one hand, it presents Quakerism as a values-based community in which, as the analysis shows, values education plays an important role in Children's Meetings. The ways in which this is done may also provide inspiration for other religious and non-religious communities, such as nurseries and schools. On the other hand, Mediated Learning Experience offers one possible tool for teaching values that appropriately complements existing approaches (see 3.5) and which, arguably, is currently underutilised.

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Appendices

A. Overview of FIE Instruments

1. FIE Basic

The instruments in this set can be used with preschool children, but their use is not limited by the age of the individual. In fact, the instruments are aimed at the following three populations (Feuerstein, 2006), in which they seek to bring about changes in the issues mentioned:

a) Students who require the development of core content and concepts in order to respond to the educational demands of their environment
b) Students who require prevention of dysfunctions or delayed development (overcoming "risk" factors)
c) Pupils who require restoration or consolidation of necessary functions that they have lost or inadequately acquired at an appropriate and relevant time (remediation)

FIE Basic includes the following instruments:

- Organisation of Dots Basic
- Orientation in Space Basic
- From Unit to Group
- Identify Emotions
- Compare and Discover the Absurd A and B
- Know and Identify
- Learn to Ask Questions for Reading Comprehensions
- From Empathy to Action
- Think and Learn to Prevent Violence
- Compare and Discover the Absurd level 2
- Tri-Channel Attentional Learning

2. FIE Standard

The instruments in Standard set are intended for individuals from approximately 7 years of age, with no upper age limit (similar to the Basic series). Therefore, both children and adults can benefit from the instruments. Each instrument targets specific cognitive functions, but also develops many other necessary prerequisites for learning. The instruments are used when working with pupils in the classroom, in small groups or individually. When the FIE program is applied as individual therapy, the teacher selects the instruments that meet the special needs of the student. If the FIE program is part of the school curriculum, all instruments are discussed gradually, and with an hourly time commitment of three to five lessons per week, the instruments are covered over two to three years (Feuerstein, 2006).

FIE Standard includes the following instruments:

- Organisation of Dots
- Orientation in Space I
- Comparisons
- Analytic Perception
- Categorisation
- Instructions
- Orientation in Space II
- Illustrations
- Family Relations
- Numerical Progressions
- Temporal Relations
- Syllogisms
- Transitive Relations
- Representational Stencil Design

B. Sample lesson from 'Journeys in the Spirit'

Journeys in the Spirit

inward outward upward downward

Children's work edition May 2019 Issue 121

Gardening

Getting ready

This is part of the series which focusses on 'Room for All' the theme for Quaker Week 2018.

Quaker week looked at how we can become more diverse, more welcoming and reach out into the community. This issue looks at how gardens and gardening can be a way of creating hope by reaching out to the wider community around us and by offering spiritual growth and healing. Take a moment to think about what gardens you have visited and may have worked in. Think about how gardens were important to Jesus, they were places he went to walk, be silent and pray to God.

In this issue we are going to look at: how gardens bring people together; how gardens grow not only plants but people; how gardens help healing and bring hope. In the same away we need to nurture plants we need to nurture each other, our friendships and relationships. You might need to gather some materials together for the different activities. Details of resources and equipment needed are included in each section.

Journeys in the Spirit offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with children and young people.

This children's work edition comes out monthly. It offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with 5–12 year olds in a Quaker setting.

It provides opportunities for exploring, creating and learning in an atmosphere of worship in partnership on our shared journey in the spirit.

Gather

Gather in a circle for a time of stillness to begin. Have some pictures of gardens, flowers, plants, gardening tools for children to look at. Ask if any of them would like to share anything about a garden they have or have been in. Ask them to choose one of the pictures that they like and why.

Explain that today you will be thinking about gardens and how gardening and gardens build hope, communities and healing. Ask them what it might be like to live somewhere with no gardens, parks, trees? You could read the story *'A child's garden: a story of hope' by Michael Foreman (see sidebar p.3)*.

Underpinning references

Bible: Luke 13 v.18-19 The parable of the mustard seed:

He said therefore, 'What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it? It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in the branches.'

Engage

Ask the children

Can they can think of any ways that gardens and gardening help people?Some ideas are as follows:

Gardens can help bring different groups of people together to break down barriers: they can give people with no jobs something to do; they help people make friendships and build communities; they provide good food for people without much money; they can give groups of people hope and something to look forward to. Working in a garden can help people who are mentally ill, have a disability, or who are in prison feel more positive.

Community Gardens

Ask if the children know of any gardens that are helping to bring people from different cultures, backgrounds or circumstances together. These are often called community gardens. Planting a garden together gives people something to look forward to and a sense of purpose. Here are two examples to explore: (*see sidebar for links to the following projects*).

Mulberry Tree Community Garden - Tottenham Quaker Meeting have created a community garden in their meeting house grounds. It brings people together from across the community – they share the vegetables they grow. The garden gives people something to do, creates opportunities for forming new friendships and provides food for everyone, some who have very little money to buy good food with.

Wildflower Alley - Wildflower Alley is a community led initiative that started in 2015 to transform the derelict, rubbish filled area behind the back to back terrace housing in the 'Holy Lands' area of South Belfast, into a beautiful communal space. It has dramatically improved the life of the residents and helped to break down barriers. It has allowed long term residents, students and migrant families to work together and build relationships and understanding. It started with free flowers and free compost donated from Queen's University and has evolved to become an inspirational community space that has won many awards.

Gardens and healing

Ask the children how gardens make them feel? Many people feel that gardens are peaceful, and make them feel better. Some people who have had difficult lives find that gardening helps them heal. Gardens were important to Jesus, they were places he went to walk, be silent and pray to God (*see the New Testament in the Bible - Matthew 26 v.36*). When we plant a seed we have to look after it – what do we need to do to make a seed grow?

You might like to read '*The Promise*' (*see sidebar p.3*) by Nicola Davies about how a girl steals a handbag from an old lady but instead of money she finds acorns inside. She then goes on a journey to fulfil her promise to the old lady and plant the acorns. Discuss with the children how the girl felt before she took the bag and how she felt after she had planted the acorns. How did her actions change people?

Across the world people are planting gardens to help people heal – you can read more about some projects by following *other links* in the side bar.

References & other resources

Quaker Faith & Practice 28:10

Mulberry Tree

https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/our-stories/the-mulberry-tree-community-garden

Wildflower Alley
https://keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.etinu.net/keepnorthernirelandbeautiful/documents/007112.pdf

Other Links:

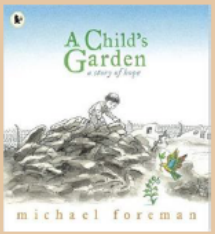
Seeds of hope – gardens springing up in refugee camps
https://lemontreetrust.org

Comfrey Project - Refugees gardening in Tyneside.
http://thecomfreyproject.org.uk

Thrive – Prison gardening work in HM Prison Hewell
https://www.thrive.org.uk/news/news/news-499.aspx

References & other resources

ISBN-13: 978-1406355598



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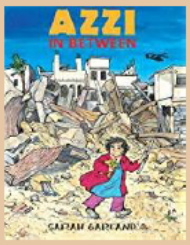

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http://bookshop.quaker.org.uk

Additional Resources 121.A and B can be found at: www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren by selecting 'resources for current issue'

Respond

There are many ways to explore this topic with children. Here are some suggestions of activities. Select one or two that will engage your group and encourage them to respond to the theme:

- If you have a garden in your meeting house you could work on a project, maybe planting runner beans, peas or flowers that later could be harvested and shared with the Meeting.
- Make a miniature garden, this can be done individually, in pairs or small groups (*see Additional Resource 121.A link in sidebar*).
- Younger children could grow cress in yogurt pots, use white sticky labels on the yogurt posts so they can be decorated i.e. with a face so the cress becomes its hair.
- Make or play a game (*see Additional Resource 121.B in sidebar*). Talk about what it takes to nurture a garden.
- On a large piece of paper draw a garden – make it into a collage. Bring old magazines, tissue paper, wrapping paper, leaves and petals to rub, cut out and add on. Show how if you work together you can create something beautiful for the future, and others to enjoy. Pin it up somewhere in your meeting house so everyone can see it and be inspired.
- Older children could write a poem about a garden, seeds growing etc.
- Make a puzzle – provide some pictures of gardens, plants or flowers. Ask each child to choose one and paste it on a piece of card (old cereal boxes can be used). Ask them to cut the picture up into pieces (not too small, but can be different shapes). Give each child another's puzzle to put back together.
- 'Me and my Tree' (adapted from Spirit Games by Barbara Sher). You can play this if you have a tree at your Quaker Meeting or if you are near a park. Choose a tree(s) that works for your group. Everyone gives the tree a hug, then stand round the tree holding hands and close your eyes. Start a conversation with the tree i.e. Hello tree? How many leaves do you have? What birds have visited today? Are you thirsty? Let each child ask a question. With a piece of paper and crayon let each child take a rubbing of the bark. Finally, all sit at the base of the tree and feel at peace and loved. Listen quietly within to hear any messages from the tree. Pour water at the tree's base before you go.

Reflect

Gather the children together to talk about what they have been doing:

- Ask if any of them want to share what they have done.
- Talk to them about what have they have learned.
- Has is changed the way they think about gardens?
- Invite them to think about the season ahead – what might they be doing in the garden at home, school etc?
- What about further ahead - is there something they might like to plan for in the future e.g. creating a small garden, holding a seed swap, have a plant sale.

Remind them that gardens are places to find peace, nature, community etc. and places where they can meet God and that of God in everyone.

Finish with a time of stillness and quiet.

Review

It's good to take time to review the session.
Take time to think about:

- Did the children engage with the topic? What questions or issues did they raise?
- Did the activities work well? Did they enable the children to work together?
- Were the children been able to participate in their own way and each one feel that they could express their feeling and experiences?
- Did the children suggest any follow-up activities that you might be able to take forward and do another time?
- Is there anything that didn't go well and if so why?

This issue was written by Megan Corrigan and edited by Mel Cook and Howard Nurden.

Journeys in the Spirit is published in two formats on alternative months. One month the issue is on a theme, with an easy to use structure set out in a four page booklet with additional online resources. The alternative month is a topical activity – something about the news or of a seasonal interest.

Available from 6 June 2019 (later due to Yearly Meeting) topical activity 'Housing'.
Available from 1 July 2019 'Future'.

Materials available online are:

Additional Resources Sheets

An easy to use plan for a Children's Meeting

A simple plan for an all age Meeting for Worship

These can be accessed through www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren by scrolling down to 'resources for current issue'.

For a 'How to use Journeys in the Spirit guide', the catalogue of previous issues and a link to the resources for recent issues, go to www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschildren and scroll down to find what you want.

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C. Sample lesson from 'Living our Faith'

1.1 Inner Peace

Peace I Leave With You / God Makes Wars Cease

Scripture

I give you peace, the kind of peace that only I can give. It isn't like the peace that this world can give. So don't be worried or afraid. —*John 14:27*

God brings wars to an end all over the earth,
Smashing bows, shattering spears,
And burning shields with fire.

Be still and know that I am God.
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.
— *Psalm 46:9–10**

Inner peace means coming to a quiet place inside ourselves where we feel safe because God loves us. Silent worship, sitting quietly, "knowing God," is a way Friends seek peace.

Discussion Questions

What does peace mean to you? What can disturb your peace?

How do you find peace of heart?

Why do you think God tells us to "be still and know that I am God?"

What happens inside you during the silence and stillness of worship?

What have others shared with you about what happens inside them when they worship?

Activities

Complete the sentence "Peace is _____."

Tell a memory of a peaceful place or experience from your own life. With older children, read the entire Psalm 46 and talk about God being a refuge in times of trouble using the biblical metaphors of earthquakes and storms at sea.

Use the metaphor of stormy or calm weather to talk about the children's interior landscapes. Ask each one to describe what brings on peaceful inner weather.

Use art to express the inner peace of worship. With pastels or watercolors (for a wash), gather in a circle around one large piece of art paper. If using watercolors, use a sponge to amply wet the entire paper just before beginning to paint. Invite children to take turns adding color to the paper while the others are still and silent. Invite children to share afterwards what it was like. Discuss how silent worship is similar-—each of us brings something and, with God, we create something new. At the end, display the paper for the meeting or cut the paper into pieces—children can write "Peace I leave with you" or "Be still and know that I am God" on reverse.

When gathering or closing, "pass the peace" by placing your hands around the folded hands of the person next to you and say, "(the person's name), may the peace of God be yours today." Then that person passes peace to the next person, and so on, around the entire circle back to the first person.

Craft

Make miniature sand/rock meditation gardens. Use terra cotta flowerpot bases or re-use aluminum pie tins, foam trays, clear plastic carry-out containers, etc. Cover the bottom with a layer of sand and add pebbles, dry moss, shells, etc. Use a plastic fork or sticks to make designs in the sand. Once each child has the materials, try sitting quietly arranging the gardens in silence together.

Guided Meditation

Feeling inner peace: With eyes closed, visualize a peaceful setting (a mountain, a beach, anywhere that feels peaceful to you). Walk into the scene and sit down. Enjoy the peaceful feeling and the stillness for a few minutes. Notice what makes it feel peaceful—warmth, light, water? Imagine God or someone from the Bible visiting you there. What is it like to be with God or your special visitor? Allow the children to rest in the scene a few moments more. Then get up, stretch, and turn around before moving into the next activity. Explain to children that this is something they can do at home whenever they need peace.

Music

W 318 *Peace is Flowing Like a River*

W 137 *Teach Me to Stop and Listen*

W 188 *Open My Heart*

Materials Guide

Peace pastel picture: large sheet of paper, watercolors and sponge, or pastels

Miniature meditation gardens: shallow containers (plastic or foam trays, pie tins, etc.), pebbles, moss, shells, sticks, plastic forks

D. Sample lesson from 'Godly Play'

LESSON 2

CREATION

LESSON NOTES

FOCUS: THE DAYS OF CREATION (GENESIS 1:1–2:3)

- SACRED STORY
- CORE PRESENTATION

THE MATERIAL

- LOCATION: SACRED STORY SHELVES
- PIECES: 7 CREATION CARDS, DISPLAY RACK (OPTIONAL)
- UNDERLAY: BLACK FELT

BACKGROUND

With this lesson we begin to trace the elusive presence of the mystery of God in the story of God's People. We begin to play Hide-and-Seek with the Holy One and ask, "What can we know of the Giver by the gift?"

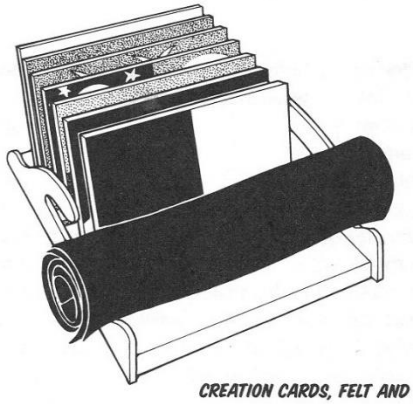
NOTES ON THE MATERIAL

This material sits on the top shelf of the sacred story shelves. The sacred story materials form a left-to-right sequence. For the sacred stories in this guide, the materials move from Creation to the Exile and Return. Thus the Creation material is found on the far left of the top shelf, the first material in the sacred story sequence.

A display rack holds up the seven cards so the children can see them. Also on the rack, in front of the upraised cards, is the rolled-up black underlay. This underlay is wide enough for all seven cards to be laid out side by side. The underlay is deep enough to place *two* rows of cards, one above the other. You can tape together a second set of cards to act as a self-checking set. When children work alone with the materials, they can compare their layout to the self-checking set to help them recall the order of days in creation. Store the self-checking set on a tray on the sacred story shelves, directly below the Creation material.

This lesson does not use a rug, since the material has its own underlay.

MOVEMENTS	WORDS
Move slowly and with deliberation to the shelf where the creation material waits.	Watch. Watch where I go.
Pick up the display rack for the creation lesson and return to the circle.	Do you see? Yes.

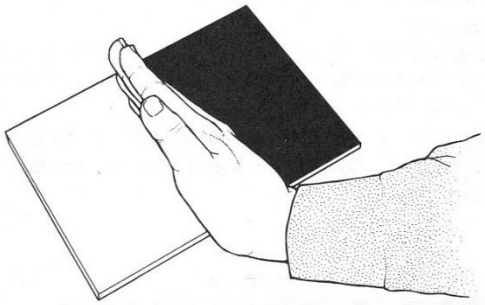


CREATION CARDS, FELT AND RACK

Place the rack beside you and get settled. Look around the circle. You may need to say:	Everyone needs to be ready.
Show the children how to "be ready" by sitting with your legs crossed and your hands relaxed on your ankles. Wait until all are ready.	
Look around the circle. Smile. Invite involvement by your own sense of openness. Wait. Nod your head, "Yes," as if someone is about to speak. The grand conversation has already begun!	What is the biggest present you ever got?

MOVEMENTS	WORDS
The children will begin to think of things they have received. They may begin with bicycles and video games, but they also may name something alive. If this happens, comment on the distinction between a gift that is inanimate and a gift that is alive. For example, you could say:	Listen. There's something different about that gift. (Wait to see if the children respond by describing the gift as alive. If necessary, describe that difference yourself.) That gift isn't like a bicycle. That gift is alive.
You are not saying whether living or nonliving presents are better. You merely notice the distinction for them to comment on if they wish. Continue to affirm the children's comments.	Listen. Listen to your friends. These are all big gifts. They are wonderful presents.
Whatever gift that a child names, unless you sense that the child is trying to shock or disrupt the group, is "wonderful." Continue the invitation to name greatest gifts until you think that all the children who want to speak have done so.	Yes. Yes. That is a wonderful present.
It is not a good idea to go around the circle one at a time, taking turns. Simply acknowledge each child when he or she is ready to speak. When all who want to speak have done so, then continue:	Did you know that there are some presents so big that nobody notices them? They are so huge that they are hard to see. They are so hard to see that the only way to know that they are there is to go clear back to the beginning, or maybe a little before the beginning.
Take the rolled-up black felt strip from the rack and place it on the floor to your right, so the children, who are facing you, will "read" the days of creation from left to right. As you speak, begin slowly to unroll the felt strip.	In the beginning...in the beginning there was... Well, in the beginning there wasn't very much.
When the strip is unrolled completely, you move your hand across its surface to show "nothing," moving from your right to your left, smoothing out the felt in one sweep.	In the beginning there was...nothing.

MOVEMENTS	WORDS
From the children's point of view, you will now trace a "smile" from the children's upper left, down to the center and back up again to the children's upper right. (To you, these movements begin in the lowest right corner, move up to the center and end in the lowest left corner.)	Except, perhaps, an enormous smile...but there was no one there to see it.
Wait a moment and then take out the first card from the rack. This card shows the pictures of "light" and "dark."	
Place the light card on the black underlay to your right so that the "dark" side of the card is closest to the right edge. Turn your hand so that the edge of your hand is perpendicular to the card and put it over the line between the light and the dark. Move your hand across the picture of light as you speak of that gift. When you name "light" or "dark," point to each.	Then on the very first day God gave us the gift of light. So now there is not just darkness, but there is light and dark. Now, I don't mean just the light in the light bulb or in the car lights at night. I don't mean just this light or that light, but I mean all of the light that is light. God gave us the gift of the light that all light comes from.

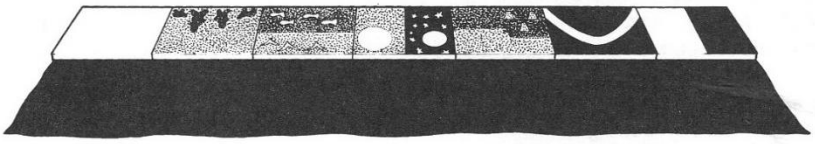


LIGHT AND DARK (STORYTELLER'S PERSPECTIVE)

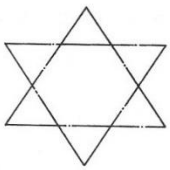
As you say, "It is good," place your hand flat on the card, as if blessing it. This is probably the most important gesture in the whole lesson. Lean back, sit a moment and then begin the next day.	When God saw the light, God said, "It is good." And that was the end of the first day.

MOVEMENTS	WORDS
Place the second card to your left of the first day.	On the second day God gave us the gift of water. Now, I don't mean just the water in a water glass or the water in a bathtub or shower. I don't even mean just the water in a river or a lake. I don't even mean just the water in the ocean, or the water that comes down from the sky in rain. I mean all of the water that is water. This is the water that all the rest of the water comes from.
Move your hand across the card. You can trace the thin, white arc with your finger, or you can leave out this gesture and wait until the children ask about the line.	This is the firmament. It divides the waters above and the waters below.
Touch the card like a blessing.	When God saw the water, God said, "It is good." And that was the end of the second day.
Take out the third card and lay it to your left, so that it touches the second card. Take your time.	
Place the edge of your hand vertically on the card's line that divides the water and land as you say "divide." Move it to the right as you "uncover" the dry land. Point to the "green and growing things" on the card as you speak of them.	On the third day God gave us the gift of the dry land. God divided the water and the dry land, and gave us the gift of green and growing things.
Put your hand on the card like a blessing as you say, "It is good." Wait a moment. Enjoy all that was given on the third day.	When God saw the dry land and the green and growing things, God said, "It is good." And that was the end of the third day.
Take out the fourth card and place it to your left, so that it touches the card for day three.	On the fourth day God gave us the gift of the day and the night. God gave us a way to count our days.
Point to the lights as they are spoken of.	Here is the great light that rules the day, the sun, and here are the lights that rule the night, the moon and the stars.

MOVEMENTS	WORDS
Touch the card like a blessing as you say, "It is good." Wait a moment. Don't hurry. Enjoy the fourth day.	When God saw the day and the night, our way to keep time, God said, "It is good." And that was the end of the fourth day.
Take out the fifth card and place it to your left, so that it touches the card for day four.	
As you mention the flying creatures and the swimming ones, touch each figure.	On the fifth day God gave us the gift of all the creatures that fly in the air. Not just the birds but all of the creatures that fly. And all of the creatures that swim in the water. All of them.
Touch the card like a blessing as you say, "It is good."	When God saw all of the creatures that fly and all of the creatures that swim, God said, "It is good." And that was the end of the fifth day.
Please remember to relax and enjoy each day after it is presented.	
Take out the sixth card and place it to your left of the fifth one.	
Touch the creatures as you name them.	On the sixth day God gave us the gift of all the creatures that walk upon the earth: the creatures that walk with two legs, like you and like me, and all the creatures that walk with many legs.
As you say "all the gifts of the other days," move your right hand over all of the card. Then touch the sixth card like a blessing as you say, "It is very good."	When God saw the creatures that walk with two legs and the creatures that walk with many legs and all the gifts of the other days, God said, "It is very good," and that was the end of the sixth day.
Take out the seventh card and place it to your left of the sixth one.	



THE SEVEN CARDS (STORYTELLER'S PERSPECTIVE)

MOVEMENTS	WORDS
As you say, "all the other days," sweep your hand across the whole line of cards.	On the seventh day God rested and gave us the gift of a day to rest—and to remember the great gifts of all the other days.
Point to the seventh card.	There is nothing here, because people go to different places to remember the great gifts. You can put something there to show your favorite place to remember. It might be in your backyard by a tree, in a church or in your room. It might be in the mountains or by the ocean or a lake. I don't know where your place is. Only you know.
As you say "mark it with a cross," you can use your fingers to trace a cross on the card. As you say "mark it with a star," you can use your fingers to trace the star of David on the card.	What I do know is that this day is so special, that sometimes the Christian people mark it with a cross and the Jewish people mark it with a star, the star of David.
	
	STAR OF DAVID
As you introduce the wondering questions, you can point to each card slowly as the question is introduced. For the last wondering question, you might pull one or two of the cards toward you so they are clearly out of line with the others. This is to suggest that these or others might be taken out for consideration.	Now, I wonder which one of these days you like best? I wonder which day is the most important? I wonder which day you are in or which one is especially about you? I wonder if we can leave out any one of these days and still have all the days we need?
When the wondering draws to a close, turn the children's attention toward getting out their own work.	
You might also explore the sequence of the days. Can they be changed? The more years you present this story, the more powerful it becomes.	

E. Letter to the Meetings

Dear Friends,

My name is Irena Marusincova, I come from the Czech Republic, and I am an attender of Prague Quaker Meeting.

Since 2017 I have been studying for a PhD at the University of Birmingham and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. My supervisors are Ben Pink Dandelion, Anne Watson and Don Rowe. General, my research concerns teaching methods used in Children's Meetings. Please find attached a brief description of my research.

Now I am in the process of planning the fieldwork for my research which I would like to start in the summer of 2019. My main research method will be through semi-structured interviews; that is why I am looking for Quakers working in Children's Meetings who would be willing to be interviewed by me. The interviews will be face-to-face during my stay in the UK or by Skype if it is not possible to meet personally. The interviews and all the material I receive will be used in accordance with ethical standards of the University of Birmingham, and I am currently applying for ethical approval. This means that all interviewees will be anonymous, individuals and Meetings will not be recognisable and naturally I will let interviewees read my elaboration of their words before I use them in my thesis. For research purposes interviews will be audio-recorded, and I will make copies of these recordings available to the interviewees. These recordings will only be used for research purposes and not made available to others, nor used in research presentations.

Although my research is about Children's Meetings the focus is on the adults and their work, beliefs, attitudes and practices, not the children.

As your Meeting is listed on the website with the comment that there is a Children's meeting at your Meeting, I am contacting you with the request to pass my e-mail to persons responsible for the Children's meeting.

If possible, I would also like to attend some Children's Meetings to orientate myself through observing.

Thank you.

In Friendship

Irena Marusincova

F. Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Research Project Title

Features of Mediated Learning Experience in value transmission to children in Quaker families and Children Meetings

Invitation

You are being invited to take part in this research project. Before you decide to do so, it is important you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the project's purpose?

This research project aims to investigate teaching methods in the context of teaching values to children in a Quaker environment and to find out if there are some similarities with the so-called Mediated Learning Experience as developed by Reuven Feuerstein.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you work with children in Quaker Meetings

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be able to keep a copy of this information sheet and you should indicate your agreement to the consent form which is a part of this sheet. You can withdraw from the project up until three months after the interview and observation. You only have to inform me by email.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be interviewed. It will be a semi-structured interview with open questions which means that you will be asked to talk about your opinions, motives, experiences and approaches. I estimate that the interview will take about 45 – 60 minutes. I may observe a Children's Meeting led by you and make written notes about the tasks and interactions that take place – no recording will take place other than these notes. You can see the notes if you wish.

What do I have to do?

You have only to answer the questions during the interview. There are no other commitments or lifestyle restrictions associated with participating.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Participating in the research is not anticipated to cause you any disadvantages or discomfort. The potential physical and/or psychological harm or distress will be the same as any experienced in everyday life.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will have a beneficial impact on how to approach teaching values not only in

Quaker environment but also in a wider context. Results will be shared with participants if they are interested in it.

What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?

Should the research stop earlier than planned and you are affected in any way I will tell you and explain why.

What if something goes wrong?

If you have any complaints about the project in the first instance you can contact me or my supervisors (see below). If you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, you can contact the University of Birmingham to take your complaint further (see below).

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that I collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified or identifiable in any reports or publications. Your Meeting will also not be identified or identifiable. Any data collected about you will be stored password protected.

Will I be recorded, and how will recorded media be used?

You will be audio-recorded for the interview. The recorded media will be stored securely in my home until the transcriptions are completed.

What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

The interview will ask you about your opinions and current practices in relation to teaching values to children in Quaker Children Meetings. Your views and experience are just what the project is interested in exploring.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

Results of the research will be published in my thesis. You will not be identified in any report or publication. Your Meeting will not be identified in any report or publication. If you wish to be given a copy of any reports resulting from the research, please ask me.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The project is my PhD project which I do under supervision of Anne Watson, Don Rowe and Ben Pink Dandelion at Woodbrooke and the University of Birmingham.

(The following is my name with contact details and the names of my supervisors with contact details)

G. Information Sheet for Parents and Carers

Information Sheet for Parents and Carers

My name is Irena Marušincová. I am an attender at Quaker Meetings in the Czech Republic. I am doing some research about the work of the adults in your Children's Meeting. I am supervised by three Quakers: Ben Pink Dandelion, Anne Watson and Don Rowe. Your Meeting has agreed to participate in the research.

Research Project Title

Features of Mediated Learning Experience in value transmission to children in Quaker Children's Meetings

What is the project's purpose?

This research project aims to investigate teaching methods in the context of teaching values to children in a Quaker environment and to find out if there are some similarities with the so-called Mediated Learning Experience as developed by Reuven Feuerstein.

Why am I involved?

Your Local Meeting has agreed to participate in this research project, which includes observation of Children's Meetings. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you are happy for your child to be present in the group while I observe the adults' work. Thank you for reading this.

Do I have to agree?

It is up to you to decide whether or not your child can stay in the Children's Meeting while I observe. Other arrangements will be made if you do not agree. If you agree, please sign the form. Please keep this information sheet.

What will happen in the Children's Meeting?

The Children's Meeting will be as normal. I will be present as an observer and will be taking written notes about what the adults say and do, how they organise the group activities and discussions. No names will be used and there will be no recordings made. Individual children are not the focus of my research. The same will happen if the Children's Meeting occurs via Zoom.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will have a beneficial impact on how to approach teaching values not only in Quaker environment but also in a wider context. Results will be shared with participants if they are interested in it.

What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?

Should the research stop earlier than planned I will tell your Meeting and explain why.

What if something goes wrong?

If you have any complaints about the project in the first instance you can contact me or my supervisors (see below). If you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, you can contact the University of Birmingham to take your complaint further (see below).

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that I collect during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. No one will be identified or identifiable in any reports or publications. Your Meeting will not be identified or identifiable. All data collected will be stored password protected.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

Results of the research will be published in my thesis. No one will be identified in any report or publication. Your Meeting will not be identified in any report or publication. If you wish to be given a copy of any reports resulting from the research, please ask me.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The project is my PhD project which I do under supervision of Anne Watson, Don Rowe and Ben Pink Dandelion at Woodbrooke and the University of Birmingham.

(The following is my name with contact details and the names of my supervisors with contact details)

H. Information Sheet for Children in Children's Meetings

Information Sheet for children in Children's Meetings

My name is Irena Marušincová. I am an attender at Quaker Meetings in the Czech Republic. I am doing some research about the work of the adults in your Children's Meeting. I am supervised by three Quakers: Ben Pink Dandelion, Anne Watson and Don Rowe.

The topic of my research is how adults try to help you understand Quaker values. As part of the project I am observing Children's Meetings to see what the adults say and do and how they organise the Meeting.

I will not make notes about you individually, only as a member of the group called 'the children'.

I would like you to be in the group as usual while I make these observations. If you do not agree we will arrange for you to be somewhere else while I observe.

If you do agree, but want to change your mind, you can let me know at any point during the meeting.

After the Meeting the notes will only be seen by me and my university tutors, and I will select parts to write about in my thesis and in papers about my research.

The notes will be destroyed after I have written my research.

If there is anything you do not understand, or want more information about, please ask me.

Irena Marušincová, email:

University of Birmingham, Art and Law, Theology and Religion, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT.

……

Please sign below:

I agree to be in the Children's Meeting while Irena observes (please tick if you agree)

I understand that Irena is doing research about the Children's Meeting and will be observing how the adults do their work with us (please tick)

I understand that Irena will not make notes about me individually, and that I can be excluded at any stage if I want (please tick)

Name

I. Consent Form for Interviews and Observation

CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS & OBSERVATION

Features of Mediated Learning Experience in values education of children in Quaker Children's Meetings

Thank you for reading the information sheet about the interview and observation. If you are happy to participate, then please complete and sign the form below. Please initial the boxes below to confirm that you agree with each statement:

Please tick the appropriate boxes	***Please Initial box:***
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated 01/05/2019 and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project up until three months after the interview without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.	
I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials and will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.	
I agree that you can observe the Children's Meeting when I am leading it, and that you can make notes about the tasks and interactions that take place, and that I can ask to see those notes if I wish, and that any use of these notes will conceal my identity and the identity of the Meeting. Only the researcher will have access to the notes.	
I agree for the interview to be audio-recorded. I understand that the audio recording made of this interview will be used only for analysis and will then be destroyed. Transcribed extracts from the interview, in which I would not be personally identified, may be used for conference presentations, reports or journal articles developed as a result of the research. I understand that no other use will be made of the recording without my written permission, and that no one outside the research team will be allowed access to the original recording.	
I agree that my anonymised data will be kept for future research purposes such as publications related to this study after the completion of the study.	
I agree to take part in this interview.	

Name of participant…… Signature …….. Date ……

Researcher …… Signature …….. Date ……

Copies: *Once this has been signed by all parties the participant will receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, and the information sheet. A copy of the signed and dated consent form will be placed in the main project file which must be kept securely in the researcher's home.*

J. Permission form opt in for parents

Dear Family Member,

My name is Irena Marušincová, I come from the Czech republic where I attend the Prague Quaker Meeting (). Since 2017, I have been a PhD student at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. My research project concerns teaching Quaker values in Children Meetings.

Your Meeting has agreed that I can visit the Children's Meeting of your Meeting for the purpose of learning more about teaching methods which are used by leaders of Children's Meetings.

This is all part of my PhD study concerning: *Features of Mediated Learning Experience in values education of children in Quaker Children's Meetings* and related publications. I will be making written notes on my observations. These notes will be kept securely. All notes and observations will only concern adults' work with children and will be only used for the purpose of my study. Individual children are not the focus of observation. No names of anyone involved will be noted and no photographs taken. I can show you notes directly after the Meeting if you wish.

If you agree that your child can be in the group when I observe please sign below with the name of the child.

Name of Child:

_____ _____

Date Signature

Thank you.

(The following is my name with contact details.)

K. Permission form opt out for parents

Dear Family Member,

My name is Irena Marušincová, I come from the Czech republic where I attend the Prague Quaker Meeting (). Since 2017, I have been a PhD student at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. My research project concerns teaching Quaker values in Children Meetings.

Your Meeting has agreed that I can visit the Children's Meeting of your Meeting for the purpose of learning more about teaching methods which are used by leaders of Children's Meetings.

This is all part of my PhD study concerning: *Features of Mediated Learning Experience in values education of children in Quaker Children's Meetings* and related publications. I will be making written notes on my observations. These notes will be kept securely. All notes and observations will only concern adults' work with children and will be only used for the purpose of my study. No names of anyone involved will be noted and no photographs taken. I can show you notes directly after the Meeting if you wish.

If you would like your child to be removed from the group and alternative arrangements made when I observe, please sign below with the name of the child.

Name of Child:

_____ _____

Date Signature

If you would prefer me to delete interactions involving your child from the study, please sign below with the name of the child.

Name of Child:

_____ _____

Date Signature

Thank you

(The following is my name with contact details.)

L. List of interview questions

i. Quakerism, personal attitude towards Quakerism

- Can you briefly describe your way to Quakerism?
- What do you appreciate most about Quakerism?
- In your opinion, what values characterise the Society of Friends in 21st century?
- Do you find, Quakerism is based on Christian values? Why do you say this?

ii. Children's Meeting in general

- In your opinion, what are the general aims of Children's Meetings? How do you try to reach them?
- How does your Meeting develop its programme for children's sessions?
- Describe me please the plan for one Children's Meeting.

iii. Approaches to working with children

- What is your motivation to work with children in Children's Meeting?
- In your opinion how important is it that the children feel to be a part of their Meeting? Why? How do you build this feeling in children?
- How do you work with children, what approaches do you use and why?
- What kind of stimuli do you use to help children think about the issues under discussion? Can you give some examples of something you've done?
- What kind of materials do you use?
- In what ways do you interact with children?
- Have you found that children of different ages need different approaches? If so, can you say more about that?
- In your opinion how important it is to let children think through for themselves rather than adopting the chain of thought given by someone else? To what extent do you see this as consistent with the Quaker way?
- To what extent do the children have the opportunity to decide the programme of Children's Meeting? How do you react to their suggestions if there are some?
- Do you speak with children about the meaning of Children's Meeting and about the individual sessions? Why yes or not?
- How would you call your role in the Children's Meeting? Why?
- Is there anything else you want to mention or add?

M. Comparison of questions asked in three selected interviews

Interview 4	Interview 12	Interview 24
Can you briefly describe your way to Quakerism?	Can you tell me briefly about your way to Quakerism?	Please first tell me generally about your experience of working with children in the context of Quaker Meetings.
Speaking of values, what values do you think most characterize Quakers in the 21st century?	What do you appreciate most about Quakerism?	OK, so what's your way?
Which of these values do you appreciate the most?	Because I'm interested in values, how do you understand the concept of value? What does it mean to you in general and in the context of Quakerism in particular?	Please tell me a little more about participation.
Can you say a little more about what it means "living simply"?	Could you give me an example of these Quaker values in practice? Equality or other values, some examples from your daily life.	You wrote me also about integration. What does it mean in Quaker the context?
And what about the other values?	You work with children in your Meeting, so what is your motivation to work with children?	And I also read in your email that your meeting organizes an Annual shindig. What is it about?
You already mentioned the children. I suppose you have children of your own and you're involved in the Children's Meeting…	Yes. Could you tell me a little more about how that works in Children's Meetings for Worship?	Now we come to Quaker Children's Meetings. How do you approach children and why?
What is the current situation of the Children's Meeting in your Local Meeting? How many children are there, how old are they etc.?	Aha, what does it mean?	How are project ideas made? Do the adults suggest what to do or are the children's ideas?
And what does the programme you prepare for children look like?	Okay, and then do you talk to the kids about their work, what they did, why they did it, or do you just let them do what they want to do?	And if you work with the older ones, what topics do you discuss, for example?

Oh, so the leaders have their ideas about the program, but it can change?	And how old are the children in your Meeting? And how many are there?	And is there anything you think children should learn at a Children's Meeting? Why do you say that?
Oh, yes. And if the children have their own ideas about the programme?	How do you start the Meeting? All together with the children for a while?	So, you said you don't think much about how you work with children, but maybe you could define some ways of interacting with children?
Now, can you please describe a specific example of one session with children?	When you read stories with children like this, do you also discuss them? If so, what kinds of questions do you ask?	Please tell me what you think are the goals of Children's Meetings.
How do you work with children, what approaches do you use and why?	What is the structure of your Children's Meeting?	And the role of the adult or adults at the Children's Meeting?
To what extent do you talk to children about the application of these principles in their daily lives? Why do you say this?	And in your opinion, what is the aim or what are the aims of Children's Meetings?	You have also been a tutor for people working with children and young people. Can you tell me more about this activity?
In your opinion how important is it to let children to think through for themselves?	Do the children in your Meeting participate in the Main Meeting?	Is there anything else you would like to mention or add regarding children, Children's Meetings
So, you discuss much with children in the Children's Meeting, but is there a difference depending on the age of the children?	The adults go to the children? I think it's usually the kids joining the adults...	And what do these zoom sessions for young children look like?
And in your opinion, what is the aim or what are the aims of Children's Meetings?	What would you call yourself as a person working with children?	
This brings me to my next question - I was told that yes, there are Children's Meetings and programmes for children, but then many young people stop attending the Meetings. What are your experiences in this regard and what could be the reasons?	Do you feel that the children enrich you? Why do you say that?	

Yes. And what about your motivation to work with children?	Is there anything else you would like to add?	
And how important do you think it is for children to feel part of the Encounter, and how do you build that feeling in children, if you do?		
Yes, I wanted to ask if you organize any other events or programmes outside of Meeting for Worship.		
And these families were friends of members of your Meeting?		
Is there anything else you would like to add?		

N. List of categories and subcategories

Categories	Subcategories	Further subcategories
Children's Meetings	Adults in Children's Meetings	Collaboration Parents Paid workers
	Aims	Allowing parents to worship Building community Continuity Contribution for Adult's Meeting Discovering diversity Enjoyment Exploring Introducing to Quakerism Kindness and respect Experiencing Preparing for life Quaker values Safeguarding Showing children their value Spiritual development Stimulating children
	Connection with Adult Meeting	
	Dynamic	
	Evaluation of Children's Meetings by Leadership	

	Children not willing to come	
	Children with special needs	
	Children's decisions	Factors Older children Younger children
	Children's room	
	Children not willing to collaborate	
	Number and age of children	Problems
	Organization	
	Plan	Examples of plans Routine Children's Meeting's journal
	Rules	
	Silence	
	Topics	God and Bible Important people Listening Other faiths Quaker charity Quaker history Quaker values Seasons Social issues
	What to learn	Materials
	Zoom sessions	Age groups

		Aims Evaluation Frequency Adult's learning how to do it Plans Practical example
Children's Meetings' Leadership	Attitude to Christianity	
	Attitude to Quakerism	
	Belief	
	Motivation to work with children in Quaker Children's Meeting	
	Personal experience as a child in Quaker Children's Meeting	
	Preferred age of children to work with	
	Relation leader x parents	
	Role	Adult presence Companion Development of the role Facilitator Help for parents Leader Official role x personal view Part of children's life Role modelling Safety

		Spiritual leader Teacher Volunteer Length of the role
	Spirituality	
	Teaching's experience outside of Children's Meetings	
	Values in general	
	Way to Quakerism	Appreciation on Quakerism Family background
Teaching approaches	Facilitation	
	Bringing children further	
	Involving children	
	Kinds of interactions	Asking questions Building on children's needs and ideas Comparison with approaches outside of Quakerism Craft activities Dialogues Didactic Discussions Drama Explicit Factors influencing kinds of interactions

		Free choice Gardening Having fun Children teaching adults Implicit Intergenerational and intercultural experiences Just being with children Leaving some feelings in children Listening Negative interacting with children Older children teaching younger children Participation Peer interactions Playing Projects Role modelling Sharing Silence Singing and music Talking about the meaning of Quaker activities Working with a book or a story Worshipping
	Quakerly way	
	Respecting children	Bad behaviour

		Children with special needs Examples
	Sharing Quaker values	
	Stimulating children to think by themselves	
Quakerism in general	Quaker values	
Other activities for children and young people		

O. Worked-on interview

Abbreviations

A(s) – adult(s)

CC – Catholic Church

CH - children

CM – Children's Meeting(s)

MM – Main Meeting

P – personal

PVs – personal values

Q(s) – Quaker(s); Quakerism

QM – Quaker Meeting

QT – Quaker Testimonies

QV – Quaker Values

X – in contrast to

Transcription of the interview	Initial coding	Focused coding
Can you please briefly describe your way to Quakerism?		
Okay. So, I started attending Meetings about probably about nine ten years ago. And I am still an attender.	what long attending Qs	
I was brought up in a faith-based community. I was brought up as Catholic.	religious background	religious background
And although there were many positive things that came from that, for various reasons,	(P) pros and cons of the CC	
I decided that I wasn't comfortable with everything there,	P attitude towards CC	reasons to join Q
with conformism	conformism in CC	
and I wanted to have a kind of spiritual experience in my life and recognize all the positive things that came from that.	need for spiritual experience	
I wanted to explore other faiths or ways to fulfill that need for spiritual experience.	exploring other faiths	way to Q
And I explored Buddhism	Buddhism	
and then eventually I came to Quakerism. And immediately when I came in,	Coming to Quakerism	
I just felt, I was very… I think the thing I noticed most was that they were non-judgmental,	P characteristics of Q	
and I really appreciated and valued the way that people were very honest and very open and frank and didn't mince their words. I quite liked that. And I just stuck with evidence.	P appreciation of Q qualities	appreciating on Q
So, and then I've gone along to find out more about it	exploring Q	
and there aren't any values within it that I disagree with, that I find challenging or so. So, I think that's how I see it.		QVs x PVs

You said you tried Buddhism and then you found Quakers. How did you find them?	QV corresponding to PV	
I looked. I think for me it is a fact that comes from a Christian tradition that resonates with me and is familiar to me.	Christian tradition	
With Buddhism it was a different language and different tradition and cultures and everything else.	x foreign tradition	
I liked Quakerism actually. There was something that I just felt more resonated more quickly and easily with me because it is in my language and it was familiar to me, I suppose.	P identification with Q	
You've already talked a little bit about values. Can you tell me more about them? What Quaker values do you value most and why?		
So, for me, the valuable, I find, that speaks to me most I think probably is the fact that		appreciating on Q
it's nonjudgmental	P characteristics of Q	QVs
and there is respect for everybody. And it doesn't matter who you are what everybody is valued for who they are.	non-judgmental respect valuing everybody	
And I like the pacifism. And yeah, I like many other things. Actually, I like the fact that it's very kind of an action based.	pacifism action based	
And just a small number of people have a huge impact on all sorts of things,	Q impact on society	Q impact on society
that they work closely with charities and projects and all sorts of influence that they extend beyond the Meeting.	charities	
I work in education,	Impact on society	professional background
and I work with children who have additional needs, very special needs.	P professional background working with CH with special needs	
And for me it's very much part of who I am, and what I do is valuing the everybody for who they are regardless of whatever challenges they have and however others in the society might see them and however disabled they are. Yeah, it's about recognizing that everybody has a place in society and that everybody has a right to be valued and respected and have a role to play and be the best they can be and do the best that they can do and also do it.	PVs unconditional acceptance of every individual valuing everybody	PVs
So, I think that influenced me very much and especially with that with the way that I wish the Children's Meeting as well.	importance of each individual influence of profession and PVs on work in CM	factors influencing work with CH in CM
And what about other Quaker values?		
I find the whole peace testimony very interesting and the whole kind of simplicity, environment all that stuff. Yeah absolutely. I love it. Everything that is really important to me and I'm really valuing that absolutely.	valuing all QT	QVs
Is there anything that bothers you about Quakerism?		
Well, I mean I don't know a lot about Quakerism outside of the UK.		
And I understand it is quite different in some other countries as well. And perhaps it's a little bit more conservative maybe or maybe a bit more traditional and more familiar to perhaps some of the other Christian traditions that perhaps I've moved away from because I thought they're a bit too dogmatic.	unfamiliarity with Q outside the UK diversity of Q (possible conservatism, dogmatism)	diversity of Q
And I miss music, I miss singing, it was very much part of		

my faith background. But then that's outweighed by some other lovely things. ***To what extent do you think it is important to share your values with the children you work with? And how do you do it?*** It's totally important. So, at the moment in our Meeting, I don't know if that in all the local Meetings, children are very small in number. And I only have my own children at the Meeting. When we first, when I used to first go, we had, there were a couple of children, there were five other children. They were, I mean, well about ten years older than my own children. So, when we first used to go there were other children but obviously, they've now moved on. So, there are only my two children. So, the values I share with very much are the values that I have. Yes, I teach them at my own children. They are now ten and twelve. And as they have grown up, I've begun to challenge them a bit more, make them think beyond their own circumstances, make them think about the environment or global conflict. It's something that's appropriate to their age really. But they are still very much, they're still quite young and they still like kind of very practical things. And I think probably because they're my children I think if there was somebody different, I think the dynamics would be a little bit different. So, I think I have to check carefully what I have to share. They really really love practical activity. And certainly, when they were younger that was the majority of what we would do and that's how I would approach it but it's always to make them aware of other people. And see beyond their own life circumstances. I think that's really important to recognize that they are very lucky and that they need to be considerate about this. That they are able to make a difference, that they have a voice, that they need to take action, that they can do things to make the world a better place. I suppose that's something that I'm very passionate about. And although I think sometimes you feel like a tiny drop you can actually make a huge impact just by being tiny little thing that's trying to get that message across to them as well. ***You said you do many practical things. Do you have an example?*** So, I don't know, at Christmas time for example we have, there's a community there we have a connection with as Quakers, it's a refugee center. So, they wanted some gifts for them but like educational gifts. So, we brought them some things like that. And we've made them biscuits and sweets. They absolutely loved that; they told me it was their favorite thing. One of the friends asked them, he involved them in how	missing music number of CH own CH development of the number of CH in CM age of CH reasons of the actual situation in CM actual number of CH sharing values consideration of age challenging CH bringing new topics to CH consideration of CH's age practical things factors influencing the dynamics of CM role mother + leader of CM love for practical activities consideration of CH's age P intention leading CH beyond their immediate interests letting CH know they can change things P conviction huge impact of each individual cooperation with a refugee centre preparing gifts for refugees	music in QM problems of CM problems of CM CH's age problems of CM sharing values age-appropriate approach approach to CH practical things factors influencing the dynamics of CM personality of CM's leader CH's interests CH's age intention of CM's leader / teaching content intention of CM's leader / teaching content teaching content examples of activities CH's reactions on activities

they want to do special themed Meeting and what they could do. And they really loved that. They made a special cake; it's got layers of soil with worms and different things. And then they decorated the whole Meeting house with like ivy, and it was very lovely. And it's about realizing the preciousness and just celebrating it and understanding. You know that kind of passage of the seasons. Yeah, I think some of other things that we've done. Yeah sometimes, I mean as they're getting older, we made, we sown some white poppies, but they stitched them for themselves, and they quite enjoyed that moment that seemed to be lighting up. They like food (laugh), so sometimes after our program, there remain 15 minutes, so we go to the shop and buy coffee and biscuits and offer them in the hall of the Meeting house. ***In your opinion how important is it that the children feel to be a part of their Meeting, to belong to the Meeting?*** I think it's absolutely important. I think what's hard is that they are my own children. I know that everybody loves having them there. My experience as I was growing up and this is partly one of the reasons why I want to have my children there, I was a part of Catholic Youth Service and from a very young age I used to get to children's liturgy during Catholic mass and so I was always surrounded by the children. And we had a lot of fun and we felt very much part of it. And I think what's difficult is because they are the own. And I think if there were more children it would be a very different theme. I think everything they've told me that they love doing most is actually when the other friend even if the adults take the time to make them feel included. So that's why they love the ends of Meeting. I think it's vital, but I think it's beneficial for everybody because a lot of a lot of the members are quite elderly. I know when I first went and there were quite a few more children I think some of them were a little bit restless and I think there were one or two comments from one or two members about being quiet and they need to sit still and notices about these things. But that's not the case anymore, I would say. But then when they are old enough now, we don't hear these notices, I think people make us feel included. But I would love to have more children there. ***If there were other children what would be your motivation to work with other children in the Children's Meeting? Would you work with these children as well?*** Yeah, absolutely yeah. I mean. I mean it doesn't matter whether it's mine or somebody else because I am with children all day long. And, yeah, totally committed to enabling and making those children thrive and be contributing to everything as much as they can and yeah, yeah absolutely. And whether or not it is in Quaker Meeting whether it's my job or not.	CH's enthusiasm from the event Joint Christmas Meeting involvement of CH in the preparation aims of activities sewing white poppies enjoyment preparing snacks for As own CH A's attitude towards CH P experience reason to bring CH to QM feeling of belonging reasons of feeling of belonging own CH factors influencing CM's dynamics CH's desire for As's attention reciprocal enrichment CH's behaviour in QM As' reactions to CH in QM age of CH feeling of belonging number of CH motivation to work with CH	examples of activities involvement of CH aims of activities examples of activities CH's reactions on activities examples of activities A's attitude towards CH Reasons to bring CH to QM feeling of belonging factors influencing CM's dynamics CH's attitude towards As reciprocity CH's behaviour in QM As' reactions to CH in QM age of CH feeling of belonging factors influencing CM's dynamics motivation to work with CH factors influencing A's teaching approach involving CH

I believe in them. And I guess, I mean that the future generation is, everything is a kind of all the issues that are kind of and the concerns, I mean unless you educate them and tell them about how to look after the environment, for example we're going to be in 20 years' time. So, all of that kind of stuff. I mean they would surprise me, the young people. They're just so amazing and I think, they're up against so many things and there's so many distractions and then. And it's a very materialistic site that we live in. And yet they still, I don't know, seem to have some real really amazing insights and some really valuable contribution to make, so yeah, I don't really know. ***So, you can learn from from them as well?*** Definitely, yeah, definitely. ***And how important do you think it is to let the children think through for themselves?*** So yeah, it's a big kind of governing. I mean ultimately that's what you want for them. And I think it's just supporting them and holding them to get to that point really. Yeah. And just become more self-sufficient and to learn all those skills and that understanding and. Ultimately, they will be what they will be, and they are who they are. And you just try and do your best and give them as much grounding and as much nurturing and love and security and guidance as you possibly can. And you just hope that they make the right choices in life and do something with it and be those people that will make a difference in the future I think and have an influence and impact on everybody else, I think. ***So how would you define your role in Children's Meeting?*** A facilitator, I suppose maybe. A guide. Yeah, I've learned a lot through just my experience in education anyway. And the children that I work with are so extreme. If you tried to tell them, if you tried to pigeonhole them or tried to kind of just have one approach, you wouldn't know, you would even get off the starting block. It would be pointless. So yeah, I'm very used to kind of looking out what motivates the child and what interests them what makes them tick and work with them. And kind of appeal to their own natural kind of like a capability model is and what's their natural kind of ability. And then go with that obviously, with their guidance and with hopefully kind of similar what I want to do. I don't know. ***Now let's talk a little bit about the structure of your Children's Meeting. I know that in your case it is a rather extreme situation but tell me what the organization of the Children's Meeting is.*** Yeah. So, we didn't have a structured programme. We stay for 10 minutes in the Main Meeting, often even 15. And then they go out and during that time there are books and I try and give them something to focus on. So sometimes there is a subject that we talk about when we come out. So, it might be on the way there I would say okay, calm down now what we will	professional background involving CH in actions belief in CH need to talk to CH about current issues CH's qualities distractions materialism CH's insights CH as a source of enrichment for As intention teaching approach aim of education approach to CH hope that CH will make use of what A have tried to pass on to them facilitator guide influenced by own profession approach to CH with special needs approach to working with CH reacting on CH's capability CH's guidance balance between CH's and A's wishes	belief in CH intention of CM's leader / teaching content CH's qualities factors influencing CH's thinking CH as a source of enrichment for As bringing CH to think through for themselves teaching approaches aims of education approach to CH teaching approaches A's role A's role factors influencing A's teaching approach reciprocity structure of CM CH in MM

begin to think about today. And then sometimes when we come out there will be something that's related to their personal experience so for example, they've had a great moment recently in the family, it might be something that as a topical issue that has come up that they've learned about at school. And sometimes I come out from the Meeting and oh and there's sometimes something that comes into my mind and sometimes some of these books we take them out. Recently for example, they are now in the age when they keep arguing with each other and so there was those books about all that conflict resolution and stuff. So, we kept that, and we read a little bit about it and talk about this. Yeah, it's very, it's quite loose. And sometimes, it's not what way the wind blows depending on what's happened. I think it would be more structured if there were more children there and there might be some things, I have to kind of go with me with what they say. So, I normally try and think of something that we're going to focus on. This is okay. For example, I've got this Greenpeace catalog I'm going to talk about it, and maybe do quiz or whatever. ***And at the end, you go back to the Main Meeting?*** We used to, we used to at the end we still came back and hold hands at the end, but we stopped doing that. And I think some people felt a bit uncomfortable with it, so they then started to come back and shaking hands. And the last few occasions we haven't done that. And I think it's mainly because, not because it is just, I don't know for some reason we just not managed to do our timings no other reason really. But also, we would then not stay for notices. Yes, it does mean I don't know what's going on but my time is limited anyway so it's the best I could do really and my focus is probably pretty much actually at the moment it's with them and nurturing them and trying to encourage them and when they're get older, I'll be able to focus more on the Meeting myself and get more involved in other ways, I suppose. Yeah. ***And are there other people that are willing to work with your children, or you are the only one?*** There's another parent who come back quite a lot but her children don't come anymore. But they do know her very well. So, when there were more children, all parents tended to come out together. And so, they were often about three or four of us. And it's probably more structured now. I probably have a bit more structured now than then. It was very very loose. It was just about playing together and letting those friendships. Which is nice. But yes, for me I suppose the kind of Children's Meetings I'm used to when I grew up were much more structured. So, for me it was a bit weird but then,	structure of CM time in MM focusing CH's attention during MM themes responding to CH's experiences (topic choices) spontaneous ideas example of activity spontaneity in deciding what to do structure of CM depending on number of CH reaction on CH's suggestions P intentions example of activity past end of Meeting with As A's reactions on CH stopping to go to MM because of timing finding a balance between own needs and the needs of CH another parent past more CH, more parents together	 teaching content teaching content example of activities preparation of the sessions factors influencing structure of CM reciprocity leader's intention examples of activities structure of CM A's reactions on CH structure of CM factors influencing structure of CM A's in CM structure of CM structure of CM teaching content

I didn't feel it was my place to suddenly come in and change everything. So yeah, so I suppose it's probably a little bit different now. But yeah. So, she comes out and she she'll do, she'll just go along with whatever we're doing and sometimes she might say okay well, we we're going to do Christmas cards or whatever you say. And yeah. There was an older guy there as well who said that he would like to teach them Esperanto, so we did that for a bit, but I haven't had time to keep that up. And then there's this other friend who also has been doing all that kind of stuff with them. So, he used to come in and out periodically as well. So, they do come in and they do get involved. There has been talk as well of setting up a more formal group but then it hasn't really come to anything. You know, allowing me to stay in the Meeting other people have to come out and stay with them. Yeah, that's been kind of talk about this before a year but never actually came to anything. Yeah. I don't know why. ***We are at the end of the interview. Is there anything else, you would like to add?*** I suppose, I would be interested in your situation.	now more structured past – very loose free play friendships P experience from own childhood not feeling competent to change the situation now CM according to P conviction occasional help from another A one-time activity another helper potential CM's committee P situation – leader of CM + parent support from the QM	factors influencing structure of CM leader's competencies factors influencing structure and content of CM A's in CM content A's in CM organisation of CM personality of CM's leader QM's attitude towards CM