SIGHTING, CITING AND SITING TE WHAARIKI:

EXPLORING THE USE OF VIDEO FEEDBACK AS A TOOL FOR CRITICAL PEDAGOGY:

The experiences of five early childhood centres

by

Margaret Ann Haggerty

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ABSTRACT

The official draft of the first national curriculum guidelines for early childhood services in Aotearoa/ New Zealand : *Te Whaariki: Draft Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Programmes in Early Childhood Services: He Whaariki Matauranga mo nga Mokopuna o Aotearoa*, was released at the end of October 1993. This document was the culmination of a curriculum development project that commenced in 1990, when the Ministry of Education sought contract proposals for the development of the first ever national early childhood curriculum guidelines.

In 1995 the Ministry of Education trialled nine different curriculum professional support projects, aimed at assisting early childhood centres to use the newly developed draft guidelines. This study reports on one of the curriculum professional support projects, which the Ministry of Education commissioned from Wellington College of Education.

The project which this study is based on, was grounded in an action research approach to professional support. Its core focus was the use of video feedback as a tool for critical pedagogy. It involved five case study centres: a playcentre, a kindergarten, a Montessori centre, an owner-operator childcare centre and an employee childcare facility. The project comprised a minimum of twenty one 'face to face' hours per centre, made up of eight sessions, spread over an nine month period. Video observations of each centre's curriculum 'in action', which constituted two of the sessions, were examined by the practitioners of the centre concerned, and considered in relation to *Te Whaariki*. Data involved interviews, journals and observations, including video.

The study found that using video as feedback for the purposes of curriculum and professional development, within the context of action research, was an essentially useful, albeit complex, and quite highly contextualised undertaking. Many participants did use video feedback to help them engage with *Te Whaariki*, although in a number of cases

the complexity of the curriculum model proved problematic. Participants used the video feedback in a range of ways to resource the development of curriculum within their centres. For a number of participants video feedback was instrumental in them taking a more reflective and critical stance toward their worplace practices. Key themes to emerge included the potential affective impact of using video feedback in examining one's own workplace practices, and the importance and complexities of the dynamics of power, both within the workplace and within the research project itself. Finally, the study raised a number of ethical issues related to the use of video in professional and curriculum development.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study explores the use of video as feedback in an action research project, aimed at assisting practitioners in five Wellington early childhood centres to work with the early childhood draft curriculum guidelines: *Te Whaariki, Draft Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Programmes in Early Childhood Services: He Whaariki Matauranga mo nga Mokopuna o Aotearoa*, (Ministry of Education, 1993a). This chapter backgrounds the events leading up to the study.

This introductory chapter overviews developments concerning *Te Whaariki* (Ministry of Education, 1993a, 1996a) and shows how the current study is linked to these developments. The second part of the chapter concentrates on the study itself, including the influences that shaped it, personal as well as theoretical. The study's commitment to action research and the intention behind the use of video as feedback is elaborated on. The concluding section provides an outline of how the remaining chapters of the study are organised.

Te Whaariki : the context for this study

The *Te Whaariki* development project was seeded in 1990 when the Ministry of Education let a contract for the development of the first national early childhood curriculum guidelines. Margaret Carr and

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Helen May from the Deparment of Early Childhood Studies, Waikato University won the contract, with a proposal which argued for multiple curricular blueprints and a bicultural approach to the development and content of the guidelines (Carr and May, 1993a, p128). Development work on the guidelines got under way in August 1991 (May, 1992a, p94) and fifteen months later, in November 1992, the draft was presented to the Ministry of Education for approval.

For the whole of the next year the document became enmeshed in what Carr and May (1993d) refer to as "political and editorial processes" within the Ministry of Education (p1). At the end of October 1993, the official draft was released and a period of trialling began.

The first 'leg' of the Ministry of Education's *Te Whaariki* trial, from October 1993 through to August 1994, was in three parts. Firstly, individual response sheets accompanying the draft guidelines were sent out to all chartered early childhood centres and other interested individuals and groups. A postal survey of 436 randomly selected early childhood centres was also undertaken, along with two case study research projects, each involving five early childhood centres: one in Dunedin and one in Wellington. Pat Hubbard and I were the contract researchers for the Wellington case study *Te Whaariki* trial (Haggerty and Hubbard, 1994).

The second 'leg' of the trialling, in 1995, consisted of nine pilot professional support programmes. The findings from these pilot

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programmes were intended to both feed into the Ministry's revision of *Te Whaariki* and assist with planning future professional development work associated with the national guidelines. The current study is based on a video-focus project, which was one of the Wellington College of Education programme pilots, commissioned by the Ministry of Education.

Field work for the video-focus project commenced in March 1995 and finished in February 1996, when participants were circulated with the draft of the project findings. In March 1996, an interim report on work undertaken in the video-focus project was submitted to the Ministry of Education : *Using Video to Work with Te Whaariki : The Experiences of Five Early Childhood Centres* (Haggerty 1996).

The current study builds on the interim report to the Ministry of Education, by placing the experiences of participants in the video-focus project within the broader context of curriculum discourse and alongside recent developments concerning *Te Whaariki*, in particular its publication in final form, in June 1996 (Ministry of Education, 1996a). The study discusses the potential of video as a tool for critical pedagogy, in light of recent post-structuralist challenges to critical educators, together with some of the ethical issues associated with the use of video as feedback within professional and curriculum development.

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Although the second 'leg' of the *Te Whaariki* trial provided the opportunity for the video-focus project, such a 'coalescing' would not have occurred had not the curriculum approach of *Te Whaariki* and the video-focus project's interest in critical pedagogy seemed sufficiently congruent. As Fullam (1987) noted in his keynote address to the Australian Curriculum Studies Asssociation Conference, there needs to be compatibility between a theory of change and the theory implicit in the innovation itself (cited in McTaggart, 1991, p36).

The current study : personal and theoretical influences

Valerie Walkerdine (1996) talks about the life "trajectories which implicitly or explicitly fuel our research" (p97). My personal "trajectory" includes my own teacher training in primary and in early childhood, several years experience as a childcare practitioner, tutoring in developmental psychology in a university setting, periods of involvement in research projects focussing on early childhood curriculum practice and my ongoing work in the College of Education in early childhood pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes. My experiences as a parent and a parent-user of early childhood services have also been significant.

Two aspects of this personal 'trajectory' have a particular bearing on the current study. The first concerns my frustration with a technicist view of teaching and learning which presents teaching as mere technical proficiency, a simple matter of putting theory into practice.

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My view is that teaching requires critical, reflective judgement, rather than mere technical proficiency and that in terms of the theory - practice relationship, practice needs to 'inform' theory, not just theory inform practice. My interest in video is thus grounded in the notion of bringing theory and practice together in a way that facilitates critically reflective practice.

The second personal catalyst for the current study, was my acute awareness of the marginalised position early childhood has traditionally inhabited. This marginalisation has been particularly true in the area of curriculum discourse and perhaps even more so in the field of critical education. *Te Whaariki* itself has been a source of inspiration in this regard, not only because of the strengthening it has offered the hitherto underepresented early childhood perspective, but because putting the early childhood voice out into such arena, is a way of helping to facilitate much needed discussion, action and critique. This study is about attempting to progress such a tradition.

Using video as feedback within action research

Action research seemed an obvious choice of methodology for the video-focus project, because of its potential to bring together the study's focus on facilitating a dialectical relationship between theory and practice, its interest in exploring the potential of video for critical pedagogy and its aim of strengthening the early childhood voice in curriculum discourse.

The study used video observations of centre practice, i.e. of curriculum 'in action', to look at how video feedback could contribute to the action research process. The phases of the action research model are usually described as in Figure 1. overleaf as a spiral of cycles of fact-finding/ observing, analysing/ reflecting, planning and acting:

Figure 1.

The Action Research Spiral
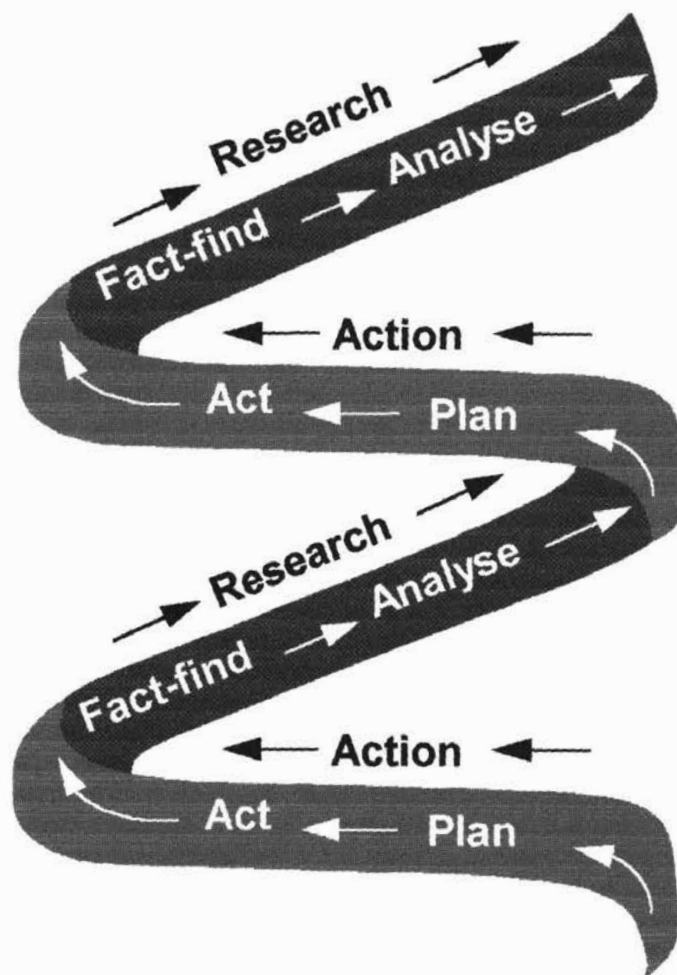
Adapted from Tripp (1990). "Socially Critical Action Research". *Theory into Practice*. 29 (3)p159

My previous experience of videoing curriculum practice (Meade, Haggerty, Bruce, 1992; Haggerty and Hubbard, 1994) suggested to me that video had the potential to make a useful contribution to the action research process through helping to resource the fact-finding/observing, analysing/ reflecting phases of the cycle.

Grundy (1987) talks about the observation phase of the action research cycle serving to preserve elements of the moment of action for later reflection, as opposed to having the practitioner trying to assess these elements as they are occurring. She suggests that in the process of deferring the moment of action, you are in a sense transforming it into a 'text', that is then available for critique (p158). In the video-focus project it was intended that video would create the 'text' of practice and that this would then be looked at alongside the 'text' of *Te Whaariki*, with the aim of facilitating a more critical 'reading' of each.

The term 'sighting' *Te Whaariki*, in the title of this study can thus be seen to refer to the process of practitioners 'sighting', critically examining and comparing and contrasting their video 'texts' of curriculum practice in relation to the theoretical text, *Te Whaariki*. The title's reference to 'citing' *Te Whaariki* concerns the notion of a practitioner's 'working' theory coming to be informed by (i.e. making reference to or 'citing') *Te Whaariki*, such that the practitioner's working theory, in turn, both 'informs' and is 'informed by', curriculum

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practice. Figure 2. describes this dialectical relationship between theory and practice, which the video-focus project sought to establish.

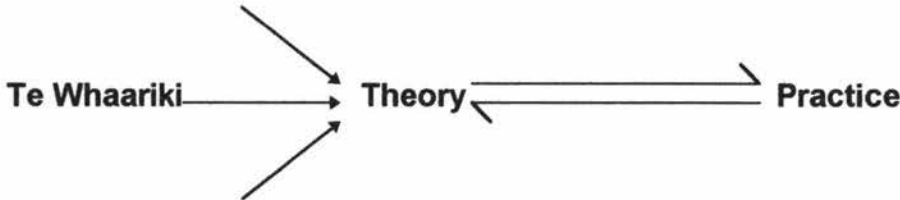Figure 2.

The Theory - Practice Dialectic

Te Whaariki ⟶ Theory ⇌ Practice

Figure 2. is also of help in understanding the title's reference to 'siting' Te Whaariki. In essence the notion of 'siting' *Te Whaariki* denotes the need to appreciate *Te Whaariki* as the product of a particular socio-cultural context and as taking a particular theoretical position, a position to be understood and critiqued by comparing and contrasting it with others in the curriculum field, including the practitioners' own.

This thesis comprises eight chapters. Chapter two continues the focus on *Te Whaariki*, with a discussion about the key contextual influences which helped shape both the draft and final version of the guidelines. Chapter three overviews developments in the wider curriculum

discourse and discusses the location of *Te Whaariki* in relation to these developments. Chapter four focuses on action research and chapter five on the use of video. Chapter six further details the study methodology, while chapters seven and eight present the discussion and summary of findings respectively. The substantive reviews in chapters two, three, four and five are to be seen as an integral part of the action research process of the study, in terms of my efforts to theorise the participants' experiences (my own included) of the video-focus project.

CHAPTER TWO

TE WHAARIKI

This chapter backgrounds the development of the draft early childhood curriculum guidelines *Te Whaariki* (1993) and its successor *Te Whaariki* (1996), the final version. It sketches the complex political web in which *Te Whaariki* was, and continues to be, a part. It considers key influences and issues at various stages of the guidelines development, and looks at some of the defining features of *Te Whaariki* and how these defining features emerged. This discussion draws extensively on the *Te Whaariki: Curriculum Papers*, a collection said by Margaret Carr and Helen May (1993f), the curriculum project co-ordinators, to "form the theoretical underpinnings of *Te Whaariki* " (Intro).

To overview the political origins of the guidelines I look at the *Before Five* (1988) policies of the Fourth Labour Government, which provided the original mandate for the development of early childhood curriculum guidelines, then turn to more recent developments occurring during the National Government's last two terms of office (1990-1996) and the term of the current National-New Zealand First coalition.

I argue that the *Te Whaariki* project embodied traditions and ideologies, which in a number of key respects, followed in the footsteps of *Before Five*. A number of key characteristics common to

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both the charter model contained in *Before Five* and the *Te Whaariki* curriculum development model are looked at.

In light of the number of similarities and interconnections there are between the *Before Five* charter model and the *Te Whaariki* curriculum models, recent developments involving charters warrant careful consideration. In particular I refer to the way in which during its implementation, the original *Before Five* charter model, was, in the words of its chief architect, Anne Meade (1995) "transformed from a developmental model to a control model" (p7). What does this augur for the national curriculum guidelines? My own view is that Ministry of Education changes contained in the final version of *Te Whaariki*, mirror this shift toward a more prescriptive approach. This chapter looks at final-version changes of a more prescriptive nature, which have occurred in the area of assessment.

Te Whaariki : policy origins : *Before Five*

The *Before Five* policies, which provided the original mandate for the development of national curriculum guidelines for the early childhood sector, were in the main based on the recommendations of the Meade Report (1988) *Education To Be More*. National curriculum guidelines, charters and upgraded regulations governing minimum standards, were to serve as the three interlinking mechanisms of what Meade (1991) termed a "quality assurance" model (p59). Although this chapter is primarily concerned with the first two components of

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Meade's proposed 'triumvirate', that is with national curriculum guidelines and charters, recent changes proposed to the regulations governing minimum standards, that is to the 1991 Statement of Desirable Principles and Practices (DOPs), will be looked at briefly in the concluding section of the chapter (Ministry of Education, 1991b, 1996b).

Key aspects of Carr and May's view of national curriculum guidelines and how these were to fit in the larger scheme of things, were derived from the 1988 Meade Report (Carr and May, 1991, p11), the antecedent of *Before Five*. Having had a peripheral involvement in the events of *Before Five*, I am aware that Helen May herself chaired the key *Before Five* working party whose brief was national curriculum guidelines, charters and minimum standards: Meade's three interconnecting elements of quality assurance.

Looked at from a national perspective, *Before Five* could be described as the early childhood education component of comprehensive state sector restructuring, which was instigated by the Fourth Labour Government. As a number of observers have noted (e.g. Boston, Martin and Walsh 1990, McKinlay, 1990), there was a consistent pattern to much of the New Zealand restructuring. So, for example, in the *Before Five* model, as in education and state sector restructuring elsewhere, charters featured as a key mechanism of accountability. Martin (1990) identified charters as the "lynch pin" of the new system (p283), and as McKinlay (1990) noted, "the same model appears to

have been applied right across all major government funded or owned activities" (p220).

Other observers looking at the New Zealand restructuring from an international perspective, site it as part of a global phenomenon also evidenced in the UK (Denemark, 1990; Lauder,1991; Lawton, 1991), Sweden (Carlgren, 1995; Denemark, 1990; Lauder, 1991) and in parts of Australia, the US and Canada (Lawton, 1991). Meade (1995) described the movement as part of a Western trend toward retreating from Welfare state provision (p6). In similar vein numerous other commentators have highlighted the economic basis of the movement (e.g. Lauder, 1991; Denemark,1990; Ladwig, 1995) and have described it in terms of a succession of countries introducing greater or lesser approximations of a market model to education .

Meade notes that while the administrative system was the focus for the New Zealand restructuring of the late 1980s, "other countries had curriculum and assessment changes as well" (p93). In New Zealand this did not get fully underway until the National Government came to office at the end of 1990, but under the new government the influence of overseas market models continued, if not strengthened, with most observers describing National's agenda of curriculum and assessment reform as characterised by the predominance of an economic rather than educational rationale (Elley, 1993; Codd, 1996; Lee and Hill, 1996; O'Neill, 1996; Peters and Marshall, 1996; Snook, 1996).

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Before Five may well have reflected certain national and international patterns of the time, but Meade (1995) suggests that there were key aspects of *Before Five* that ran counter to the overall trend of the restructuring. Whereas the bulk of the 'reforms' involved a pulling back from universal state provision, there were some areas in which *Before Five* represented an expansion of state involvement (p6). Meade attributes this somewhat remarkable expansion "in large measure, [to]...enough people coming together to speak with one voice for the sector" (p2). As Meade explains, "while the [Before Five] working group needed to work within its terms of reference, many of the answers to the questions had already been formulated in preceding discussions amongst providers, unions, teacher educators and scholars..."(p4).

Thus in some respects, the *Before Five* policies can also be said to be 'of' the sector, the culmination of a decade of increasing dialogue and collaboration between the different early childhood organisations, supported by the Department of Education[1], across a range of areas, which included curriculum. Carr and May (1993d) highlight the significant role played by a series of national in-service courses held at Lopdell House during the 1980s, in progressing the agenda of national early childhood curriculum guidelines (p146).

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[1] In the 1990 restructuring the Department of Education became the Ministry of Education

In the main *Before Five* policies kept faith with what those in the field were seeking, and utilised and built on work that had already been undertaken. The policies and implementation plans were arrived at through a process of considerable sector involvement. *Before Five* thus embodied a tradition that the *Te Whaariki* curriculum development project would later follow, if not outdo. Meade (1995) referred to the development process of the *Te Whaariki* project as "the most powerful example [of an] open and collaborative approach..."(p9). Tina Bruce (1996), a UK educator who has written extensively about early childhood, also saw the major input of early childhood expertise which *Te Whaariki* represented, as one of its defining features (p11).

A change of Government : a change in direction

The National Government came to office at the end of 1990, promising to continue the education reforms the Labour Government had commenced (Carr and May, 1993a, p128), but within weeks the early childhood sector was to note signs of a turnaround. In the event, many of the gains made in *Before Five* were subsequently lost or stalled. The process has been well documented (Meade & Dalli, 1991; Meade 1991, 1992, 1994, 1995; May, 1992b; Dalli, 1993; Farquhar, 1993; Smith, 1993). Against this backdrop of retrenchment, the development of early childhood curriculum guidelines was allowed to proceed and was subsequently hailed as "the one major positive policy change of the 1990s" (Meade, 1995, p7).

Carr and May (1993a) viewed what Meade (1995) termed the "unravelling of the comprehensiveness and coherence of the [Before Five] policy" (p7), as critical, arguing that the demise of key aspects of the *Before Five* policies constituted a real threat to *Te Whaariki's* viability:

> *Te Whaariki* takes a holistic approach to curriculum which can only be sustained if the separate parts of the *Before Five* policies also remain connected, ie funding, quality staffing ratios, regulatory enforcement, quality training, advisory services, professional development, accountability and evaluation. The role of Government is to ensure these parts do not move further out of alignment so that the curriculum can be implemented in practice (Carr and May, 1993a, p128).

This view is consistent with Carr and May's (1993a) "ecological" view of curriculum, such that government changes eg altering staffing ratios, are seen as creating a "ripple effect [which] has a direct influence on curriculum" (p129). Thus Carr and May's view, like Meade's (1991, p56), drew on the work of Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) in highlighting the connection between socio-cultural context and children's development.

A guiding principle : challenging the care/education duality

Meade (1995) says that the over-arching principle guiding *Education to Be More* (1988), was "to maintain the integration of education and care, while preserving the diversity of services" (p4). Not only does this over-arching principle identify what were the key issues for the *Before*

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Five charter framework, but in my view, these were the same two sets of issues which played a pivotal role in the development of the *Te Whaariki* framework.

The care/education debate can be viewed as part of a wider debate as to the place of early childhood within mainstream curriculum discourse. Looked at another way, the care/education debate can be seen as part of the ongoing debate about the nature of curriculum.

In proposing a curriculum which integrated care and education, *Te Whaariki* was taking a position counter to a traditional view of curriculum. From a traditional viewpoint the domain of curriculum was seen to be education and by implication anything 'other than' education fell outside the parameters of curriculum. Hence the historical construction of a care/education dichotomy, which argued care as distinct from education was something that had helped to preclude the early childhood sector from mainstream curriculum discourse.

The notion of early childhood traditionally being positioned on, or outside, the margins of mainstream curriculum discourse, is supported by Meade's (1995) observation that "the education field is most focussed on school children" (p13). Likewise, when Elizabeth Smith (1994), a UK early childhood educator, positions early childhood in relation to the popular view of curriculum, she makes the point that early childhood just doesn't quite 'make it' into the curriculum arena:

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For many people, the term curriculum may seem more relevant to the junior or secondary years, with a set timetable, different subjects and a clearly defined body of knowledge to be imparted at different ages within a school context. The notion of a curriculum for the under-fives, and particularly for under threes, has been more elusive (p80).

I would suggest that it is not only mainstream curriculum discourse which has had difficulty with the notion of incorporating early childhood, but that early childhood discourse itself, has had its own difficulties with the term curriculum. For example, in a rich and extensive early childhood literature about concerns of quality, the term curriculum, up until relatively recently, only entered the discourse infrequently. And so, for example, in a substantive study such as Farquhar's (1993) *Constructions of Quality in Early Childhood Centres*, the term "programme" is consistently used in preference. The term curriculum appears only twice in one hundred and sixty plus pages and only then in the context of quoted references. I am not suggesting that Farquhar herself has any particular discomfort with the term curriculum, but rather that this piece of work is indicative of the terminology 'in use' within the early childhood sector.

The view that the early childhood sector has traditionally had difficulty with the concept of curriculum is supported by Cullen (1996), who suggests that, "the concept of curriculum has long been viewed with suspicion by early childhood educators who have tended to equate

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curriculum with a subject-based approach more typical of primary or secondary education" (p114).

In similar vein, an American study involving kindergarten and first and second grade teachers reported a considerable degree of antipathy toward the term curriculum. Walsh, Smith, Alexander and Ellwein, (1993) stated, "we have found that the very word 'curriculum' makes teachers of young children very wary ... the teachers ... adamantly resisted using the word curriculum" (p329).

One significant aspect of the care/education duality, of what Meade (1995) has referred to as the "wall" dividing care and education (p3), is the way the 'wall' has impacted differentially on different early childhood services. So, for example, childcare services whose focus on care was so clearly part of their identity, were as Anne Smith (1990) put it, "on the margins of an already marginal entity" (p14). At a governmental level, for example, it was not until 1986 that childcare services were transferred from the Department of Social Welfare to the Department of Education. Smith (1990) argues that the impact of the demarcations was such that, "even within...[the] early childhood service there is a hierarchy of status" (p14).

One could well add to this, that the early childhood services traditionally perceived as furthest removed from curriculum discourse, have been services catering for the youngest children i.e. infants and/or toddlers. As Elizabeth Smith's (1994, p80) comments earlier

have already foreshadowed, curriculum for the 'under-threes' has been a particular sticking point. An illustration of this can be seen in the American *Guidelines for Appropriate Curriculum Content and Assessment in Programs Serving Children Ages 3 through 8,* a joint position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Early Childhood Education Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAEYC/SDE) (Bredekamp and Rosegrant, 1992). This document refers to work yet to be undertaken on "tackling the interesting question of 'curriculum' for infants and toddlers" (p8). In my view it is significant both that the word curriculum is enclosed in inverted commas here, and that the title of the earlier NAEYC position statement covering children from birth, referred to "programs" as distinct from curriculum (Bredekamp, 1987).

As Anne Smith (1996) observes, "to have an early childhood curriculum at all is unusual in the international early childhood arena" (p86). As far as covering infants and toddlers was concerned, *Te Whaariki* was initially thought to be the first national curriculum statement to achieve this (Meade, 1994, p10), but in fact Norway was also developing a national curriculum framework covering infants and toddlers simultaneously to New Zealand (The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, 1996). Regardless, it is particularly significant that the project strategy for *Te Whaariki* was, "to work on the details of the infant and toddler curriculum first, and make sure that the parameters set by infant/toddler material set a path for the older children" (Carr, 1993, p119). This was seen as helping to prevent the possibility of the

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early childhood curriculum becoming a 'watered down' version of school curriculum.

The *Te Whaariki* development project was very committed to protecting early childhood's child-centred tradition. Its view of curriculum was holistic. It was a view that acknowledged care and education, learning and development, as inextricably linked. Carr and May (1993e) did not just articulate concerns about providing a strong protective curriculum framework for early childhood services, but saw this early childhood view of curriculum as having much to offer the school sector and referred to *Te Whaariki* as "poised to inform the school curriculum" (p179).

Diversity

At the time the *Te Whaariki* development project got under way, the approximately 3000 centres in Aotearoa New Zealand reflected over 20 different types of early childhood service (Carr, 1993, p119) and the message from the sector, as for example from the Early Childhood Convention in September 1991, was that the valued diversity of services was to be protected (Meade, 1991).

The notion of a model for early childhood that would enable the diversity "that is a strength and characteristic of early childhood programmes" (Carr and May, 1993a, p127) and provide for "different blueprints" (p128), was a driving vision for Carr and May, just as it was

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for Meade (1991, p59). Carr and May (1993d) argued for "the possibility of multiple curricula in a common framework" (p146), a notion that is picked up in the title metaphor *Te Whaariki*, a woven mat, curriculum as weaving. The metaphor illustrates how diversity is integral to the model:

the Guidelines provide framework and guiding threads (Principles, Aims and Goals) and examples of how these might be interpreted. But each centre and each programme will weave their own curriculum mat, and create their own patterns from features and contexts unique to them, their children, and their community (Carr and May, 1993d, p152).

Hence *Te Whaariki* is based on a view of curriculum as an interactive social construct, changing according to the different social and cultural context in which it is embedded.

The *Te Whaariki* development project's commitment to meeting the challenge of enabling diversity was also strongly reflected in the curriculum development process. As project coordinators, Carr and May brought together a fifteen-member core Curriculum Development Team made up of early childhood practitioners from the sector's various services i.e. "with backgrounds from or current practice in state kindergartens, Playcentres, community child care, Kohanga Reo, Pacific Island Language Groups and Home-based programmes" (Carr,1993, p119).

The curriculum development team subdivided into six "working groups": two central working groups, "the infant and toddler" and "the young child"; and four "specialist" working groups, (i) Maori Immersion, (ii) Curricula for Pacific Island Children, (iii) Children with Special Needs and (iv) Home-based Programmes. Each specialist working group comprised a coordinator, who was a member of the core development team, and three or four other members recruited from the specialist group's constituent community. Hence as Carr and May (1993e) claim, "the idea of multiple curricula within a common framework was implicit in the structure of the core Development Team" (p172).

The project team also included a large advisory committee representing key interest groups, and 'last but not least', in terms of drawing on sector input, were "the numerous hui with practitioners held around the country and the trialling...in a range of centres and services" (Carr and May 1993d, p4). Hence according to Carr and May: "it [Te Whaariki] reflects the diversity of early childhood care and education in Aotearoa-New Zealand and it comes from the practitioners" (p4).

The above is to be contrasted with the degree of consultation enjoyed by the school sector on the draft of *The National Curriculum of New Zealand* (Ministry of Education, 1991a). Lee and Hill (1996) argue that despite Ministerial protestations to the contrary, consultation on this document was little more than a charade. In similar vein, Elley (1993)

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talks about "tight time frames" for the consultation on the draft discussion documents for the different subject areas, which resulted in "very few teachers [being] involved [and] few trials [being] undertaken in schools" (p38).

Te Whaariki : starting with a bicultural framework

In terms of the charter framework, Meade (1991) regarded Kohanga Reo as epitomising the need for there to be different blueprints. Carr and May's (1993e) proposal for the development of national guidelines took this a step further, arguing for "multiple curricula blueprints and in particular a bicultural approach to its development and content" (p172). Carr and May (1993c) later observed that, "as it turned out, consideration of social and cultural context was a major source for the model chosen" (p149), in part an acknowledgement of the particular and extensive influence of the Maori voice on the shape of the curriculum framework.

Meade (1995) described the *Te Whaariki* development process as one which "start[ed] with Maori formulating the basics for Te Kohanga Reo and other programmes, *prior to* the rest of the guidelines being developed"(p7). Not only did *Te Whaariki* contain a Maori version which was developed by Maori, but the Maori version, rather than being a separate 'add on' or an 'after the fact' translation was enormously influential in the overall framework.

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According to Carr and May (1993e), it was at the initial four-day meeting of the curriculum development team, in 1991, that a framework of Principles and Aims was developed (p172). It was a framework which Carr and May (1993c) describe as, "strongly advocated by the Maori negotiators" (p149), a framework which as Carr and May (1993e) observe, "in the event...guided the entire later curriculum development process" (p172). The framework comprised, in the first instance, four Principles:

(i) the early childhood curriculum should empower the child to learn and grow

(ii) the early childhood curriculum should reflect the holistic way children learn and grow

(iii) the wider world of family whanau and community is an integral part of the early childhood curriculum

(iv) children learn through responsive reciprocal relationships with people places and things

The principles were accompanied by a dual set of parallel Aims, which Carr and May (1993e) describe as having provided the "important breakthrough in attaining the framework for a bicultural and bilingual document" (p177). The concept of dual Aims, a Maori version and a

version in English, was the result of the Maori group's initiative in presenting the five Aims (later Strands) which it saw early childhood curriculum needing to facilitate for Maori children (Carr and May, 1993b, p137). The Aims were as follows:

Mana Atua	Wellbeing
Mana Whenua	Belonging
Mana Tangata	Contribution
Mana Reo	Communication
Mana Ao Turoa	Exploration

As Carr and May (1993c) explain, the English set of Aims are not translations of the Maori, "but the domains of empowerment they describe are seen as equivalent" (p150).

Tilly Reedy (1995), who along with Tamati Reedy was co-ordinator and writer for the Maori version, that is of the curriculum guidelines for Maori Immersion Programmes, suggested that *Te Whaariki* had:

> a theoretical framework which is appropriate for all, common yet individual, for everyone, yet only for one; a whaariki woven by loving hands that can cross cultures with respect, that can weave people and nations together (p17).

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Certainly *Te Whaariki* has received much acclaim for its bicultural framework. For example, the Ministry of Education (1995) acknowledged it as "the first truly bicultural curriculum statement" (p2). Sobstad's (1997) comparison of Norway's early childhood curriculum and *Te Whaariki* identifies the bicultural framework of the New Zealand guidelines as their "most interesting" feature. Sobstad views the extent of Maori influence on the overall framework of *Te Whaariki* as offering challenge and leadership with respect to the Norwegian curriculum's response to Norway's indigenous Sami minority (p11).

It is recognised, however, that the acclamations referred to in this review are predominantly non-Maori. Few Maori responses to the document appear to have been widely promulgated in non-Maori arena, though according to the Ministry of Education (1995), "Te Kohanga Reo National Trust Board expressed unanimous support for the document" (p2).

Te Whaariki : proposing a curriculum model of change

Implicit in the recognition of curriculum as embedded in diverse social and cultural contexts, is an acknowledgment that, as Carr and May (1993a) argue, "a curriculum should change and develop" (p129). Bruce (1996) picks up on this feature of *Te Whaariki,* describing it as a curriculum that "has evolution built into it" (p4). As Bruce elaborates:

> The understanding of children's development, the context in which children are educated and cared for, the content, can change in *Te*

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Whaariki. It encourages a constant reinterpretation of the fundamental principles, all of which is part of the reframing and reflective process of working with children (p4).

Bruce goes on to contrast the way in which *Te Whaariki's* framework is based on four key principles, with the model of a "tightly prescribed" curriculum, characterised by identical features, particularly of content and method, common to all the settings using it. Bruce describes the latter model as "[having] preservation and ossification built into it" (p4). In short, Bruce highlights the contrast between *Te Whaariki* and a prescriptive approach to curriculum, an approach which is characteristic of a positivist orientation.

Eschewing a prescriptive approach

Carr and May (1993a) explicitly rejected a prescriptive approach to curriculum: "The concept of *Te Whaariki*, or an early childhood programme as weaving, implies there is no set way to develop a programme" (p129). Meade (1988) did the same with regard to chartering. Meade (1991) argued for what she termed a "developmental" approach in which charters were to serve as "a constructive tool for growth and development" (p61).

According to Carr and May (1993c) national curriculum is, "by its very nature a source of tension: it attempts to protect diversity and quality, to provide direction without prescription, and to be helpful to a wide range of age groups, communities, cultures and philosophies" (p152).

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While acknowledging these 'tensions', Carr and May favoured an approach similar to the 'developmental' one envisaged by Meade (1991):

It may be that one of the greatest contributions of a national curriculum to improving the quality of early childhood programmes is the discussion and reflection that accompany its development. Another measure of its value will be whether discussion and reflection continue to contribute to the national curriculum, to create changing patterns of individual whaariki, and to suggest reviews of the guidelines (Carr and May, 1993c, p152).

Curriculum guidelines : within a new political agenda

And so to the question as to why the development of the guidelines was allowed to proceed? Why was there this seeming 'lone exception' to what many in the early childhood community regarded as a Governmental agenda intent on dismantling all the positive changes the sector had won in the previous twenty years (Smith, 1993, p66)?

Carr and May (1993e) suggest that the National government came to office, with its own agenda of curriculum reform, which featured a much greater emphasis on assessment and that within this agenda the development of early childhood curriculum guidelines became repositioned in relation to the new National Curriculum for schools:

In 1991 [the Government] moved to overhaul the school curriculum. After wide circulation of a draft document the Government published in 1993 a new Curriculum Framework for schools, and national curriculum documents for subject areas are being progressively

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written. These are written in levels, with achievement based assessment, by level, in mind. It is a logical step from these documents to look at what might constitute the earlier levels, i.e. the early childhood curriculum (p171).

Other observers also suggest that it was in the area of assessment that the " radical departure from the earlier model" occurred (O'Neill, 1996, p6). In the new curriculum framework for schools this centred on the National Achievement Objectives which set out eight progressive levels of achievement in each learning area against which student progress was to assessed.

There was, as Carr and May (1993e) observe, considerable concern within the early childhood community as to the possible ramifications of early childhood curriculum guidelines having to 'sit alongside' the National Curriculum for schools, that is of a Government agenda looking to develop continuity and progression with later phases of schooling (p171).

There was particular concern about the possibility of an assessment-related 'trickle down', which was seen as threatening the integrity of early childhood practices. Such concern was fuelled by reports from the United Kingdom where early childhood curriculum developments had become similarly linked with a new National Curriculum for schools (Carr and May 1993c, p145; Smith E.,1994, p88). UK attainment targets in the school curriculum were seen as influencing the early childhood curriculum, often inappropriately (Fleer, 1992;

Pascal, 1990, cited in Carr and May, 1993e, p171;Sylva, 1992, cited in Carr and May, 1993e, p171).

To understand the basis of such concerns, it is useful to consider the distinction Willis (1992) makes between a "professional" model of assessment, which she describes as reflecting "a complex and context-bound view of the learning process that recognises the importance of process as well as non cognitive aspects of learning" and what she terms "the market and management accountability models" (p248). Willis describes the latter as :

> committed to an empiricist approach to education whereby ...knowledge can be broken down into a series of separate pieces through the operation of scientific methods commonly described as positivistic...A failure to recognise the complexity of the learning and teaching process has contributed to assessment that is simplistic and concerned with observable outcomes...standardised tests play a key role...as useful market indicators (p248).

The UK had adopted a market approach of such 'high stakes' testing and the resulting pressure on the curriculum had been alarming. Elley (1993) for example, cites instances of teachers coaching children for the tests, administering the tests repeatedly and encouraging certain children to absent themselves.

While there is continuing debate as to how similar the UK and New Zealand approaches are, and, in particular, how strong the market element will prove to be in New Zealand's assessment reforms (Willis,

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1992; Elley, 1993), the weight of evidence as to its influence, is mounting (Codd, 1996; Lee and Hill, 1996; O'Neill, 1996; Peters and Marshall, 1996; Snook, 1996). Certainly one thing that is clear is that a market model is quite 'at odds' with the approach to assessment in the *Te Whaariki* draft, as is indicated by its' articulating the following position statement:

> this document does not provide an inventory or checklist of measurable outcomes that can be used for evaluation and assessment... The literature indicates that developmental checklists are 'neither precise enough nor conceptually appropriate for designing a curriculum for individuals' (Ballard, 1991, cited in Ministry of Education 1993a). Attributes such as respect, curiosity, trust, reflection, belonging, confidence and responsibility are essential elements of the early childhood curriculum but are extremely difficult to measure...Informal and informed observations by experienced adults are a more appropriate form of assessment in the early childhood setting (Ministry of Education, 1993a, p117).

Rather than assessment 'driving' the curriculum, the *Te Whaariki* draft advocated that "assessment and evaluation should start from the children's needs and from the aims and goals of these guidelines" (1993, p116). Cubey and Dalli (1996) state that, "this view is upheld in the final version of Te Whaariki" (p6). However, while it is true that the final version contains statements that would suggest this to be true, it also contains other, in my view, significant changes, which I would argue represent a shift toward a more market or positivist approach. For example, the explicit position statement from the 1993 draft of *Te Whaariki*, quoted above, was edited out of the final version. Furthermore, the final version evidenced an added emphasis on measurable outcomes through the introduction of specified lists of learning outcomes, albeit with

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a disclaimer that these lists were "indicative rather than definitive" (Ministry of Education, 1996a, p44).

The overall approach in the final version is more prescriptive. The new emphasis on 'in-depth' assessment is seen to involve obtaining a close match between observed changes in children's behaviour and learning and the curriculum goals, as is more consistent with the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* principle, that "the achievement objectives against which students progress can be measured, ...[are] clearly defin[ed] at each level" (Ministry of Education, 1993b). Admittedly though, many of the final version changes are subtle and the pattern is not a consistent one, for as Cubey and Dalli (1996) observe, certain key statements concerning assessment from the 1993 draft, do remain (p6). However, if the final version changes are looked at in light of the national school curriculum reforms and in light of experiences overseas, and if one accepts Meade's (1995) contention that charters were, during the implementation phase, transformed from a "developmental" model to a "control" model (p7), there seem to be grounds for concern as to how well the *Te Whaariki* framework will fare in the longer term. Hence with regard to Meade's (1991) question, "will multiple curricula survive the implementation stage?" (p60), I would suggest that the outlook does not look promising.

Not only are charter developments and the final-version curriculum 'editing' developments a source of concern in this regard, so too are the most recent proposed revisions to the regulations governing

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minimum standards (Ministry of Education, 1996b). In particular I refer to the implications of the fact that the *Te Whaariki* guidelines have failed to become a legal requirement. As the Ministry of Education preamble to the recently gazetted *Revised Statement of Desirable Objectives and Practices* (DOPs) states:

It is not possible to include *Te Whaariki* as a direct requirement of the DOPs, due to a legal anomaly in the Education Act 1989 which would require all 99 pages of *Te Whaariki* to be printed within the DOPs. This is obviously not practical. Aspects of *Te Whaariki* have therefore been included throughout the revised DOPs. Although the DOPs do not make *Te Whaariki* mandatory, the curriculum of a service must be consistent with *Te Whaariki*, as the example of quality curriculum cited in the introduction in the DOPs. Services will therefore be expected to be able to identify the links between *Te Whaariki* and their curriculum and to demonstrate that none of their curriculum is inconsistent with *Te Whaariki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b, p1).

Cullen (1996) notes that with regard to the use of *Te Whaariki* draft for monitoring purposes on it becoming a legal document, the Chief Review Officer is quoted as saying: "at the moment, we would have some difficulty regarding it as a sufficiently robust framework for evaluating educational effectiveness" (Hurst, 1995, p30, cited in Cullen, 1996, p121). Clearly the final version changes concerning assessment were an attempt to address these perceived 'shortcomings', but what of the above 'sidelining' of the guidelines with respect to legal status? I would suggest it is highly likely that over time, *Te Whaariki* will be pre-empted by the telescoped version of the framework, contained in the draft of the revised DOPs (Ministry of Education, 1996b).

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When Tina Bruce (1996) spoke about *Te Whaariki* she based her talk around Peddiwell's (1939) satire on curriculum in the USA. Bruce's account of the satire tells of the wise old men of the tribe who advocated getting back to "fundamentals" i.e. "Fish-grabbing-with-the-bare-hands"; "Woolly-horse-clubbing"; and "Sabre-Toothed-tiger-scaring-with-fire" (p1) The radicals in the tribe, on the other hand, noted that times had changed and would continue to change and they argued that education needed to be geared toward developing the skills and the thinking able to take account of such changes. Bruce used the notion of the Sabre Toothed tiger curriculum to highlight its positivist, modern-day equivalents. Her assessment of *Te Whaariki* was, in contrast, that, "early childhood expertise has contributed to [the guidelines] in major ways. Radicals have been allowed to speak" (p11). However, perhaps in light of recent history one could add, ' but, for how long?'

In summary

Te Whaariki (1993) was a world leader in proposing a curriculum that covered children from 0-5 years and in taking a holistic view of curriculum that moved away from historic compartmentalisations such as care versus education and subject or content-based knowledge. The *Te Whaariki* (1993) curriculum model argued the case for a common framework of Principles, Aims and Goals; but saw these as open to critique and review. Rather than advocating a prescriptive

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approach to curriculum development, the *Te Whaariki* model argued for one which enabled diversity and one which acknowledged the highly contextualised nature of curriculum, as evidenced in Carr and May's (1993a) "ecological" view of curriculum, a view which highlights the influences and constraints of various layers of the sociocultural context (p129).

This chapter has sketched the complex political web of which *Te Whaariki* was, and still is, a part. It has proposed that the *Te Whaariki* development project embodied traditions and ideologies which in a number of key respects followed in the footsteps of *Before Five*. This chapter has also raised questions about the future of *Te Whaariki* in light of the position the National government has so far taken on the other parts of *Before Five* policies, that is in relation to charters and in relation to the regulations governing minimum standards (*DOPs*).

I have suggested that the changes in the *Te Whaariki* (1996) rewrite concerning assessment and evaluation, including the introduction of prespecified lists of learning outcomes, constitute an attempt to bring the document more in to line with the Government's assessment agenda, as evidenced in the school sector curriculum reforms. I have also suggested that the changes should be regarded as significant and that they are a key component of the shift evidenced in the final version toward a more prescriptive, more positivist approach, a shift further elaborated on, in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

NOTIONS OF CURRICULUM

This chapter explores key influences in the field of curriculum theory. It firstly overviews the positivist tradition which has so dominated notions of curriculum and then focuses on postpositivist attempts to 'reconceptualise' the field. As well as continuing to look at what critical discourse has to say about the nature of curriculum, the second section of the chapter focuses on three further strands of reconceptualist discourse, each of which has been identified by Pinar (1988) as having significantly influenced current notions about curriculum: feminist discourse, autobiographical discourse and post-structuralist discourse (p5). The concluding section of the chapter considers where to 'site' *Te Whaariki* in relation to these wider curriculum discourses and discusses the possibility that the draft and final versions of *Te Whaariki* may warrant differential 'sitings'.

The Positivist Tradition

Numerous writers have observed that the positivist tradition has traditionally dominated curriculum discourse (e.g. Apple 1975; Kliebard 1971; Pinar 1975, 1988; Miller 1988, 1992; Macdonald 1975; Cornbleth, 1990; Eisner, 1985; Tetsuo Aoki, 1988, Bloch, 1992; Kessler and Swadener, 1992). According to Pinar (1988), from the time curriculum began to emerge as a field of study in the 1920s,

through to the 1960s, curriculum was conceptualised as "content" or a "course of study". Knowledge was thought of as "Truths about, or information in", a particular subject or field (Delandshere and Petrosky, 1994, p11).

Many educational theorists like Lather (1991) argue that we are now in a postpositivist era. And yet, while Lather (1991) believes that the last twenty years have given rise to a "definitive critique" of positivism, she also acknowledges that "positivism retains its hegemony over practice" (p2). This view is also supported by Kliebard (1995), a theorist well known for his (1970) landmark critique of Tyler's *Rationale,* a work widely regarded as one of the seminal works of a positivist approach to curriculum. Kliebard (1995) described the effects of his own critique, some twenty two years on as follows: "I strongly suspect that in the real world of US schools and state departments of education the Tyler *Rationale* remained unscarred by any criticism that I or others had directed toward it" (pp81-88). Certainly recent developments in curriculum and assessment policy as described in the preceding chapter, would seem to indicate that positivism is not, as some observers would have it (e.g. Pinar, 1988), a 'spent force'.

The origins of positivism

Jurgen Habermas (1971), one of the most influential critically-oriented social theorists of the Frankfurt School, suggests that there are three basic cognitive *interests* defining how knowledge is constructed:

technical, practical and critical, and that these constitute the three types of science by which knowledge is generated and organised in our society: empirical-analytic, historical-hermeneutic and emancipatory. Lather (1991) suggests that the post-modernist, post-structuralist perspective constitutes a fourth paradigm (p7).

In terms of the origins of the positivist tradition in the social sciences, Habermas (1971) suggests that it was the scientific aura of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that led to a Western perception that knowledge is derived only by empirical-analytical means, a perception that has served to undermine other sources of knowledge e.g. the knowledge base of the arts.

Bloch (1992) summarises the seven interrelated assumptions which Popkewitz (1984) identified as characterising the empirical-analytic sciences as follows:

1. A theory that is universal and not bound to a specific context;

2. A commitment to a disinterested science where the goals and values of people are independent of what may be expressed as scientific research by those people;

3. A belief that the social world exists as a system of variables that are separable - that one can examine the parts of a system and make sense of one behaviour by isolating and controlling variables, for example, without regard for the rest of the system (e.g.. teacher praise as a single variable);

4. Formalised knowledge that must be operationalised and reliably judged before examination in research

5 A distinction between theory and practice, where theory and research should inform practice but not be directly linked to it

6 The frequent use of mathematics to test or examine the theory or hypotheses generated

7 An empirical-analytic paradigm typically aligned with positivist theory, stemming from Compte. In brief, it recognizes positive facts and stresses observable phenomena, as well as the positive relations between these and the laws that determine them; positivism also is associated with a reduction of emphasis on the causes or ultimate origins of phenomena that cannot be observed or examined within the context of research. (Popkewitz, 1984, cited in Bloch, 1992, p6)

Two of the main curriculum theorists seen as representing the positivist orientation, are Bobbitt (1924) and as already noted, Tyler (1950). The account in this review of Tyler and Bobbitt's work draws on Kliebard (1970, 1971, 1995) and Cornbleth (1990).

Bobbitt, described by Kliebard (1971) as one of the early prophets of the new efficiency, based his work on adapting business techniques for use in schools. School administration was Bobbitt's initial focus, but he progressively moved into the domain of curriculum theory. Kliebard (1971) comments:

The extrapolation of the principles of scientific management to the area of curriculum made the child the object on which the bureaucratic machinery of the school operates. He became the raw material from which the school factory must fashion a product drawn to the specifications of social convention. What was at first simply a direct application of general management principles to the management of schools became the central metaphor on which modern curriculum theory rests (p56).

Bobbitt saw the central task of curriculum development as the precise specification of particularised objectives, as derived from activity

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analysis. The curriculum became something to be discovered through progressive scientific analysis of human activity.

A derivative of activity analysis is to be found in recent competency-based initiatives (e.g. Gonzi, Hager, Oliver, 1990). This is, for example, the model the New Zealand Qualifications Framework is based on. One key feature of such approaches is a concern with accuracy and precision in measuring achievement. For example David Hood, Chief Executive Officer of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) from the time of its inception in 1990 until July 1996, has described one of the four attributes of a quality curriculum as "it [being] capable of measurement in outcome terms" (Hood, 1993, p7).

Kliebard (1970) notes that Tyler's (1950) model of teaching and learning and behavioural objectives extended the earlier work of Bobbitt and his followers. Tyler's model also presupposes learning happens as a linear process and involves a four-step process of curriculum development: stating objectives, selecting experiences, organising experiences, and evaluating. Tyler's conception of evaluation was, "...the process of determining to what extent the educational objectives are actually being realized by the programme of curriculum and instruction" (cited in Kliebard 1970, p79). Hence, the curriculum process is one of implementation. It does not involve critical appraisal of the objectives themselves.

As well as being critiqued for their lack of critical consciousness (e.g. Tetsuo Aoki, 1988), such positivist approaches have been seen as simplistic, limited and reductionist (e.g. Eisner, 1985). For example, Eisner refers to the "fall out" that occurs in a model of educational practice built on the assumption that quality of education is determined by measuring the achievement of prespecified objectives. Eisner concludes: "Teachers pay attention to much more than any set of objectives can specify... A model that purports to be rational and yet neglects the critical features of genuinely excellent teaching is less rational than it purports to be" (p171).

According to Giroux (1981), within the 'culture of positivism':

> knowledge is objective, bounded and 'out there'. Classroom knowledge is often treated as an external body of information, the production of which appears to be independent of human beings. From this perspective, human knowledge is viewed as being independent of time and place; it becomes universalised ahistorical knowledge. Moreover, it is expressed in a language which is technical and allegedly value free...knowledge, then, becomes not only countable and measurable, it also becomes impersonal. Teaching in this pedagogical paradigm is usually discipline based and treats subject matter in a compartmentalised and atomised fashion (pp52-53).

The role of the teacher in the positivist paradigm

Drawing on Habermas' (1971) theory of technical, practical and critical knowledge-constitutive interests, both Macdonald (1975) and Grundy (1987) argue that implicit in curriculum informed by a technical or

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positivist interest, is a fundamental concern with control. Macdonald (1975) suggests that the "logical outcome" of a technical interest informing curriculum is what he terms a "Linear Expert Model" of curriculum development (p292). His model describes a process, dominated by experts with specific goals in mind, where control is maximised through the experts making the initial and final decisions about the validity of content and process. Grundy (1987) also highlights a similar division of labour between curriculum designers and curriculum implementers, as characterising technically-informed curriculum (p31).

The pattern of teachers' typically being positioned on the periphery of curriculum development, is noted in Kliebard's (1986) historical account, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum*. Kliebard's view is supported by Walsh, Smith, Alexander and Ellwein (1993) who argue that there are "few exceptions" to teachers being kept on the margins of contemporary curriculum reform efforts in the USA (p319). In reporting on the first year of the implementation of a state-wide pilot pre-kindergarten programme in Virginia USA, Walsh et al. state that in their study: "no working classroom teachers...were involved in the discussions" (p321).

The Virginia pilot programme involved teachers implementing a standard curriculum i.e. the High/Scope Cognitively Oriented Curriculum (Weikart et al 1971, cited in Walsh, Smith, Alexander and Ellwein, 1993):

it [Highscope] was presented to the teachers as a comprehensive curriculum, specifying daily schedule, room arrangement, teaching methods and content- a complete package [including] a field tested instrument for assessing the effectiveness of curriculum implementation, the Preschool Classroom Implementation Rating Instrument [PCIR] (Walsh et al, 1993, p321).

Walsh et al argue that "implicit in the very notion of a standard curriculum is the idea that implementing it is a technical process, a process of learning what to do rather than how to teach" (p321).

The Virginia study provides insights into the role of teachers whose job is confined to this sort of implementation. For example, Walsh, Smith, Alexander and Ellwein, (1993) report experienced teachers being reduced to asking trivial questions about what they were allowed to do and when they were allowed to do it, and instances of teachers being constrained by the curriculum to the extent that it prevented them from following their own convictions about what the children in their rooms needed.

These findings are similar to those of Rudduck (1984), who concludes from her experiences of national curriculum development initiatives in the school sector in the UK :

One of the most important things that I learned as a member of a national curriculum development team was how damaging the authority and supposed integrity (i.e. wholeness) of a curriculum

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product' could be to the professional autonomy of the teacher (p232).

The positioning of the teacher that tends to emerge from much of the literature is therefore one of teacher as technicist, disempowered and deskilled (Giroux 1988, p247); of legislators and administrators seeking "control over teachers through such routine devices as management-by-objectives, standardized curriculum packages, and minimum competency testing" (Rosenholtz, 1989, cited in Walsh Smith, Alexander and Ellwein, 1993, p320); of teachers being "left to implement what others have decided" (Walsh et al, 1993, p329).

Reconceptualising Curriculum

According to Miller (1992), moves to 'reconceptualise' curriculum were due to the initiatives of a disparate group of scholars dissatisfied with the predominating prescriptive and positivist orientations of curriculum discourse. In similar vein, Pinar (1988) describes the reconceptualist movement as one initially defined by its opposition to mainstream curriculum theory, with origins in quite different and often opposing traditions.

The characteristics of the reconceptualist movement are difficult to define and the subject of controversy, with many writers preferring to use the arguably more definitive term 'postpositivist'. However, Pinar (1988) suggests that the reconceptualist movement went beyond critiquing the positivist tradition and that one can identify certain "reconceptualist themes": political, feminist, post-structuralist, phenomenological and autobiographical (p5). Certainly these can be acknowledged as key influences in shaping current curriculum discourse, as will be seen in the following discussion.

In the context of early childhood discourse, it seems that it is only relatively recently that many of the 'reconceptualist' themes have started to emerge. For example, Lubeck (1996), a US early childhood teacher- educator, points to the significant influence of the five early

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childhood "reconceptualizing" conferences, held in America, prior to her article, an article which offers a post-structuralist perspective on traditional child development and teacher education discourse. Lubeck's article also highlights the influence of the publications that have come to be associated with the reconceptualising conferences, the first being Kessler and Swadener's (1992) *Reconceptualizing the Early Childhood Curriculum: Beginning the Dialogue.* Goncu and Fitzgerald (1994) also highlight this 'wave' of change in their article, *The early childhood curriculum : notes on the transformations of a field.* Other writers point to the influence that Italian initiatives in the Reggio Emilia nurseries have had in heightening awareness of the importance of socio-cultural context in the construction of curriculum (Edwards, Gandini and Forman, 1993; Gura, 1997).

Perhaps then, the reconceptualist movement is best described not so much as a position, but as a questioning of the presuppositions that for so long undergirded curriculum theory. Moves to reconceptualise curriculum centred on critical and later post-modern questions such as: What is legitimated as knowledge? And how? How do I experience knowledge? Who can construct knowledge? Who decides? In whose interest is this decided? (Miller, 1992, p112) Whose knowledge is given preference? Who benefits or is disadvantaged? What conditions beyond the immediate situation shape the selection, organisation, treatment and distribution of curriculum knowledge? (Cornbleth, 1990, p191). For many theorists exploring the links between knowledge and power became a key focus in their attempts to reconceptualise curriculum. Knowledge came to be viewed as problematic (Giroux,

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1981) and thus so did curriculum (Rudduck, 1984). Stenhouse (1986), for example, suggested viewing curriculum as a set of hypotheses which require critical testing rather than acceptance. In the early childhood context, Lubeck (1996) notes that a central theme in much of the early childhood reconceptualist discourse has been challenging the use of child development as the sole directional guide for practice.

Theorists attempting to reconceptualise curriculum focussed on the who, what and how of curriculum as a social construct. So, for example, Cornbleth (1990) defined curriculum as "contextualised social process", comprised of the interactions of students, teachers, knowledge and milieu (p7). Apple (1971, 1988) highlighted the 'hidden curriculum', of underpinning values and ideologies that went unrecognised and unacknowledged. Buck-Morss (1975) suggests, for example, that the stage of formal operational thinking, which the pervasive Piagetian model presents as constituting the pinnacle of mental functioning, should be looked upon as simply representing a way of thinking that is valued in societies in which work itself is detached from concrete experience (cited in Lubeck, 1996, p157).

McWilliam (1995) suggests that the first step to reconceptualising curriculum is rejecting the tendency to treat the curriculum as "a fixed body of information to be ingested" (p55). Thus in contrast to the prevailing product conception of curriculum as a document or plan, theorists increasingly began to reconceptualise curriculum focussing on the 'enacted' curriculum, curriculum in action. So, for example, as

Grundy (1987) argues : "ultimately ... the curriculum is that which students experience in the learning environment" (p42). Conceptions of curriculum began to extend beyond the cognitive domain, for example giving increasing recognition of the role of the affective domain in the learning teaching process (e.g. Ellsworth, 1989; Dadds, 1993, 1995).

The overall picture emerging from post-positivist discourse is of curriculum becoming increasingly recognised as complex, context-bound and interactive, defying easy description or analysis (Sapon-Shevin, 1992). As Lather (1991) puts it, the field of curriculum theory emerging from the reconceptualisation process is: "somewhere in the midst of a shift away from a view of knowledge as disinterested and toward a view of knowledge as constructed, contested, incessantly perspectival and polyphonic" (pxx).

Critical theory

It was relatively early on in the reconceptualist movement that a considerable body of work began to focus on curriculum as a pre-eminently political entity. As Lather (1991) explains it, such attempts to politicise the curriculum discourse were not a matter of bringing politics in where there were none, rather they were attempts to "make overt how power permeates the construction and legitimation of knowledges" (pxviii). In the main, this body of work had its roots in

critical theory, which in turn originated from the Frankfurt School of sociological and philosophical inquiry.

Whereas the predominant positivist orientation to curriculum viewed the question, 'What knowledge is worth knowing?' as an essentially empirical question, critical theory was a key player in helping to bring about increasing acknowledgment of the sociological and philosophical dimensions of this question.

Most critical theorists initially focussed on the interrelationships among cultural, ideological and economic relationships; and race, class and gender-related oppression (e.g. Giroux, 1981; Apple, 1988). For example, for some critical theorists, Marxists and Neo-Marxists in particular, a major theme became the role curriculum played in the transmission of dominant culture and ideologies, seen as legitimating and thereby helping to preserve, arrangements of political and economic power.

Two other concepts central to critical theory and to much feminist theory, which significantly influenced curriculum discourse, were the notion of reflection, and the notion of empowerment. Significantly, these two concepts are central to the *Te Whaariki* model.

The role of reflection

Geuss (1981), argues that the notion of reflection is pivotal to, if not the defining feature of, critical theory: "Whatever differences in epistemic status or cognitive structure exist between scientific and critical theories are to be attributed to the role 'reflection' plays in the confirmation of critical theories" (p91).

As Geuss (1981) explains, the central positioning of self reflection fits in with critical theory's view of human agents as not merely having and acquiring beliefs, but having ways of criticising and evaluating their own beliefs (p61). This can be seen as quite different from a positivist orientation, which as Geuss explains, "assert[s] all cognition is 'objectifying' cognition...denying that theories can be both reflective and cognitive" (p2).

Hence, in contrast to the positivist notion of 'teacher as technicist' referred to earlier, came the reconceptualist view of the teacher as reflective practitioner. Critical theory depicted the reflective process as meaning that unconscious or habitual attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns were to be brought to full consciousness, to enable them to be changed. Miller (1992) has described this process operating in her work as a professional development facilitator thus:

I work with teachers to excavate, reflect on and analyze underlying assumptions, expectation and constructions of our daily work. Such self reflexive processes are necessary I believe in order to also view

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our educational roles through critical lenses that enable us to focus on social historical and political forces that shape and influence our personal assumptions about teaching (p103).

Emancipatory discourses: the notion of empowerment

Gore (1992) defines empowerment as the exercise of power in an attempt to help others exercise power (p68). Gore's definition suggests that the end result of empowerment is seen to be action.

Lather's (1991) definition of empowerment also highlights the need for action and clearly exemplifies critical theory's view of empowerment as expressly political. Lather describes empowerment as "analyzing ideas about the causes of powerlessness recognising systemic oppressive forces and acting both individually and collectively to change the conditions of our lives" (p4).

In the New Zealand context, Marshall (1987) uses the example of Maori to argue that education needs to be more than an academic exercise, that it is political and that it needs to empower people to take action:

> It is not enough that...people should come to grasp the socio-historical circumstances in which they live but that, also, this education should liberate people from domesticating thought structures and debilitating forms of control. For example ...being able to study Maori in the school system and coming to understand the 'situation'...is not enough because it does not show how to change or move out of this situation (Marshall, 1987, pp62-63, cited in Carr 1992a, p68).

For many critical theorists notions of empowerment have tended to revolve around issues of race, class, and gender, what Luke (1992) calls "the oppressed triad" (p36). Latterly however, there has been a growing body of work, influenced by post-structuralism, which argues that such a focus is too restricted and that it fails to take account of the multiplicity of relations of power (e.g. Walkerdine, 1992; Ellsworth 1989). Increasing numbers of theorists argue a post-structuralist view of power, i.e. that "there are no social positions exempt from becoming oppressive to others...Any group-any position can move into the oppressor role" (Minh-ha-cited in Ellsworth 1989, p114). Ellsworth (1989) sees the racism of the women's movement in the US as a case in point (p97).

Like many post-structuralist feminists, Ellsworth (1989) is interested in how to facilitate empowerment. Ellsworth argues that because the power dynamic operates in context-specific ways, this is how it must be dealt with. Ellsworth suggests that the empowerment process needs to involve ongoing analysis of how power is being deployed in the learning situation, so that oppressive ways of acting and oppressive knowledges can be targeted (p114).

Ellsworth (1989) takes issue with the way critical discourse makes empowerment dependent upon rationalism. She argues that critical theory is too bound up in logocentric rationality, that it fails to acknowledge that as subjects split between the conscious and the

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unconscious and between multiple social positioning, social agents are not capable of being fully rational and disinterested. Ellsworth draws on the work of Valerie Walkerdine (1988), who points to the power-knowledge relation associating masculinity with rationality and scientific truth, and femininity with irrationality and who argues that this continues to regulate current pedagogical discourse. Similarly Ellsworth points to the way in which:

> rational argument has operated in ways that set up as its opposite an irrational Other, which has been understood historically as the province of women and other exotic Others...rational deliberation, reflection and consideration of all viewpoints has become a vehicle for regulating conflict and the power to speak (p94).

Ellsworth goes on to argue, that in this way, rationalism effects "a series of exclusions -[e.g.] of women, of people of colour..." (p96).

Critiquing critical theory : asserting the micro level

Perhaps the most common criticism of critical theory has been the pre-eminence it has tended to accord the macro level (e.g. Grundy, 1987; Pinar 1988; Scott 1988; Cornbleth, 1990; Lather, 1991, Luke and Gore 1992; Cherryholmes, 1993; Anyon, 1994). For example, Cornbleth (1990), herself a critical theorist, emphasises that the contexts that shape curriculum include immediate structural or systemic influences, not just macro-order dynamics such as economics. Cornbleth accuses critical theory of tending to ignore this level of influences and in effect "leapfrogging" to the societal context (p27). Although Cornbleth's

(1990) notion of curriculum as "contextualised social process" (p7) looks to encourage practitioners to consider issues from progressively broader perspectives, it also highlights the importance of more immediate contextual variables. Other writers have also emphasised the notion of different levels or layers of context, as for example Wilcox's (1982, cited in Kessler 1992, p24) model of a series of concentric circles, and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) metaphor of nested Russian dolls.

Much of the early childhood discourse on 'quality' programmes has traditionally focused on the importance of relatively immediate structural variables, such as those Pence (cited in Farquhar,1993,p15) refers to as the "iron triangle": adult-child ratio, group size and trained staff. In similar vein, King (1992, p45) argues that physical environment is a variable that often receives insufficient attention from researchers and teachers alike. Conversely, the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education, an influential approach which highlights the socio-cultural basis of learning and development, places considerable emphasis on the environment, such that it is referred to as "the third educator", along with the team of two teachers (Gandini, 1993, p148).

Overall there seem to be increasing numbers of theorists seeking more acknowledgment of context at the personal, individual level of the curriculum making process. For example Miller (1992) talks about teaching, learning and curriculum as processes that are "informed,

influenced and shaped by particular historical and social forces as well as by unique individual perspectives and interactions" (p113).

In the Swedish context, Carlgren (1995) is another writer calling for both the micro and macro level to be acknowledged. As Carlgren observes: "There is always a subjective intentional side of human enterprise as well as...one linked with the social, historical and political context" (p412). Carlgren argues that focussing on the macro level alone puts a particular 'slant' on the curriculum development process: "Normally, accounts of educational debate and critical analysis are constructed some distance from the policy making process, with the result that some aspects are focused on while other aspects disappear" (p412).

Feminist perspectives

Another of the major criticisms levelled at critical theory is that it was based on male experience and was not inclusive of women's concerns (Grumet, 1988; Miller, 1988,1992; Scott,1988; Lather,1991; Luke and Gore 1992; McWilliam, 1995). Grumet (1988) for example, observes that when she entered the field of curriculum theory in the 1970s, the experiences of family life and bearing and nurturing children were notably absent from the discourse. Grumet argues that for feminists, notions of gender are at the heart of reconceptualising notions of curriculum:

Feminist scholars work to bring together domains of experience and understanding that history and culture have kept apart. For what it means to teach and learn is related to what it means to be male or female and to our experiences of reproduction and nurturance, domesticity, sexuality, nature, knowledge, and politics (p538).

There seems to be a clear intersection here between Grumet's position and early childhood interests. In the New Zealand context again, May (1992b) infers that there are strong links between feminist interests and early childhood interests, when she terms early childhood services a "crucial barometer" of how women are faring (p84).

On the other hand, Lather's (1991) observation that feminism is "full of contestatory and contradictory theories and practices" (p27), serves as a caution against essentialising feminism, or for that matter, early childhood. It is, at the very least, a reminder that early childhood and feminist discourses can not be conflated and treated as one and the same.

Autobiography : enabling new perspectives on curriculum

Miller (1992) credits autobiography with providing the means by which women's experiences were able to be acknowledged and included into existing curriculum structures, during the early years of the reconceptualist movement. Hutcheon (1989) talks about "a very feminist awareness of the value of experience and the importance of its representation in the form of 'life-writing'.." (p167, cited in Lather, 1991, p127).

The possibilities autobiography offers for what Gomez (1992) terms "breaking silences" (p165), is a significant factor in the interest it has generated. Its ability to give voice to suppressed or marginalised perspectives has been important not just from the point of view of gender, but also in terms of other 'silenced voices', e.g. race-related, class-related, or for that matter, for the postpositivist enterprise Ayers (1992) describes as "recovering the voice of the teacher" (p266).

Proponents of autobiography see it as breaking with the metanarrative or totalising narratives in favour of multiple narratives, that is the multiple accounts that result from individuals voicing their different experiences of the same process and events, for example the curriculum development process.

Furthermore as some theorists have pointed out (e.g. Lather 1991; Dadds, 1995; Miller, 1992) multiple accounts of the same event or process can be constructed by one individual for example the same event or phenomenon can be viewed by the individual very differently as circumstances change. As Miller puts it multiple accounts highlight the complexity of experience that any one story necessarily reduces (p14).

Autobiography can be seen as contributing to a growing trend to be more open to, or accepting of, difference. Tetsuo Aoki (1988) argues

that a "dominant orientation" amongst curriculum reconceptualists involved acknowledging the possibilities of multiple approaches in examining a phenomenon or problem (p411). Other observers talk in terms of a dissemination of legitimacy. Lather (1991) refers to the creation of a "plurality of sites from which the world is spoken" (p33), something Hartshock (1987) ascribes to "the diverse and disorderly Others beginning to speak and beginning to chip away at the social and political power of the Theorizer" (cited in Lather, 1991, p33).

I would argue that to some extent early childhood education can be regarded as one of Hartshock's "diverse and disorderly Others" in that it has both served to broaden and been accommodated by, the increasingly inclusive parameters of curriculum discourse. For example, the intersection between feminist and early childhood conceptions of curriculum has meant that the work of feminist theorists like Grumet (1988), Ellsworth (1989) and Dadds, (1995), which has been instrumental in notions of curriculum broadening beyond the cognitive domain, has also meant that early childhood conceptions of learning and development, of care as curriculum, have been able to be more easily accommodated.

Post-structuralism, post-modernism

Attempts to define post-modern and post-structural theories are acknowledged as fraught with difficulty (e.g. Anyon, 1994; Kenway, 1995; Singh, 1995; Lubeck, 1996). Anyon (1994), for example, notes that although different, these two kinds of theories overlap, in many cases, "often subsumed in and by each other" (p118). Anyon also notes the further confusion caused by the many different types or genres (e.g. feminist post-structuralism) within the group. Despite this Anyon proposes three analytical heuristics on which post-structural and post-modern theorists are in general agreement: "the importance of the local, the validity of deconstruction and the centrality of discourse" (p118).

"The importance of the local" and its influence in feminist and autobiographical discourse has already been noted, in that focussing on the "local" has characterised attempts to break with the metanarrative in favour of the micro level, the local narrative. The two other features Anyon (1994) suggests most salient, are the concepts of *deconstruction*, based on the work of Derrida (1981, cited in Anyon, 1994) and *discourse* as developed in the work of Foucault

Although the notion of deconstruction comes originally from literary criticism, it is now used as a means of interrogating a range of social practices (Lubeck, 1996). Deconstruction is described by Anyon (1994) as an approach to critical analysis which aims to show that

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many of the categorical oppositions that permeate traditional social analyses (e.g. male/female; culture/nature) are socially constructed rather than natural and immutable.

Gross (1986) puts it this way: "What Derrida attempts to show is that within these binary couples, the primary or dominant term derives its privilege from a curtailment or suppression of its opposite" (p73, cited in Scott, 1988, p89). A case in point, in terms of early childhood curriculum would be the construction of the care/education dichotomy discussed in chapter two. This is a dichotomy, which involves a reductionist or restricted notion of 'care', for example, in the way the educative aspect of care is obscured or denied.

Hence, if binary oppositions provide insight into the way meaning is constructed, and if they operate as Derrida suggests, then analyses of meaning cannot take binary oppositions at face value, but rather must "deconstruct" them for the processes they embody (Scott,1988, p37). Deconstruction provides a tool with which to unravel or excavate what Lather (1991) terms "the transformation of difference into dichotomous oppositions" (p27). And so, for example, Lubeck (1996), uses deconstruction to focus on dualisms such as normal/abnormal and to challenge the cult of individualism so embedded in the Western psyche, which Lubeck also sees as dominating the child-centred tradition.

Caputo (1987) suggests that deconstruction aims, "to keep things in process, to disrupt, to keep the system in play, to set up procedures to continuously demystify the realities we create, to fight the tendency for our categories to congeal" (cited in Lather, 1991, p13).

And so to discourse, which Walkerdine (1988) describes as signifying the public process through which meanings are progressively and actively generated in the regulation of practices (cited in Singh, 1995, p189).

Apple (1991) describes discourse as attempting to signal "the inescapably political contexts in which we speak and work... Discourse and politics, knowledge and power are ... part of an indissoluble couplet" (pvii).

Scott (1988) also highlights the involvement of conflict and power in the construction of meaning, whereby meanings are seen as locally contested in discursive "fields of force" (p75). The power to control a particular field is held to reside in claims to knowledge embodied not only in writing, but also in disciplinary and professional organisations, that is in institutions such as early childhood centres, schools and hospitals, and in social relationships such as teacher/child, doctor/patient.

Walkerdine's (1989, cited in Singh, 1995; 1992) work focusing on progressive and child centred pedagogy, suggests ways in which politics and knowledge/power relations operate within these discourses, in terms of the institution of the school and the child teacher relationship. Walkerdine (1992) argues:

the advent of naturalism, that is, the ensuring of a correct passage from animal infant to civilized adult became understood as "progressive" - according to scientific principles - and effective....What was proposed was a process - a scientific process - whereby the school room could become a laboratory, where development could be watched, monitored and set along the right path. There was therefore no need for lessons, no discipline of the overt kind... The ultimate irony is that the child supposedly freed by this process to develop according to its nature was the most classified, catalogued, watched and monitored in history. Freed from coercion, the child was much more subtly regulated into normality (pp17-18).

Consistent with the post-modernist rejection of absolutes and any and all universalising schemes, Aronowitz (1987) emphasises that discourse provides "narratives about the world that are admittedly partial" (cited in Ellsworth, 1989, p96). Ellsworth (1989) elaborates that narratives can be understood to be partial in the sense that they are "unfinished, imperfect, limited" as well as partial in the sense of partisan, that "they project the interests of "one side" over others" (p97).

Usher and Edwards (1994) describe the post-modern paradigm as follows:

In post-modernity there is a rejection of universal and transcendental foundations of knowledge and thought, and a heightened awareness of the significance of language, discourse, and socio-cultural locatedness in the making of any knowledge claim...post-modernism proposes plural understandings of truth; that all knowledge is contextual, historical, and discursive. (pp10,24, cited in Lubeck, 1996, p150).

Hutcheon (1988) summarises post-modernism as aiming to provide a thoroughgoing "denaturalizing" critique, in order to "dedoxify" our cultural representations and show their undeniable political importance (cited in Lather 1991, pvii).

Reactions to post-modernism and post-structuralism are varied. As Apple (1991) observes, in some quarters it is argued that they are simply a reflection of the cultural logic of late capitalism (pviii). Some writers have considerable concerns regarding the politics of post-modernism and post-structuralism, especially the undercutting of claims to truth and justice that undergird emancipatory efforts. Habermas (1987) argues, for example, that post-modernism fosters nihilism, relativism and political irresponsibility (cited in Lather, 1991).

On the other hand, although there are those who read Foucault as an argument about the futility of human agency, there are also those like Scott (1988), who simply interpret Foucault's work as warning against simple solutions to difficult problems, as advising human actors to think strategically and more self-consciously about the philosophical

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and political implications and meanings of what they are endorsing. As Anyon (1994) observes many critical scholars now seek empowerment for teachers through post-modern and post-structural ideas.

Notions of curriculum :

where to 'site' *Te Whaariki*

The preceding section of this chapter has suggested that one of the defining features of a postpositivist or reconceptualist view of curriculum, is that such a view moves beyond a content-based notion of curriculum. Rather than perceiving curriculum as a set of plans, a body of content to be ingested, or a list of skills to be acquired, the emphasis for many reconceptualists has been curriculum 'in action' and what children *actually* experience.

It is this child-centred emphasis on the *enacted* curriculum that comes through in the definition of curriculum offered in the *Te Whaariki* draft (1993): "the sum total of children's direct and indirect learning experiences in early childhood education settings (p13). Notably however, in the *Te Whaariki* (1996) rewrite, there is a subtle change in definition such that once again curriculum is defined in terms of the content of *what is provided* : "The term curriculum is used in this document to describe the sum total of the experiences, activities and events, whether direct or indirect, which occur within an environment designed to foster children's learning and development" (p10).

A subtle shift toward a more content-based approach in the final version is further evidenced in the way the five 'Aims' of the original

framework which were seen as general aims for children in society (Carr and May, 1993f) are renamed or recategorised as five 'Strands', and defined as "essential areas of learning and development" (1996, p15), Links are drawn between each of these Strands and the essential skills and essential learning areas of *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* for schools (p10). Also noteworthy is the final version's departure from the draft's inclusion of 'hidden curriculum' in its definition of curriculum. References to the hidden curriculum being deleted in the final version could well 'read' as a disengagement from what is an essentially reconceptualist notion.

The core definition of curriculum in the *Te Whaariki* draft was one generated by early childhood sector representatives, in 1988, at a gathering convened by the then Department of Education, to make a start on policy formulation for early childhood curriculum (Department of Education, 1988). It was a definition which emphasised the sector's commitment to child-centred learning, a tradition which has had a particularly strong following in early childhood education world-wide (e.g. Blenkin and Kelly, 1987).

Scott (1996), a UK educator, highlights *Te Whaariki's* child-centredness and suggests that like the UK Quality in Diversity project and the Reggio Emilia approach, *Te Whaariki* is founded on a profound respect for children as learners" (p39).

Miller (1992) suggests that there are strong links between the child-centred tradition and attempts to reconceptualise the curriculum. Miller regards child-centred educators as in a sense the antecedents of the reconceptualists: "[the reconceptualist] focus on knowledge as occurring in the experience of the situation, in contexts of daily lives [was] a focus that child-centred educators have been arguing for decades" (p112). If Miller's view is accepted, this would seem to further support *Te Whaariki's* siting in the postpositivist, reconceptualist tradition.

On the other hand, other writers point to the strong links early childhood has traditionally had with the largely positivist tradition of developmental psychology (Bloch, 1992; Goffin, 1996; Katz, 1996; Lubeck, 1996; Stott and Bowman, 1996). Bloch argues that whereas the school sector "gradually incorporated more critical sciences into [its] research and traditions in the decades from 1960 to 1980 ... early childhood education, until recently, did not" (p8). In the New Zealand context, Smith's (1996) view that childcare research is only now beginning to attend to the total ecological context of childcare, lends support to Bloch' argument.

According to McNaughton (1996) and Cullen (1996) the *Te Whaariki* draft draws extensively on the developmental tradition. However, whereas McNaughton appears to view the theoretical underpinnings of the draft as 'all but' uncontestedly developmental, Cullen suggests a theoretical tension between the influence of its developmental

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philosophy and the grounding of the curriculum model in social and cultural contexts, albeit with a weighting toward developmentalism. Whilst I agree with Cullen as to the existence of tensions between the underpinning developmental and sociocultural theories, my own view is that influences 'other than' developmental theory, play a stronger role in the *Te Whaariki* model than Cullen seems to suggest.

Ritchie (1996), for example, emphasises the links between *Te Whaariki* and critical pedagogy. With reference to the final version of *Te Whaariki*, Ritchie argues for 'siting' the document in critical discourse on the basis of its acknowledgment of cultural context, its learner-centredness and its advocacy of empowerment, reciprocal, pedagogical relations and reflection. Like Ritchie, I would also suggest that, there are strong links between *Te Whaariki* and critical pedagogy, though I would stop short of 'locating' *Te Whaariki* within critical discourse, because of 'cross-currents' of the sort Cullen (1996) refers to above. I would further suggest, that links with critical and reconceptualist pedagogy were at their strongest in the *Te Whaariki* draft and that much of what was edited out in the final version involved statements integral to these linkings. The only notable exception to this trend, as far as I am aware, is that the final version includes a more explicit reference to the work of Urie Bronfenbrenner (p19), one of the few developmental theorists to draw attention to the importance of sociocultural context.

Also relevant to any consideration as to where each version of *Te Whaariki* might be most appropriately sited, are the final-version changes concerning assessment, which it was suggested in chapter two, evidence a prescriptive, positivist influence. Other final-version changes reflecting attempts to bring *Te Whaariki* closer in line with the new curriculum framework for schools, include the advocacy of competition as a curriculum goal, as is consistent with a market model, and the matching or redefining of each of the four *Te Whaariki* principles in terms of their 'equivalents' from the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Ministry of Education, 1993b).

Especially salient to a consideration of the *Te Whaariki* curriculum model are the four framework principles. Like Bruce (1996), I regard these as "fundamental" to the *Te Whaariki* model (p4). And so, for example, I would argue that these four principles embody the core 'other than' developmental theory, underpinning the *Te Whaariki* model, a core which Cullen's (1996) interpretation, in my view, does not sufficiently emphasise.

First and foremost is the principle of empowerment (1993, p26), which as seen in the preceding discussion, links with critical or emancipatory curriculum discourse. As with the notions of empowerment in emancipatory discourse, the *Te Whaariki* draft links empowerment issues with issues of social equity and is especially emphatic about equity obligations in relation to Maori (1993, p13). Tilly Reedy's (1995) address on *Te Whaariki* to the sixth early childhood convention,

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"Knowledge and Power Set Me Free", presents a view of the knowledge-power relationship underpinning the guidelines, which I see as similar to the Foucauldian notion of power and knowledge as an "indissoluble couplet" (Apple, 1991, pvii). Significantly, in the final version, a number of the references to empowerment disappear and those that remain tend to define the concept in a more utilitarian way, such as: "enhanc[ing children's] sense of themselves as capable people and competent learners" (1996, p30).

The other three *Te Whaariki* framework principles comprise the principle of holism and the principles of "family and community" and "relationships". The principle of holism argues a broader view of learning than that offered by the traditional cognitively-dominated orientation (Reedy, 1993) and as such can be seen as consistent with reconceptualist, particularly feminist discourse, which seeks recognition of domains such as the emotional. Carr (1992a) emphasises links between the latter two principles and a social reconstructionist approach, which emphasises the reconceptualist theme of the importance of context.

The Role of the Teacher

Also salient to a consideration of the *Te Whaariki* curriculum model, is how the role of the teacher is conceived. Earlier in this chapter it was suggested that a positivist view of curriculum implied that the teacher was someone whose job was simply to implement the curriculum

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content prescribed. The *Te Whaariki* draft proposes quite a different view.

The *Te Whaariki* framework principles of holism and social constructionism call upon early childhood practitioners to 'know' their children in the context of their daily lives and to act responsively in light of that knowledge. The *Te Whaariki* draft talks about early childhood curriculum needing to be humanly appropriate, nationally appropriate, culturally appropriate, developmentally appropriate, individually appropriate and educationally appropriate (1993, p13). Implicit in such a contextualised positioning of curriculum, the majority of which is notably edited out in the final version, is a call for teachers to continually exercise their professional judgement.

Along with the emphasis on professional judgement *Te Whaariki* embodies a corresponding emphasis on reflection, a key theme in most postpositivist or reconceptualist curriculum discourse. This emphasis on the role of reflection is evidenced in the *Te Whaariki* draft's quite sweeping recommendation that, "reflective questions provide a useful first step in the planning and evaluation of the programme" (1993, p116).

The title metaphor of 'weaving' curriculum suggests that the teacher is viewed as a key participant in the process of constructing curriculum. However, the *Te Whaariki* model not only proposes that practitioners are viewed as active agents of curriculum construction at a centre

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level, but as the development project demonstrated, practitioner input at a curriculum policy level was seen as critical. To have existing practice play such a prominent role in the construction of the national guidelines is very different to technical approaches to curriculum which as seen, appear to have little need for the involvement of 'grass roots' practitioners in the curriculum policy arena. Thus it can be seen that the role of the practitioner is pivotal to Carr and May's (1993a) notion that "a curriculum should change and develop" (p129).

Cullen (1996) cautions that there is likely to be a negative side to *Te Whaariki's* approach of being substantially guided by current practice. Cullen suggests that in drawing heavily on the developmental tradition of the early childhood field, *Te Whaariki* leaves itself vulnerable to conservative, normative interpretations, that will fail to take account of the curriculum model's emphasis on differences in sociocultural contexts: "the most likely outcome is that the guidelines will be interpreted on the basis of existing philosophies and practices with an 'overlay' of the new terminology." (p118). Cullen's view as to the likelihood of this scenario, centres on doubts as to whether early childhood practitioners will be able to grasp the "theoretical richness which should guard against the use of the guidelines as a prescription" (p123). Cullen suggests that without adequate quality training and ongoing support for professional development, practitioners will founder on "the abstract concepts and sophisticated body of knowledge contained in Te Whaariki's rationale and structure" (p122).

In similar vein, Nuttall and Mulheron (1993) describe *Te Whaariki* as representing "a major learning curve" (p4) for early childhood practitioners and suggest there is a danger that early childhood practitioners will simply respond to *Te Whaariki* by saying, "oh but we do this already" (p7).

The issue of how able the early childhood community is to engage with the challenge of Carr and May's vision of curriculum guidelines as the focus of ongoing debate, reflection and review, and the notion of curriculum as highly contextualised and as needing to be held as problematic, that is, as needing to be continually, reflectively and critically re-examined, is an issue that is at the heart of the current study. If Cullen's assessment of the situation is correct, perhaps there will need to be a generation of work before early childhood will be 'ready' to engage with such a challenge.

In addition, if one looks at the changes in the final version, one could well conclude that had these been the curriculum guidelines at the centre of the video-focus project, they would have presented quite a different 'vision' for the practitioners to engage with. Perhaps comments Carr made in 1992 can help to illuminate this 'shift' in vision. Carr (1992a) suggested that at that time, the *Te Whaariki* draft's model of care and education and the model of education reflected in the national curriculum principles, constituted a model "mismatch" (p67). She argued this based on the contrast between the early childhood curriculum principles (empowering linked to

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community, reciprocal, and holistic) and the school sector model's "concern with pre-planned and measurable learning objectives, a community defined as a modern competitive economy, an instrumental basis for decisions about what will be in the curriculum, and a focus on basic subjects..." (p67). Now the final version of *Te Whaariki* has moved closer to the school sector model through:

(i) the introduction of prespecified learning outcomes;

(ii) the new advocacy of competition;

(iii) the closer leaning toward a more traditional content-based notion of curriculum;

(iv) some reworking and downplaying of the Principles;

(v) the editing out of some key statements integral to what I would describe as *Te Whaariki's* reconceptualist approach.

It could be argued that these changes are evidence of a 'mismatch' of the type Carr was referring to, and if this is so, it is a 'mismatch' that is now within the final version of *Te Whaariki* itself.

CHAPTER FOUR

ACTION RESEARCH

It was stated in the opening chapter, that a 'fundamental' of the current study, was its commitment to action research, in the interests of facilitating critical pedagogy. This chapter looks at how the notion of action research 'informed' by such a critical interest, compares and contrasts with that involving a positivist or technical interest, or an interpretivist or practical interest. Also discussed are post-modern/post-structuralist perspectives on action research, many of which echo the post-modern/post-structuralist themes identified in the previous chapter. In the concluding section consideration is given to what bearing these views have on the current study.

The chapter 'tracks' developments in action research discourse from the time the term first came to prominence, to the present-day debates. Prominent in this overview, because of their relevance to the current study, are developments in the use of action research in teaching practice and curriculum.

Tracking developments in action research discourse

The term 'action research' first came to prominence in the United States, in the 1940s, through the work of Kurt Lewin. The original target group for Lewin's programme of action research were U. S. field

workers trying to improve relations between minority groups. Lewin's idea was that much needed social change might be achieved if theory and practice (research and action) could be developed together. It was an approach opposed to theoreticism, that is the separation or divorcing of theory and practice.

As seen in the introductory chapter, the Lewinian spiral, which is probably Lewin's best remembered contribution to action research, describes a series of cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. It should be noted, however, that there continues to be considerable debate as to how significant the spiral is and how it is to be interpreted. As McTaggart (1996) puts it:

> The Lewinian...spiral has created serious confusion about the idea of action research, the fundamental feature of which is collective reflection by participants... It is a mistake to think that slavishly following the 'action research spiral' constitutes 'doing action research'... Action research is not a 'method' or a 'procedure' for research but a series of commitments to observe and problematise through practice a series of principles for conducting social enquiry... We can say that the spiral makes explicit the need for acting differently 'within the study' as a result of progressively learning from experience (p248).

It is in the action research 'tradition' which McTaggart describes here as involving a series of commitments to problematise the research principles through practice, to progressively learn from experience and to act upon that learning, that the current study is located.

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An important focus in Lewin's work was the internal dynamics of groups that would make action research and ultimately social amelioration, possible (McTaggart,1991, p7). It was, as Kember and Kelly (1993) observe, in the field of group dynamics and human relations that Lewin's ideas initially flourished and continue to flourish today. Certainly, the perception of action research as helping to facilitate group process was a key factor in its use in the current study.

As far as Lewin's influence in the field of education is concerned, as Kember and Kelly (1993) note, Lewin himself worked on action research programmes with teachers and from around 1946, his ideas became very influential in the areas of curriculum research and development at the Horace Mann Lincoln Institute of Teachers' College, Columbia, particularly in the work of Stephen Corey (Goodson 1946, cited in McTaggart, 1991). However, despite some pockets of influence, the consensus seems to be that initially at least, action research failed to take hold in the field of education (McTaggart,1991; Kember and Kelly, 1993; Carr, 1995).

A number of writers (e.g. McTaggart, 1991; McKernan, 1991; Kember and Kelly,1993; Carr,1995) attribute much of the initial negative response to action research, to the strength of the conventional educational research establishment. This response is perhaps hardly surprising, if as Carr (1995) suggests, action research represented an attempt to challenge "the conservatism and elitism of academia, the

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theoretical orientation of conventional social research, [and] the increasing technologization of social life" (p100).

As Sanford (1970) described it in "Whatever happened to action research?", a paper he delivered to an audience of American social psychologists:

> I would say now that action research never really got off the ground, it was never really influential...After World War II the separation of science and practice was institutionalised and it has been so ever since...I would say that we have separated - and institutionalised the separation - of everything that - from the point of view of action research...belong together (p129, cited in Carr, 1995, p101).

Action research resurfaced in Britain in the 1970s, under the influence of curriculum theorists such as, Schwab (1970, cited in McTaggart, 1991), Stenhouse (1975) and Elliott (1978, cited in Mckernan, 1991). This resurgence of action research is commonly linked to the strengthening of curriculum as a field of enquiry (McTaggart, 1991, p21).

Drawing on Kemmis (1988), Kember and Kelly (1993) relate the revival of interest in action research to several factors:

> 1. A strong interest among educational researchers in helping practitioners deal with problems of practice.
> 2. A broad methodological interest in interpretive or illuminative methods which attempt to define the problems of the field in ways which represent the understandings of practitioners.

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3. A growth of collaborative curriculum development and evaluation work.

4. An explicit commitment to addressing social and political problems of education through participatory research carried out by practitioners on problems of immediate and more general public concern (p3).

Though Schwab is not an advocate of action research, his work can be seen as having an affinity with its basic ideas. His work was important in promoting the notion of curriculum enquiry needing to engage teachers as key participants. Also significant was Schwab's emphasis on "the practical" as distinct from "the theoretic", what he termed "practical deliberation" (1970, p5, cited in McTaggart, 1991, p22). Schwab's argument was that theories should be used eclectically to inform action rather than prescribe it.

Stenhouse's (1975, 1986) notion of "teacher as researcher", which was touched on in the previous chapter, was particularly influential in promoting the notion of enquiry by practitioners. Stenhouse's view was that all teaching ought to be based on research and that research and curriculum development were the preserve of teachers. Other writers have subsequently challenged the notion that so much of the power in determining curriculum should be vested in teachers. Drawing on the work of Gibson (1985), Webb (1996) argues the case for also hearing the voices of other 'stakeholders' in education i.e. students, parents, employers, professional bodies, government (p150). For Stenhouse (1975), however, the curriculum was a means of studying the problems and effects of implementing any defined line of teaching. His main emphasis was on the curriculum development process enabling

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practitioners to gain increased understanding of their work and thus improve their teaching: "we are concerned with the development of a sensitive and self critical subjective perspective and not with the aspiration to unattainable objectivity" (p157).

John Elliott, whom McKernan (1991) describes as "having probably done more to advance the cause of curriculum action research than anyone" (p22), worked under Stenhouse on the Humanities Curriculum Project (1967-1972), then as co-director with Clem Adelman in the Ford Teaching Project (1973-1975). He was later involved in the dissemination work of the Classroom Action Research Network [CARN] and in designing and facilitating the Teacher-Student Interaction and Quality Project (1981-1983).

In 1978 Elliott published *What is Action Research in Schools?*, which McKernan (1991) credits as the first complete analytic account of the action research concept (p22). Two key concepts in Elliott's (1990) advocacy of action research were, (a) the notion of teaching as theory-building and, (b) the notion of research as a self-reflective process in which teachers examined the theories implicit in their own everyday practice. Elliott's view of the theory-practice relationship contrasted with the predominant rationalist assumptions of the time, which held, "that good practice consists of the application of theoretical knowledge and principles which are consciously understood prior to it" (p3). Elliott's own approach seems to link with Glaser and Strauss' (1967)

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notion of "grounded theory". As McKernan (1991) puts it, action research can be described as grounded curriculum theory (p4).

Schon's (1983) study of *The Reflective Practitioner* was another that provided increased support for the notion of enquiry by practitioners. As McTaggart (1991) points out, although Schon's examples did not include educational practitioners, his focus on knowledge as acquired through and attendant upon professional practice, represented a significant challenge to the theory-practice dualism.

Further developments in conceptions of action research revolved around what is sometimes referred to as the 'Deakin view' (McTaggart, 1991, pv), that is the work of the Deakin University Action Research Group in Australia, founded by Stephen Kemmis. This view (e.g. Carr and Kemmis 1986; Grundy, 1987; McTaggart, 1991) held that action research needed to be conceptualised more broadly in terms of social theory and attempted to establish action research as the praxis of critical social science. McTaggart notes that the critical impulse in Australian action research was paralleled by similar advocacies in Europe (Brock Utne, 1980, cited in McTaggart, 1991, p41).

As would be expected from the previous chapter's discussion, action research based in critical theory embodied an expressly political agenda. For example Kemmis and McTaggart (1988a) describe action research as:

a form of collective self reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out... (p5).

As McTaggart (1991) puts it, advocates of critical or emancipatory action research not only sought the transformation of individual practitioners and the profession of teaching, but ultimately a transformation of the language, organisation and practice of education (p30).

Latterly, the coupling of action research and critical theory is being increasingly called into question, as the contemporary debate between modernism and post-modernism/post-structuralism, touched on in chapter three, starts to take hold. Much recent critique of action research based in critical theory, echoes the sorts of post-modern/post-structuralist themes identified earlier. On the one hand there is a focus on deconstructing many of the foundational concepts of critical theory, such as the concepts of emancipation, empowerment and rationalism. As Webb (1996) puts it: "The idea that, through rational debate, the structured differences which inhabit society may be brought to consensus is in line with Habermasian thought but antithetical to what has come to be called 'post-structuralism'..." (p151).

As I argue in the last chapter, post-structuralism has also challenged critical theory's "totalising" tendencies and the way it seeks recourse

to principles such as human justice, which Webb (1996) terms its tendency to evangelical orthodoxy; post-structuralism has also challenged the emphasis critical theory puts on the macro, socio-cultural level.

On the other hand, alongside the debate as to how problematic and contestable the core notions of critical action research are, there is a 'reconstructive' focus emerging in action research discourse, that is a focus on how action research is to take account of the challenges of post-modernism. Jennings and Graham (1996), for example, talk in terms of reconceptualising action research through exploring "the possibilities of dialogue" between modernist action research and post-modernism (p165). Their view is that post-modernism and post-structuralism may usefully supplement and modify action research modes of data analysis.

One of the examples Jennings and Graham (1996) give of post-structuralist theory's potential contribution to strengthening modes of analysis is Foucault's concept of power. Like Ellsworth (1989) whose views on power were discussed in the previous chapter, Jennings and Graham see Foucault's notion of power as a relational activity, as better able to take account of the multiplicity of the power dynamic. Jennings and Graham suggest that Foucault's idea of relationships of power rather than the singular term power prompts a much-needed focus on the 'how' of power and that this widens the scope from the unduly narrow 'who' and 'why' questions of power endemic to action

research. As Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983, cited in Jennings and Graham, 1996, p 175) observe "[if]...power is not a thing or the control of a set of institutions...then the task for the analyst is to identify how it operates" (p185).

Constructing a typology of action research?

According to Carr (1995), by the 1980s action research had become "nothing less than a full blown 'movement' sustained by a large number of teachers, teacher educators and educational researchers and supported by numerous institutions and research agencies in Britain, Australia, continental Europe and the USA" (pp101-102). In the New Zealand context, Webb (1996) suggests that in the 1990s action research is currently the fastest growing orientation towards educational and staff development (p139).

With the ever-burgeoning breadth of activities that legitimately termed action research projects were seen to cover, advocates of action research based in critical theory tended to become increasingly concerned about establishing the parameters of action research. Central to much of their dissatisfaction with how action research was being theorised, was the way that in America, action research had in a sense been appropriated by the dominant positivist research paradigm and repackaged as little more than a set of practical problem solving techniques.

One way that critical theorists sought to marginalise functionalist approaches to action research and at the same help establish it as the praxis of a critical social science, was by using Habermas' theory of knowledge-constitutive interests to differentiate three kinds of action research: technical, practical and emancipatory. While the catalyst for the construction of this typology may initially have been the issues of debate between critical theory and positivist social sciences, the focus has since broadened to include issues of debate between modernism and post-modernism.

In the writing of critical theorists like Carr and Kemmis (1986), Grundy (1987), Tripp (1990) and Zuber-Skerritt (1996) a key emphasis was, and continues to be, on placing *technical* action research on the margins of action research. As Carr and Kemmis (1986) put it:

> To the extent that this is action research at all, this form may be described as *technical* action research...The aim [of which] is efficient and effective practice, judged by reference to criteria which may not in themselves be analysed in the course of the action research process. Moreover, the criteria may be 'imported' into the situation by the facilitators, rather than emerging from the self reflection of practitioners (p202).

Carr and Kemmis (1986) distinguish *practical* from *technical* action research on the basis that the former treats the criteria by which practices are to be judged as problematic and open to development, rather than treating them as given (p202).

Tripp's (1990) approach is to describe technical, practical and emancipatory approaches more broadly in terms of the social theory each is seen to support. Thus Tripp describes the technical approach as tending to treat the social world as if it were part of the natural world. The practical approach he describes as recognising the difference between the two, but accepting the social world as it is. The emancipatory approach he sees as not only recognising the difference between the natural and social worlds, but as critiquing and seeking to improve the latter by, for example, making it more egalitarian (p 160).

Zuber-Skerritt (1996) differentiates between technical and emancipatory action research by drawing on Argyris' (1980) notion of "single-loop learning" and "double loop learning". Zuber-Skerritt contrasts the technical, functional, short-term orientation of single loop learning defined by Argyris as "any detection and correction of error that does not require change in the governing values" (p14), with the double-loop learning of emancipatory research, which does. (Zuber-Skerritt, 1996, pp90-91).

Zuber Skerritt (1996) also picks up on Glaser and Strauss's (1967) notion of "grounded theory" and suggests that the empowerment of participants to construct grounded theory constitutes a definitive aim of emancipatory action research. Zuber-Skerritt's proposal seems not unlike Elliott's (1990) notion of teaching as theory building, referred to earlier, and yet Elliott's work along with that of Stenhouse (1975) and Schwab (1970, cited in McTaggart,1991) is held to reflect a practical

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rather than emancipatory interest. Such points of intersection between the practical and emancipatory models tend to highlight a degree of difficulty differentiating between them. Grundy (1987), for example, describes the emancipatory interest as "largely incompatible" with a technical interest, though not only compatible with but "in a sense, a development of a [practical interest]" (p99). Likewise Carr and Kemmis (1986) and Tripp (1990) identify basic incompatibilities between technical and emancipatory action research, but suggest that practical action research can and often does serve as a stepping stone to emancipatory action research.

In a more recent paper, "Emancipatory Aspirations in a Post-modern Era" Kemmis (1996) suggests links between the practical or interpretivist interest and various streams of post-modernist and post-structuralist thought. The latter Kemmis describes as a second wave of interpretivism, that is following in the legacy of theorists like Schwab (1970, cited in McTaggart) and Stenhouse (1975), but taking a "more radical perspective" (p207) Unfortunately Kemmis does not explore his proposed alignment of practical/interpretivist and post-modern/ post-structural very fully. Indeed Kemmis himself concedes that he is at risk of taking liberties with the variety of post-modern perspectives at play and acknowledges that the thrust of his paper does not allow for an adequate analysis of the competing claims of the different approaches. Nevertheless, Kemmis puts a sufficiently convincingly case for relooking at how radical a departure from earlier interpretivist positions some post-modern and post-structuralist positions really are,

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particularly with regard to the work of pragmatists like Cherryholmes (1993, 1994) and Webb (1996).

Critique of the technical, practical, critical typology includes suggestions that the three models are unnecessarily restrictive, that they are theoretical abstractions that cannot be substantiated and that they have insufficient bearing in reality. Kember and Kelly (1993) for example, argue that in practice all three models can be and are used for the improvement of teaching and that it is difficult to conceptualise them as totally separate (p4). McKernan (1991) and Webb (1996) take issue with what they describe as the drive to conformity that critical action research imposes. McKernan does so as an advocate of the practical approach as epitomised in the work of John Elliott, referred to earlier, while Webb's position reflects a conviction that action research needs to address itself to the challenges of post-modernism. One of the examples Webb uses is the notion that critical action research necessarily involves group process. Webb argues that this is merely a vestige of the interest early members of the Frankfurt School had in psychoanalytical (intra-individual) analysis. Webb cites Jack Whitehead's (1991, cited in Webb, 1996, p152) work as a case in point, arguing that it exemplifies legitimate action research involving individual rather than group process, that is in Whitehead's case, his own.

The role of the facilitator

McTaggart (1991) points out that although action research as Lewin conceived it always involved collaboration between researcher and researched, Lewin did not consider it a process which could be identified primarily as the property of people who were not professional researchers (p4). It was later work undertaken in action research in the 1970s and 1980s which emphasised practitioner action research done by individuals and groups, often without the involvement of professional researchers.

A number of writers suggest that the way group facilitation is approached, is an important means of differentiating between different forms of action research. Advocates of action research based in critical theory tend to support Carr and Kemmis' (1986) proposal that, "different kinds of 'facilitator' roles establish different kinds of action research...[i.e.] 'technical', 'practical' or 'emancipatory'..." (p202). Tripp (1990) for example, suggests that an inservice educator introducing action research to a group of teachers often determines from the outset key characteristics of the project, e.g. whether they see action research as more a process of individual and group enlightenment and empowerment than a process to achieve a successful problem solution. As Tripp points out, it is often the facilitator who first raises the kinds of issues that could turn a practical action research project into a socially critical one.

One of the key criteria used to differentiate between types of facilitation and consequently between types of action research is the kind of power/autonomy relationship between practitioner and facilitator (e.g. Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Grundy,1987; Winter, 1989; Tripp, 1990; McTaggart, 1991). So for example, Carr and Kemmis (1986) describe the focus of technical action research and the criteria used to evaluate it as "imported" by the facilitator. In similar vein Tripp (1984) defines the process in technical action research as "other-directed" that is, not directed by the practitioner participants (cited in McTaggart, 1991, p27). McTaggart (1991) points to concerns that such an approach lends itself to the co-option of teachers into a research enterprise over which they have no control (p28).

Carr and Kemmis (1986) describe the role of the outside facilitator in practical action research, sometimes termed a "process consultancy" role, as involving co-operative relationships with practitioners and involving the facilitator acting as a sounding board helping practitioners to articulate their own concerns, plan strategic action for change, monitor the problems and effects of changes and reflect on the value and consequences of the changes actually achieved (p203).

Elliott's (1990) account of the *Humanities Curriculum Project*, a project involving facilitators acting as process consultants, suggests that such a role involves a degree of separateness between facilitators and participants. According to Elliott, during the course of the project, the research team's view of the relationship between external academic

change agents and practitioners, within the curriculum development process, underwent a transition, that is from the idea of both groups engaging in collaborative research into the problems of developing the pedagogy, to the idea of each party focusing on a quite distinct domain of practical investigation (p16).

Rather than pursuing the notion of *collaborative* inquiry, the hallmark of an emancipatory approach, Stenhouse, who was the director of the Humanities Curriculum Project, contrasted the "first order inquiry" of the teachers and the "second order enquiry" of the team of curriculum developers, whereby the teacher's inquiry was seen as focused on the problems of developing pedagogical strategies consistent with educational aims and principles, while the development team's inquiry was focused on the problems of facilitating teachers' reflective capacities. The change agents' second order inquiry into the problems of facilitating the development of teachers' reflective capacities, was seen as supporting and at times intersecting with the first order pedagogical inquiry of teachers (Elliott,1990, p16).

As Zuber-Skerritt (1996a) explains it the notion of collaborative participation in emancipatory action research means that, "there is no hierarchy", that is, that although participants contribute in different ways, they contribute "on an equal footing with everyone else" (p5). Hence, as Carr and Kemmis (1986) point out, a corollary of the need to work collaboratively is that in a generally collaborative group, the role of the facilitator is one which can, in principle, be taken by any

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member of the group. Carr and Kemmis further suggest that an outsider taking such a role persistently undermines the group's collaborative responsibility for the process. Tripp (1990) is also of the view that socially critical action research is probably most effective when undertaken and directed by the participants. As Tripp notes 'help' can easily turn into direction.

While critical theorists tend to regard the involvement of outside facilitators in emancipatory action research as not truly desirable, they do not rule out the possibility of their involvement. Carr and Kemmis (1986) for example, suggest that outsiders can legitimately take some kind of facilitative role in establishing what they term "self-reflective communities of action researchers" (p205).

Notwithstanding some degree of acceptance, the involvement of outside facilitators, particularly as related to the broader issue of power differentials amongst participants, is a hotly contested area in critical action research discourse. Several advocates of action research based in critical theory have looked for various means of 'finding a way through' such difficulties. For example, Winter (1989) proposes that one of the principles of action research should be that, as attempted in the video-focus project, the initiators of the research put themselves 'at risk' alongside other members through the process of the investigation:

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Through involvement in the investigative process, we will therefore not only submit others' accounts to critique, but our own also...We are not 'consultants', advising others how to change, nor 'catalysts', unchanging facilitators of others' development....In engaging in a process where the purpose is change (innovation at the level of practice and the development of new insights concerning practice) we are part of the situation which is undergoing change (p60).

Winter suggests that any provisional interpretations of the situation, made by the person initiating the research, should be regarded as 'resources', alongside those of other members. Likewise any decisions the initiator makes as to the questions at issue, and thus what is and what is not relevant, together with their expectations of the sequence of events the investigation is to involve, are all seen as needing to be open to transformation and in this sense 'at risk' (p60).

Carr and Kemmis (1986) suggest that where status and power differentials exist among participants these must be suspended to allow collective work to begin, but combated in the course of that work (p31). However for a growing number of writers such facilitation/power issues are beyond questions of strategy. These writers argue the issues are foundational, a manifestation of inadequacies inherent in critical theory. Sears (1992) argues:

The reconstruction of social relations rather than the construction of personal meanings is the primary goal of the critically based, qualitative researcher. Critical ethnography unravels and exploits the interplay between individual consciousness and the social order. While the qualitative researcher searches for meaning to enhance a

phenomenological understanding of the human condition, qualitative inquiry in the hands of the critical theorist may become a nomothetic press stamping all that falls onto it with its own identity (p152).

An increasing number of writers are looking to post-modernity for answers (Webb,1996). Post-structuralist challenges relevant to how the role of the facilitator is conceived have already been touched on in the previous chapter. For example, Ellsworth's (1989) contention that individual narratives need to be understood to be partial both in the sense of being "unfinished, imperfect, limited and partial in the sense of partisan, that is project[ing] the interests of 'one side' over others" (p97), specifically targets critical educators/facilitators and their failure to recognise the partisan nature of their own positions. Similarly challenged is the ability of critical educators/facilitators to take sufficient account of the way in which rational argument serves the interests of those who have the power to form and define rationality. As Ellsworth (1989) observes, post-structuralism has facilitated a "devastating critique" of the use of rationalism as a tool of domination, "of the violence of rationalism against its Others" (p96).

This chapter has identified key criteria in the action research typology comprising technical, practical and critical orientations. This chapter has also identified a number of substantive challenges which a post-modern/post-structuralist orientation poses to action research discourse. It has been suggested that such challenges call for researchers involved in critical action research, as in the case of the

current study, to embark on an 'interrogation' of the assumptions underpinning their methodology, or at the very least to engage in 'dialogue' with the post-modern turn. It is amongst such initiatives to construct an area of 'intersection' between a critical and a post-modern orientation, that the current study locates itself.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE USE OF VIDEO FEEDBACK

The last two chapters, which have looked at curriculum and action research respectively, show how differently these are conceived, according to whether the perspectives drawn on are positivist/technical, interpretivist/practical, critical or post-modern. This chapter explores how those paradigm differences are played out in video discourse, that is how video is used differently by researchers who draw on different paradigms, so that the use of video in the current study can be 'sited' in relation to these different approaches.

This chapter highlights several aspects of using video as feedback which are especially pertinent to the current study. Video as an agent of change is one of the key themes discussed, together with questions concerning the social and professional context in which video is used, in particular the role of the videoer or facilitator. Also significant are studies focussing on the affective impact of video feedback involving self-viewing.

Video has been hailed as making it possible to solve some of the research problems of previous eras, problems such as inter-observer reliability, selectivity and validity (Walker, 1985). Some writers refer to video as being able to provide "an objective record", as does Winter,

(1989, p16). Others, like Biggs (1983), talk more cautiously of video "radically reduc[ing]" the possibilities for distortion (p218).

Notwithstanding the fact that video has generated a reasonable degree of interest in educational discourse, it has seldom been, as in the case of the current study, a central focus. Most writing about video only focuses on its use incidentally. Hence within methodological texts, video tends to be identified as one of a number of methods of data collection (e.g. McKernan, 1991). Likewise, when used in a research project, the use of video is characteristically only briefly mentioned, in a methods context. In similar vein, Forman (1996) identifies video as one of a number of possible instruments of 'documentation' for use in recording children's behaviour for the purpose of teachers studying children (p7). The following sections elaborate on differences in approach to the way video has been used.

Video : the technical approach

An early 'wave' of writing in which the use of video received attention was in professional development within technicist, competency-based teacher education programmes, as for example in its use within microteaching (e.g. Allen and Ryan, 1969). A technicist, skills-training approach seemed to remain particularly dominant in the field of special education, for those working with 'at risk', special needs and severely handicapped children (e.g. Bisno and Cavallero, 1986).

One early childhood study which provides a useful illustration of some of the key features of a technical approach to using video in professional curriculum development, is Palmerus and Pramling's (1991) use of video for skills training with childcare staff in Sweden. The study involved thirteen staff from three childcare centres, who firstly underwent a week of training in the focus intervention programme: *Mediated Learning Experiences* (MLE), (Klein, 1989, cited in Palmerus and Pramling 1991, p 403). Videos of staff-child interaction, taken at four-weekly intervals, were then used to provide feedback to staff on their performance in relation to MLE criteria. Palmerus and Pramling report that the videos were analysed "*for* all staff members" by members of the research team and "positive behaviour exhibited by staff was reinforced" (p403, my emphasis).

In this Swedish study, the analysis of videos of enacted curriculum was seen to be the role of the researchers, the staff developers, the 'experts'. It appears that in this study it was not seen to be the practitioners' role to critique their own practice or the curriculum innovations they were working with. Rather, as with the Virginia Highscope study (see chapter three, Walsh et al 1993), the role of practitioners in Palmerus and Pramling's study was one of technical implementation; the MLE criteria were not up for question. This was despite the fact that MLE's developer reported its use as limited (Klein, 1989, cited in Palmerus and Pramling 1991, p409); subsequently Palmerus and Pramling supported this finding, in terms of the negative effect of MLE's overuse in the study centres.

Video has also been used for skills training where peers act as models, for example, in McKernan's (1991) study, videotape records were made of teachers using recently developed curriculum materials as "exemplars" for use in other schools.

An interpretivist perspective

Casswell (1983), who overviews the 'take up' of video technology during the 70s and 80s, in the fields of anthropology, psychology and education, argues that there was an increased rate of video usage that can be attributed to a "paradigm shift" taking place in those fields of research, that is from a positivist to an interpretivist approach. Casswell suggests that video 'came into its own' in the move away from the application of experimental method, that is of the observation of individual behaviour in a carefully structured laboratory situation, to a more interactive focus looking at social behaviour in context:

> The scenario of participant and researcher viewing videotaped recordings of the participant's behaviour and constructing through their interactions a conceptualization of the recorded behaviour is a far cry from the psychological experiment in which manipulations are applied to the black box and selected responses are measured (p19).

According to Casswell, video was particularly well-suited to the new interpretivist emphasis. Certainly, as far as the current study is

concerned, the way that video lends itself to the sort of interactive dialoguing Casswell describes, was a key factor in its selection.

Particularly significant amongst those influenced by the interpretivist approach, is Marion Dadds (1993, 1995), whose work is based on the notion of teacher as action researcher, in the tradition of John Elliott. Dadds (1993) recounts the experiences of two award-seeking, teacher action researchers, who chose to use video feedback from their own classrooms, as part of their self-study assignment. As in the current study, Dadds (1993) focuses on the use of video in an action research context, for feedback.

Dadds' central thesis is that discourses about human emotion need to be integrated into what are essentially cognitive accounts of professional learning. As Dadds points out, adopting the reflective mode in studying one's own professional work is not simply a cerebral activity. The role of the affective domain in professional development, as we will see, is something that seems to be particularly pertinent where the use of video as feedback is concerned, particularly when it involves self-viewing.

While there is no doubt that Dadds' work is very relevant to the current study, there are significant differences between the two studies in terms of the focus of video feedback; these need to be kept in mind when considering the implications of Dadds' findings. In Dadds' (1993) study, the focus was self-study and self-viewing, so that video

feedback targeted the individual teachers and their interactions: "I simply kept Laura in view of the video camera during the second of the morning's sessions" (291). This contrasts with the current study where video feedback focussed on the *enacted* curriculum, that is in the first instance on the children, and what *they* were experiencing. Thus video feedback in the current study was first and foremost for the purposes of curriculum development, which means that the focus of the video feedback was broader than the individual adult participants. While self-study and self-viewing were seen as key components, it was not intended to have an unremitting focus on teacher-child interactions. It was expected that this would help 'dilute' the extent to which the participants felt that their professional practice was under the spotlight.

Video : a focus on micro-process

As well as providing the sort of common focus or communication 'bridge' between researcher and participant which Casswell describes above, video data has been generally regarded as better able to answer postpositivist calls for a heightened focus on situational factors. Video recording is able to incorporate more of the numerous aspects of a situation that might be of potential relevance. Mehan (1993), describes large scale positivist surveys and experiments as "masking" such factors and contrasts this with the very close analysis which video facilitates. Mehan's (1973, 1978) own early use of video in educational research, provides some useful examples of what such close observation and analysis can uncover. For example, in videotaping and analysing tester-student interactions in standardised

testing situations, Mehan found a consistent pattern of tester-student collaboration in the production of test results, e.g. tester interventions leading a student to modify their answer. Such interventions could result in a student's test score varying as much as 25% (reported in Mehan, 1993, p95).

While Mehan saw positivist methodology as ill-equipped for dealing with the complexity of social life, he was also sensitive to interpretive studies being dismissed as too much focussed on 'micro' processes, thereby ignoring 'macro' level influences. Thus, while Mehan celebrated the close analysis that video facilitated at a microeducational level, his interest in micro process was very much socially rather than individualistically located. He firmly believed that examining events closely would reveal social structure in the making : "if you grasp enough of the social interaction, then you have the social structure" (p99).

Mehan describes what video has to offer as follows :

> When we listen to and look at life closely, which is what a videotape...enables us to do, we see and hear a different version of social life than is otherwise possible. [For example] we are able to examine more critically the factors which have played a dominant role in explanations of school performance. 'Social class', 'heredity', 'ethnicity' and other important concepts which have been said to determine school success do not operate as simply and as directly as we are lead to believe by much of the prevailing social theory (p103).

Using video to promote critical pedagogy

Also particularly salient to the current study, because of commonalities of purpose, is work which focuses on the possibilities video offers in promoting critical reflection within the context of teaching. Grant, Richard and Parkay's (1996) study at Washington State University, illustrates some of the key features of such an approach. The study focuses on the use of 'video cases' of classroom practice in promoting critical analysis and reflection in preservice teacher education. Student teachers were to "deconstruct" the video "text", to question the assumptions about teaching and learning underlying various classroom interactions captured on videotape (p19).

This Washington State University study draws on theories of reflective teaching which suggest that reflective teaching includes an ability to look at a situation from a variety of perspectives (Brandt, 1994, cited in, 1996, Grant et al, 1996, p4; Smyth, 1989, cited in Grant et al, 1996, p4). Reflective teaching is also seen to involve a way of evaluating and creating learning situations based on previous experiences (Ross, 1989, cited in Grant,et al, 1996, p4), and to incorporate levels of reflection from technical through to social /ethical thought (Sparks-Langer & Colton, 1991, cited in Grant, et al, 1996, p4).

Like this study, Grant et al (1996) hold a view of teaching (and by implication curriculum) as problematic. Unlike the view of the teacher

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as technicist whose role is that of relatively straightforward implementation, Grant, et al seek to illuminate the ambiguity and perplexity of teaching (p4) and to highlight that, "there are no clear-cut, simple answers to the complex issues teachers face" (Wasserman, 1994, p606, cited in Grant, et al, p5). Grant et al's interest in the use of videotapes is in helping "future teachers [to] examine the pedagogical social, ethical and political contexts of classroom practice" (p16).

Using video : the postmodern interest

While I have not come across educationally-focussed studies using video, which argue a post-modern perspective, there are post-modern themes to be found in studies which have already been referred to. For example, the interpretivist interest in micro process, referred to above, is very much consistent with the post-modern emphasis on "the importance of the local", referred to in chapter three (Anyon, 1994, p118).

There are further echoes of post-modernism in Mehan's (1993) approach, in particular in his attempts to explore the use of video "as a tool to hear students' voice" (97). I would suggest that this can be seen as consistent with the way post-modernism is framed as a politics of difference in which voices from the margins challenge the voice which is dominant.

Then too, if as Schutz (1962) has claimed, one takes it for granted that one's perspective on an object of common knowledge is essentially the same as anyone else's (cited in Biggs, 1983, p213), then Grant, et al's (1996) study can be 'read' as an attempt to have video help illuminate differences in perspective, by offering opportunities to experience how differently people can perceive the same data and opportunities to explore those differences.

Video feedback as an agent of change

As implied in most of the studies so far referred to, a key theme in video discourse, is video as an agent of change. This is so across a range of applications which include the use of video as model or exemplar, video as case study and video as feedback. However, a number of writers whose focus is video as feedback, note that while video can make people aware of the possibility of change, partly because of a dissatisfaction with what is seen on tape, video may also be instrumental in affirming or reinforcing existing practice. As Biggs (1983) observes, the reason why one response rather than the other occurs, is often unclear (p217).

In general there is a strengthening theme in the discourse on video as feedback, which denotes a growing appreciation of the complexity of the process and the importance of contextual factors. As Dowrick (1983) wryly comments with reference to the therapeutic use of video feedback: "after the initial wave of exuberance, it began to emerge that

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obtaining positive results was not as simple as letting loose a camera crew in a psychiatric ward " (p107).

Video as self-viewing

Most of the work referred to so far involving video as feedback, centres on self-viewing or self-confrontation, that is the process taking place when one sees oneself on video, a process often described as actor becoming observer (McRea, 1983; Trower and Kiely, 1983; Biggs, 1983). Biggs (1983) contrasts self-observation during normal social interaction with what happens when the self is seen on video. Drawing on the work of Jones and Nisbet (1972, cited in Biggs, 1983, p220) and Kuiken (1976, cited in Biggs, 1983, p220), Biggs argues that when involved in a social event, actors are primarily concerned with effects being made on the outside world and that this allows for only minimal monitoring of other aspects of their personal behaviour.

Biggs' focus here is the more in-depth monitoring of one's own behaviour that video allows, but findings from an earlier study using videos in early childhood centres (Haggerty and Hubbard, 1994), indicate that the process of practitioner becoming observer, also enables better monitoring of a host of other work-related factors, which at the time practitioners may be unable or too busy to notice. It is the facility video has for capturing detail and then enabling it to be 'unpacked' that one of the participants in the Washington State University study seems to be referring to in suggesting: "when we

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analyze video we are freezing and reviewing the action, so we can discuss things in more detail. There is just so much that is going on at different levels in any classroom.."(Grant, et al, 1996, p14).

Video : the cosmetic response

While many writers may be excited by video feedback because of the possibilities it offers for reflecting upon events in a very concrete way or as Biggs (1983) puts it, for making the raw material of self reflection available (p221), it is worth noting that what self viewers often first focus on is primarily body image. The following comments of one of the participants in Dadds' (1993) study provide an illustration :

> I had what I read in a book - the cosmetic reaction they call it, when you look at yourself. Oh god do I really look like that. Do I really move like that. Do I - the tone of my voice shocked me because it was too high and I always thought I had a rather deep voice (p294).

Hargie and Saunders (1983) point to evidence from a number of researchers which suggests that individuals viewing themselves for the first time are often preoccupied with the size, shape and general characteristics of their face and body and ignore their actual behaviour (p159). McRea (1983) warns about self viewers for whom concerns about body image become a 'sticking point'.

However, Macleod (1977), suggests that increasing exposure to videotape may help self viewers move beyond the 'cosmetic'

response. He reports that over time the student teachers he worked with typically "became preoccupied with the behaviour they see and the consequences of that behaviour" rather than with their own appearance (p203, cited in Hargie and Saunders, 1983, p159).

Seeing the self 'anew'

Biggs (1983) compares the process of self-viewing with being able to 'step outside' oneself and suggests that it is the ability to distance oneself from ones own behaviour that leads to increased choice and change:

> A space emerges between the viewer and the object of attention, the self as actor. This distance leaves room for an area of ...'free play' around the object of attention, which means it can be more easily described in different ways and from different points of reference. Immediately that one is distanced from events, questions arise...One becomes aware of alternatives to the existing state of affairs, or at least to the possibility of what the self is not (p221).

In similar vein, Dadds (1993) suggests that some ability to separate one's sense of self from the 'self' reflected in the data appears to be essential "in order to see and think anew" (p301).

Holzman (1969) talks about "de-automization", a process whereby viewers experience "a shake up" of habitual attitudes or the typical defensive stance towards the self, a process of "facing an image of

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ourselves which we had learned not to see" (pp207-208, cited in Biggs, 1983, p221).

It could be argued that these observations do not just apply to self-viewing situations. For example, when Holzman refers to "de-atomization", this need not only refer to seeing the self anew, but to seeing one's situation differently, or as in the case of the current study, seeing the environment one works in differently. This is what Winter (1989) touches on, when he talks about the opportunity video offers for repeated viewings as enabling the 'surprising' features of a situation, initially glossed over as familiar, to be noticed (p22).

Video as exposure

Dadds (1993) suggests that, "if self-study is to do more than scratch the surface of our understanding, then self exposure has to be the order of the day as layers of preconceptions and assumptions are peeled away for examination and evaluation" (p290). Dadds also acknowledges however, that when such a process challenges, questions and perhaps threatens established self-images, this may result in feelings of instability, anxiety, negativity and even depression,

"especially...if the 'self' we come to see in self-study is not the 'self' we think we are, or the 'self' we would like to be" (p287).

Some writers are concerned about the potential for video feedback to undermine a person's sense of self, particularly in situations where video feedback is used as a psycho-therapeutic technique. Beck (1976) for example, argues that patients suffering from severe depression characteristically have cognitive sets within which they negatively distort self-related information; Beck also argues that they apply the same interpretive bias to video feedback (cited in Trower and Kiely, 1983, p182). Trower and Kiely suggest that when such patients draw evaluative inferences of personal failure, helplessness, etc., from negative information, they experience lowered self-esteem and either increased depression or anxiety and worsening of performance (p182). Trower and Kiely warn that while "so-called normals will cope with, and benefit from, [video feedback] ...certain vulnerable individuals, including many patients, may not "(p191).

This is not to say that Trower and Kiely's (1983) review of the "clinical" literature on video as therapy, is consistently signalling that difficulty coping with video feedback is the preserve of some notional group of 'others', who fall outside of the 'normal' range. Certainly, the dispositions to be high in self-consciousness and or low in self esteem, which as Trower and Kiely point out, are often associated with the 'vulnerability' referred to above, seem to be relatively common. Notably, both of the teachers in Dadd's (1993) study had problems in this regard, and both experienced difficulty reconciling themselves to the video self-feedback. While one teacher ('Jo') appeared to be helped through her self-deprecating negativity by some timely mediation on the part of her husband, the other teacher

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('Laura') was so disturbed by what she saw that "her video was locked away for two years before she felt sufficiently stable, emotionally, to review it" (p295).

The view that such problems may well be experienced more widely, appears to receive a measure of support from Holly (1991), who suggests that teachers "have rarely suffered from high self-esteem" and that while teachers undertaking self-evaluation need to develop "the observer mind", they tend to start by being judgemental rather than analytical (p6, cited in Dadds, 1993, p295)

The difficulties referred to in association with self-evaluation should not necessarily be seen as peculiar to video. Dadds (1993), for example, recounts the case of a teacher for whom clinical depression and anxiety were the end result of an appraisal process which had involved negative feedback from colleague interviews. Nevertheless, it would appear that viewing the self on video can be a very affecting act of exposure.

Using video in a professional context: group dynamics

In arguing for greater attention to the nature of the learning climate in which self-study, self-evaluation and developmental self-appraisal take place, Dadds (1993) suggests that :

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action research communities and critical friends may be able to play a vital and positive role in contributing to the emotional context and learning climate of the research enterprise, by offering 'unconditional positive regard' (Rogers, 1969) whilst helping to sustain the questioning, challenging basis of professional development (p298).

While it is easy to accept Dadd's view of the positive role that critical friends can have in the process of self-evaluation, it is also important to acknowledge that there can be tensions between the 'critical friend' and 'support' roles; Dadd's view does not do this fully.

For example, when one considers the experiences of the two teachers in Dadds' own study, it is clear that in Jo's case, the 'significant other' who was able to help her through her initial negativity, took a purely supportive and very positive role:

When I wrote down my first reactions, everything I wrote down was criticism...[but]...when I was watching it with Michael he started to pinpoint - he didn't have any criticisms - he pointed out all the positive things (p295).

On the other hand, Laura, as Dadds tells us, kept the entire experience to herself for two years, failing to draw on "the resources of the supportive, if critical, group" of the Masters degree course she was part of (p291). Dadds goes on to suggest that in doing so Laura did not access group resources which "may have been able to help her to construct and sustain positive self regard while undergoing the critical

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and challenging scrutiny demanded of self study" (p291). However, Dadd's view is not wholly convincing: it is difficult to be certain that such a group would be willing or able to deal with the psychological issues involved. One could argue that in Laura's situation, given the nature of the group and Laura's connection with it, it is hardly surprising that she felt unable to submit such an emotionally charged episode to the critical scrutiny of course colleagues.

Perhaps Trower and Kiely's (1983) observation that self-viewers believe that other viewers will see them "in all their imperfections", also helps to shed some light on Laura's reticence (p191). Interestingly, Trower and Kiely go on to argue that self-viewers continue to believe in this "transparency" despite evidence that other people do not have "the same emotional investment [and]...will be less likely to attend to [their imperfections], remember them or evaluate them" (p191). However, in Laura's situation, it could be said that she had good reason to expect her practice would be 'under the spotlight'.

The tension between being supportive and being critically analytical is supported by Goffman's (1969) observation that people go to some length, probably unconsciously, to help any accepted member of the community to maintain face by ignoring faulty performances or giving justificatory accounts (cited in Trower and Kiely, 1983, p191). Schratz (1996) also appears to allude to this same tension, when he suggests that one of the strengths of his work involving collaborative, self-critical inquiry through memory, is that the group is able to engage in

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critical discussion, because the person doing the written recollection does *not* need to be protected by the other members of the group.

While Dadd's (1993) view that there is much positive potential from group sharing is easy to accept, the matter of how, or indeed whether, this potential can be realised is clearly very complex. I would argue that not only does it bring in the emotional as well as analytical capabilities of group members, as Dadds suggests, but that as writers like Ellsworth (1989) remind us, it ties in with the social and historical context of the group and relates very strongly to the power dynamics operating in that particular group.

The role of the videoer/facilitator

Biggs (1983) is one writer who highlights the definitive importance of the power relationship between the videoer and the videoed. He suggests that the person being videoed, needs be able to exercise a degree of control over the process and sees two ways this might happen. Biggs firstly advocates that the videoer or facilitator, "should respect [the]...superior personal knowledge of [those videoed] and work with them to discover the meaning of any insights gained in the context of the viewer's own sense of history" (p211). Biggs also highlights the issue of who exercises control over the video tape once it has been made and points out that the more private the use, the more control this gives those videoed over the way meaning is constructed about the videoed events.

Focusing on who 'owns' the tapes, on how much 'say' participants have over how they are interpreted, or on how much respect those views are accorded, not only helps illuminate further areas of difference between some of the key studies looked at during the course of this review, but can help highlight the issues associated with a given approach for the role of videoer/facilitator. In Palmerus and Pramling's (1991) study, which as discussed, draws on a technical or positivist view, it is the researchers/facilitators *not* the participants who take away the tapes, interpret them and decide on their meaning.

Dadds' (1993) study is quite the opposite. After the videoing session, the tapes appear to be left with the participants for them to evaluate, for them to determine their significance and for them to relay their findings back to course colleagues and tutors. Ostensibly there is no overt 'interference' in that process on the part of Dadds, whose role is that of videoer, researcher, facilitator and course tutor. However this raises questions for me about situational factors which 'cut across' what might appear to be a participant-driven exercise; Dadds' role in the study is one such factor.

While there is no doubt that Dadds' study attempts to relay the participants' perspectives of the self-study videoing experience, the study is also very much about Dadds' perception of those experiences, and this raises concerns about the way Dadds seems to downplay that role. This occurs through the overall lack of specificity concerning the dynamics between Dadds and the participants, and in the way Dadds

depicts her own role as if oblivious to the implications of the power relationships involved, most obviously with regard to her position as tutor in the award-bearing courses the participants are involved in. Dadds' complicated role-combination of videoer, researcher, facilitator and course tutor remains unexplored, with no tensions or role conflicts acknowledged.

In Grant, et al's (1996) study , which deals with video cases rather than video feedback, the issues relating to ownership are quite different because the students who view the videos are viewing exemplars of other professionals rather than themselves and their own practice. Nevertheless, Grant, et al also focus on the need for participants to have their say and for their views to be given a considerate hearing. These writers also argue that it is the facilitators' role to challenge participant assumptions. They describe facilitators in their study as having to:

> walk the thin line between challenging student assumptions and stifling honest expression [since] students will not learn if all their ideas are uncritically affirmed; nor can they learn if they are afraid to speak for fear of having their responses criticized (pp18-19).

Here again the tension between support and critique referred to earlier is apparent. Grant, et al's (1996) position seems to be that this duality of role is necessary if students are to learn from the consideration of videotaped case studies, rather than just have their prior beliefs confirmed by them. They also highlight the unpredictability involved in more participatory or collaborative approaches to the critique of

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videoed episodes of teaching practice and suggest that processing the excerpts in this way can be difficult for facilitators :

> Faced with something as ambiguous and complex as a videotaped case study, preservice teachers may notice or say almost anything or nothing, and it takes a skilled instructor to make such a session meaningful and productive (p17).

In contrast to Dadds' (1993), Grant, et al's (1996) study places enormous emphasis on the role of facilitator suggesting that the effectiveness of video cases in promoting critical reflection in student teachers is "highly dependent" on the facilitator's approach (p17). Perhaps it is also worth noting that in describing the university's efforts to incorporate the use of video cases into various courses in the teacher education programme studied, Grant, et al report that rather than using video to prompt reflective discussion, most instructors tended to select video in order to 'illustrate' a theoretical or methodological concept they were teaching in their courses (p15), which raises questions as to just why this was so.

This chapter has highlighted several of the attributes of video which account for its central role in the current study including:

(i) the possibilities video feedback offers as an agent of change and as 'the raw material' of reflection, analysis and critique

(ii) the ability of video feedback to provide relatively 'raw', that is unprocessed observation records, which can capture a number of the key features of something as complex, dynamic and detailed as real life encounters, or in the case of this study, early childhood curriculum 'in action', in a way that "radically reduces" the possibilities for distortion (Biggs, 1983, p218).

(iii) the facility for video feedback to act as a communication 'bridge' or common platform between researcher and participants, and within participants' teams

This chapter raises some key issues associated with the use of video feedback, most especially the importance of attending to the context in which it is embedded: personal, historical, social, professional, cultural. In terms of using video as self-feedback, one is also alerted to its potential affective impact and to the possibility of individuals suffering detrimental effect.

CHAPTER SIX

METHODOLOGY

In the preceding chapters a number of statements have been made about the methodology of this study. These include the study's commitment to action research, in particular to a dialectical relationship between theory and practice, and to a view of curriculum as problematic and highly contextualised, which suggests the need for practitioners to constantly critically interrogate curriculum discourse. As indicated in the concluding section of chapter four, the study's interest in the use of video can be notionally located within the 'intersection' of critical and post-modern discourse. This chapter elaborates on how such a perspective translated into the research process of this project.

Figure 3. provides a diagrammatic overview of the project, showing that the project came under the 'umbrella' of action research and that this was reflected in three key aspects of the project i.e. the research process, the use of video feedback and the role of the researcher-facilitator. This chapter looks at each of these aspects in turn. Figure 3. also identifies the three core research questions of this project:

What use do the participants make of the project in relation to:

-the curriculum development process

-engaging with the draft curriculum guidelines, *Te Whaariki*

-their own professional development

Figure 3.

THE UMBRELLA

RESEARCH

ACTION

APPROACH

The role of Researcher Facilitator

The Research Process

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J

What use did the participants make of the project in relation to:

Curriculum Development   **Te Whaariki**   **Professional Development**
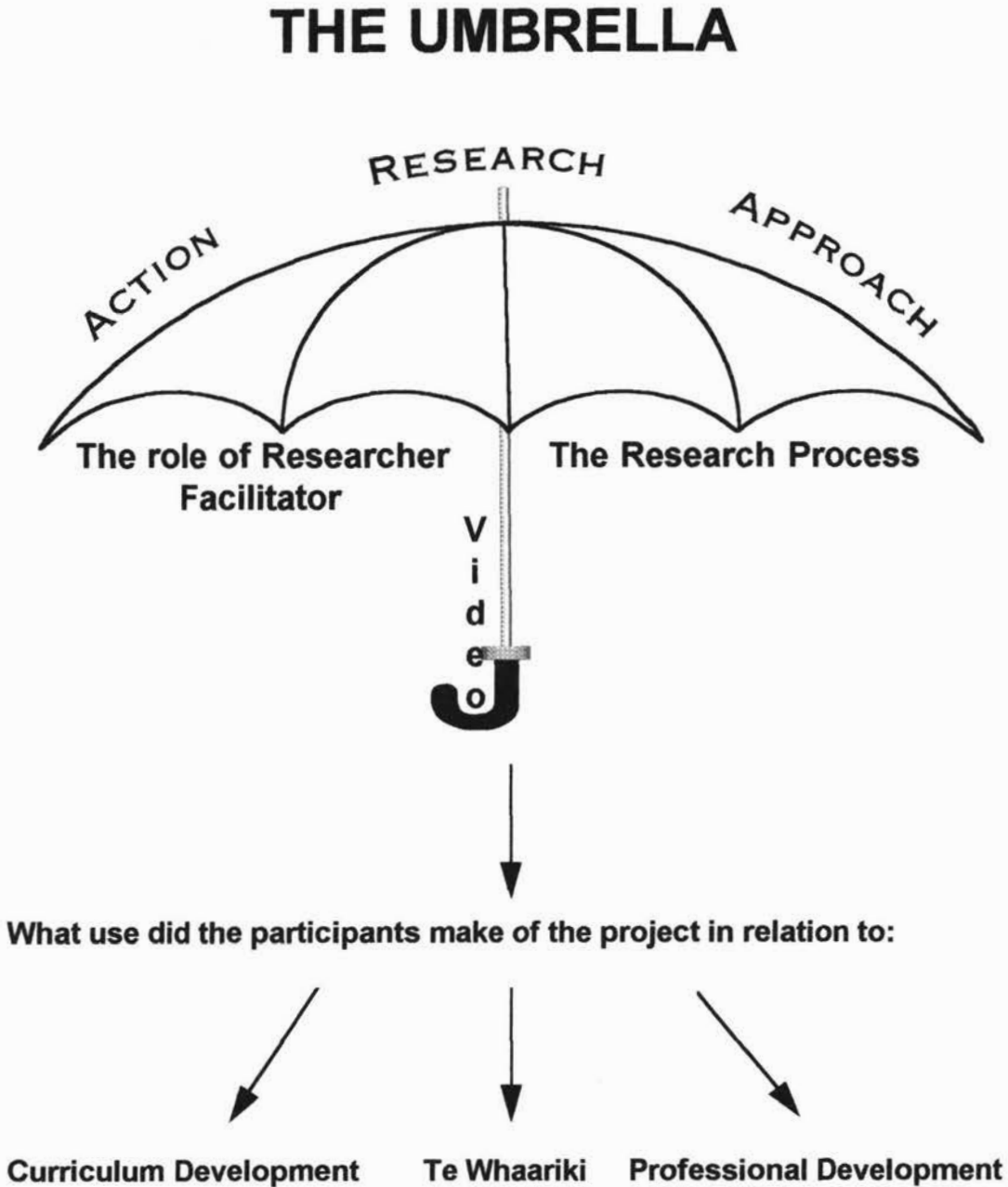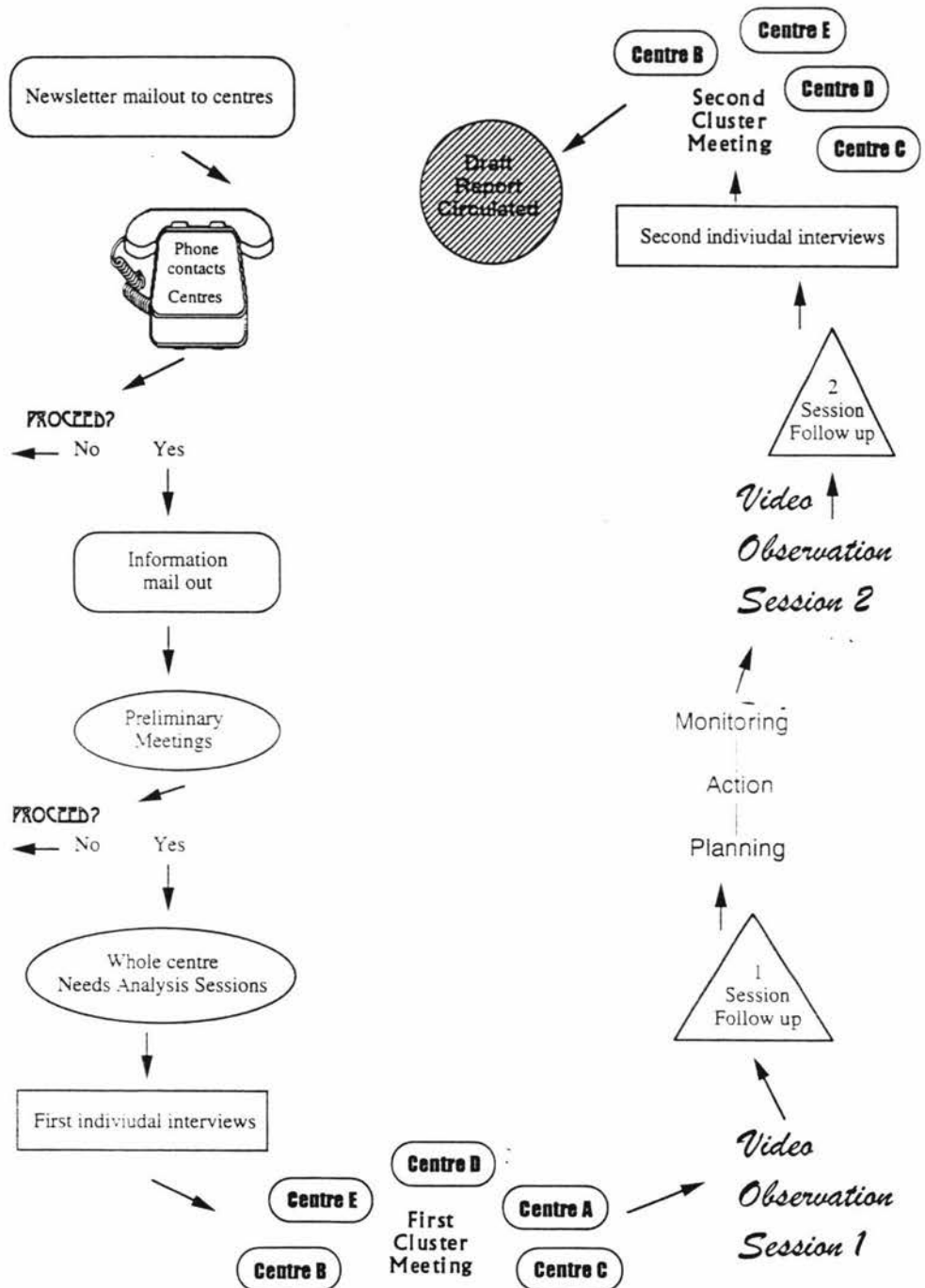
The Research Process

Figure 4 shows the sequence in which the project sessions occurred.

Figure 4. **THE RESEARCH PROCESS**

Time line

The timeline following gives some idea of the flow of the project process for the centres involved.

Generally speaking there was about a month between each of the project sessions:

preliminary meetings 15/3/95 - 23/3/95

entry interviews 6/4 /95- 27/4/95

training needs analysis meetings 27/3/95 -19/4/95

first five-centre cluster meeting 29/4/95

first videoing sessions 2/5/95 - 30/5/95

first video follow up sessions 6/6/95 - 3/7/95

second videoing sessions 7/7/95 -4/8/95

second video follow up sessions 16/8/95 -29/8/95

final interviews 14/9/95 - 24/10/95

second cluster meeting 4/11/95

circulating the draft findings 28/2/96

Selection of participating centres

The project used what Goetz and LeCompte (1984) call "criterion-based sampling", a process of determining the criteria or attributes the "units of study" are to have and locating the "units" that match the combinations of criteria required (cited in Merriam, 1988, p48). This

method is also referred to as "purposive" (Chein,1981, cited in Merriam, 1988, p48) and "purposeful" (Patton, 1980, cited in Merriam, 1988, p48). The underlying assumption of the method is that if one wants to discover, understand or gain insight, one needs to select the sample from which one can learn most. As Brewer and Hunter (1989) explain it, purposive sampling is where the units of study are theoretically defined as important and not statistically defined to be representative (cited in Farquhar, 1993, p35).

Although in a number of respects this project treated the "unit of study" as the early childhood centre, I was mindful of the need to maintain a tandem focus on the individual participants (Haggerty and Hubbard, 1994).

The selection criteria

As is consistent with an action research framework, the over-arching selection criterion was the participatory requirement, such that the sample was to comprise centres and participants who wanted to be involved in the project, who shared an interest in its aims and who wished to engage in its process.

In addition, the group of five early childhood centres was to include:

- at least one centre from each of the childcare,

playcentre and kindergarten services

- at least one full time childcare centre

- at least one centre catering for infants and toddlers

- both private and community-owned childcare centres

- differing group sizes

- differing adult to child ratios

- differing levels of training among the staff teams

- centres servicing multi-ethnic communities

- centres with a sizeable proportion of families on lower

   incomes

- a 'special purpose' or 'special philosophy' centre

One of the key reasons for looking to include some different services in the sample i.e. playcentre, kindergarten and childcare and a 'special purpose' or 'special philosophy' centre was because of the particular challenge the diversity of early childhood services presents for curriculum and professional development initiatives. However, the sample did not look to include centres from either Kohanga Reo or Pacific Island Language Nests, because as researcher-facilitator I did not see myself as having what Bishop and Glynn (1992) term the cross-cultural competence necessary to work in these settings.

The start of the selection process

The importance of the participatory requirement in an action research context was seen as meaning that when participants made their initial decision about whether they wanted to be involved in the project, they needed to be as well informed as possible and that they needed to be clear that they were able to 'opt out' if at any stage they no longer wanted to be involved. To this end, the preliminary written information which was prepared for all the early childhood centres that might want to participate, contained as much information about the project as seemed feasible. This circular was distributed as follows.

All licensed childcare centres in the Wellington region were mailed the circular and invited to apply. Where more than one applicant centre met the criteria, selection was made on a 'first come, first serve' basis. For the playcentre and kindergarten services, the selection process preferred by the respective organisations was used. Thus the Wellington Playcentre Association and Wellington Free Kindergarten Senior Teacher Team and Hutt-Wairarapa Free Kindergarten Senior Teacher Team, decided that the organisations themselves were to act in an intermediary or 'gatekeeping' role; the organisations suggested the centres from their service which they believed best suited the selection criteria identified.

Ministry of Education approval was obtained for the selection criteria (Appendix A) and for a list of potential project centres. Appendix B

profiles the five centres that eventually made up the sample; comprising a playcentre, a kindergarten, a Montessori centre, an owner-operator childcare centre and an employee childcare facility; and gives some details about each of the participants.

Participants/participating centres

The project participants were selected on centre-related rather than individual-related criteria. The one exception to this was that it was hoped to involve at least one, preferably two centres, in which participants had differing levels of training. It was however, my feeling, that the range of training levels amongst the childcare centres that applied to take part in the project, was 'better than average'. In fact given the screening and self-screening that tend to operate in projects like this, it is likely that the centres accessed were 'better than average' per se.

One issue that arose concerning the participant group, was whether ethnic background should feature in the selection criteria. In light of the issues Sears (1992) and others have raised, I was concerned about how I as a Pakeha researcher would maintain the integrity of the voices of participants from cultural backgrounds significantly different from my own. However I opted for a 'random' group rather than including ethnic background among the selection criteria. The participant group that eventuated, included one Samoan participant and one Tongan participant.

Preliminary meeting

Once centres were informed of their selection, a whole-centre session
of about an hour, was arranged. The main function of this session was
to give prospective participants any further information they required to
make an informed decision as to whether they wanted to confirm their
involvement in the project. When, and if, would-be participants
confirmed their involvement, a schedule of project sessions was
negotiated for the centre.

Training Needs Analysis Session

The training needs analysis session was a two hour, whole-centre
session, envisaged as a way of maintaining links with the other
Wellington College of Education *Te Whaariki* programme pilots. The
session was jointly facilitated by the researcher-facilitator of the project
and the co-ordinator of the overall College contract. It followed the
same format as training needs analysis sessions carried out by the co-
ordinator in other parts of the contract.

The training needs analysis session was looked upon as the first
'substantive' session, since the preliminary meeting was primarily
focussed on selection-related concerns. The purpose of the training
needs analysis session was to tease out what participants saw as the
curriculum issues and priorities for their centre.

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Individual interviews

There were two interviews scheduled with each participant, an entry interview and a final interview (ref Fig. 4), but not all participants were able to be re-interviewed. The re-interviewing of the playcentre participants proved most problematic. Thirteen playcentre participants completed a first interview, but I was only able to re-interview six. This was mostly due to participant 'fall-off', which a couple of the playcentre participants suggested was "quite normal", although two would-be interviewees were lost due to my having to reschedule interviews. In addition, one of the participants in Centre E, who was the centre's main reliever at the time of the first interview, was set to take up a more permanent part-time position when centre numbers allowed, but this did not eventuate and she left the centre.

All interviews were taped and then transcribed. Because of poor sound quality on some of the initial tapes, a microphone was used for the remainder. This meant that the recording equipment was less than discreet and therefore perhaps somewhat intrusive.

Entry interviews

The entry interviews were scheduled for up to an hour. The interviews were semi-structured, in that I drew up a list of questions and areas I wanted to explore (Appendix C), but did not prescribe the exact wording or sequence of questions beforehand. I wanted to be free to respond to the person I was interviewing and to the substance of each

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interview. Two important functions of the entry interviews were to get a better feel for professional development needs at an individual level and to help build rapport with each of the participants.

Final interviews

The final interviews were scheduled after the second video feedback session, but prior to the final cluster meeting (ref. Fig 4.). Participants were advised about a week beforehand what areas the interview would cover. These interviews were allocated an hour and a half each. Most took around that time; some were a little shorter and some longer.

Journals

As part of the project each centre was asked to keep a journal. It was hoped that the journals would be a way of keeping the project as something of an ongoing presence in the centre and that the journal could act as a net for project-related feedback that might otherwise get lost.

In light of work such as Tripp's (1987, 1988) on the use of professional journals in collaborative professional development projects, it was also hoped that encouraging centres to keep journals would have benefits for the centres themselves e.g. in promoting systematic recording of things relevant to the processes of evaluation, planning, actioning, monitoring, encouraging reflection and so on.

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Video Sessions

There were two, three-hour video sessions that involved me as researcher-facilitator spending two half-days in the centre videoing. The focus of the videoing was the 'enacted' curriculum, for as Grundy (1987) puts it, "ultimately... the curriculum is that which students experience in the learning environment" (p42). Furthermore, as I have suggested in chapter three, such a focus on curriculum 'in action' and on what the children are experiencing is at one with the approach taken in the *Te Whaariki* draft.

In the first videoing session, because of the likelihood of some adult participants being quite apprehensive about being videoed, I generally tried to avoid focussing too much or for too long on adult interactions. In the second videoing session, I tried to include those aspects centre participants had specifically asked me to follow up on.

Parent permission for videoing

A process for informing parents about the project and obtaining their permission for videoing was developed for each centre, in consultation with the participants. This included an information poster (ref. Appendix E) and permission slips (ref. Appendix F), (wording did vary slightly between centres). Centre participants took responsibility for liaising with parents, though it was agreed that if parents had substantive queries or concerns, I would also become involved.

After each video session was completed, a copy was made of the video and given to the participants for them to work through prior to a whole-centre 'video follow-up' session with the researcher-facilitator. Centres were free to organise viewing the videos in the way that best suited them i.e. whether participants watched the video singly, or in groups, or both and so on.

For the first video, participants were asked to select episodes that they saw as "significant", to think about why they saw them as significant and to consider what if any significance they saw the episode as having in terms of their programme. I hoped that this process would give me some insight as to how observation data about the curriculum tended to be processed in each centre and/or by each participant i.e. some sense of the 'modus operandi'. If centres wished to incorporate *Te Whaariki* into this process they were free to do so.

For the second video, *Te Whaariki* became the central focus. Participants were asked to look at episodes they saw as either:

(a) 'on target' with or 'reflecting something of' any of the principles, aims or goals of *Te Whaariki*

(b) indicating areas in need of attention in relation to any of the Principles, Aims or Goals of *Te Whaariki*.

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Video follow-up sessions

The video follow-up session was originally scheduled as a three hour, whole-centre session in which the facilitator-researcher and participants explored how each centre had analysed the video feedback. However, in the first 'round' of follow-up sessions, a further two-hour session was scheduled for two centres, because it seemed to both the researcher-facilitator and participants that the first video follow-up session left too much 'unfinished business' needing to be addressed.

The purpose of the follow-up meetings was to progress the curriculum development or professional development process. The focus was whichever aspects of the process seemed appropriate e.g. further analysis, identifying additional information required or shaping plans. In the second video follow-up session, the emphasis was on exploring the contribution of the *Te Whaariki* framework to the curriculum development process.

Cluster meetings

Two, three-hour sessions, involving as many participants from each of the five centres as could attend, were held during the project. The first of these 'cluster meetings' was after the first set of interviews. The second cluster meeting was the very last session (ref. Fig. 4.).

The decision to use cluster meetings was made because of:

(a) the benefits I had observed when I had used them as per the Ministry of Education contract requirements for the Wellington case study *Te Whaariki* Trial (Haggerty and Hubbard, 1994).

(b) having looked at how they were used in an action research project, involving a group of classroom teachers and staff from Deakin University : *The remedial reading group: A case study in cluster-based action research in schools* (Kemmis, 1982).

Although the use of cluster meetings in this project was on too limited a basis to hope for the "possibility of critical community" that Kemmis was aiming for in the Deakin University project (p167), the idea of providing opportunities for participants to discuss and compare ideas and experiences as a means of helping wider critical perspectives develop, still seemed sound.

Cluster meetings were also intended to offer opportunities for peer support. Given the power imbalance in the relationship between researcher-facilitator and participants, it was hoped that the cluster meetings could serve to empower the participants. For example, the second cluster meeting involved a report-back session where I as researcher-facilitator identified the patterns I saw emerging from the data. Participants were then asked to form groups to discuss what had been presented and to feedback either verbally in the plenary session, or via written notes from their small group discussion. It was hoped that such a process would make it as easy as possible for

participants to take issue with the way I had construed the data, for them to offer alternatives and so on.

Circulating the draft report amongst the participants

Due to unforeseen difficulties, circulating the draft report had to be delayed a month. As arranged, copies of the chapter "Findings and Discussion", from the interim report to the Ministry of Education (Haggerty, 1996) and a response sheet (ref. Appendix G) were delivered to centres. Three participants who had changed jobs had copies mailed out to them. Responses were collected from the centres a week later. Responses from the three individual participants were mailed back.

The Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee was to form the main link between the video-focus project and the other models being trialled within the Wellington College of Education, Professional Development Programme: *Te Whaariki* (ref. fig. 5). The advisory committee consisted of the project director for the college contract, the project co-ordinator for the college contract, representatives from the early childhood services involved in the development and/or delivery of the college contract, a representative of the tangata whenua, a college representative from the early childhood education preservice department, co-ordinators and advisers of the college's professional development team, the

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researcher- facilitator and two representatives from the childcare centres in the region (e.g. employer/ employee). The committee met three times.

Figure 5 shows how the video-focus project was positioned in relation to the overall College contract with the Ministry of Education.

Figure. 5.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

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                        │ Chief Executive  │
                        └──────────────────┘
                                 │
┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────────┐    ┌────────────────────┐
│   Advisory   │────│ Project Director │────│   Professional     │
│  Committee   │    │                  │    │ Development Unit    │
└──────────────┘    └──────────────────┘    └────────────────────┘
       │                      │
       │            ┌──────────────────────┐
       │            │ Project Co-ordinator │
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│Research/Facilitator│ │ Facilitators │ │ Inservice Tutors│
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│      EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES AND STAFF                │
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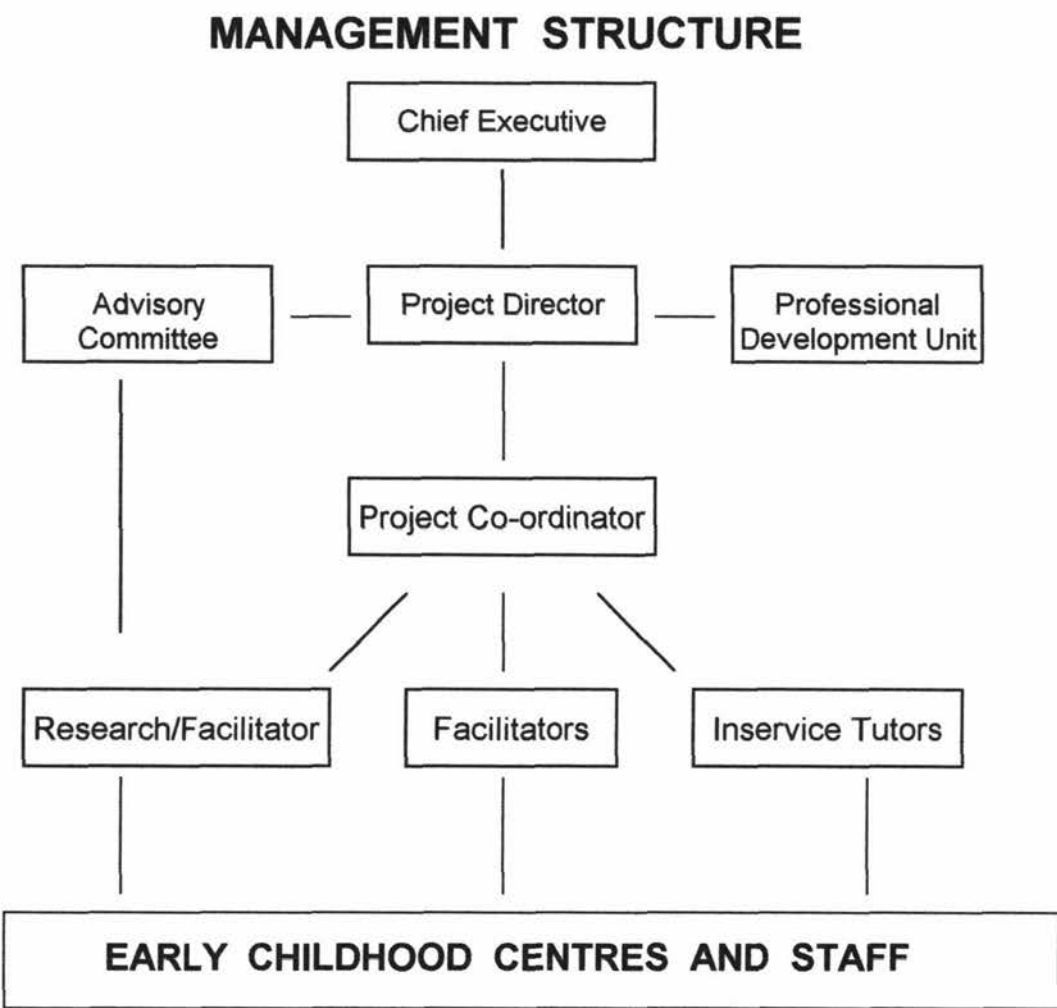
Using video feedback in action research

I suggested in the opening chapter that the function of video in this project was to create a 'text' of curriculum 'in action', for the purposes of critique. As noted earlier there are a number of similarities between this approach and that used by Tripp (1993). Tripp used journalled incidents, in the place of video episodes, as the basis for critique. However, as I have already suggested, video has a number of features which make it especially well suited to such a process.

Because of the collaborative interest of the current study, for example, it was especially significant that video as a medium lends itself well to group critique. Video can present observation data in a way that is easily accessible. There is an immediacy and succinctness to video. It can, for example, circumvent the sheer volume of words required to describe dynamic scenes with prose.

Tripp (1993) makes the point that for the purposes of critique, the journalled incidents he and the practitioners worked with, needed to be accurate and detailed (p32). My previous experience of videoing curriculum in action had suggested that it was precisely this need for accuracy and detail in the practice 'text' used for analysis, that made video so well suited to this task. For example, in the Wellington case study *Te Whaariki* trial, video observations enabled practitioners to see things that were happening in their centre, which they had not managed to see, even when an observation system involving both

anecdotal and running records was already in place (Haggerty & Hubbard, 1994). In addition, because video was perceived by the practitioners themselves as more accurate and as less prone to observer bias, this tended to mean it was more readily accepted as a worthwhile focus for group critique.

This is not to say that video feedback is to be regarded as providing an objective account, because for one thing, to do so is to ignore the selection or sub-sampling of naturally-occurring events, which the video record represents. Biggs (1983) says that to treat video as objective and to discount the social, personal and historical contexts that surround it, is to make "the empiricist error" (p218). Akin to Biggs' position, the use of video as feedback in the current project was based on the notion of situated inquiry. The meaning of the video record was seen as dependent upon situational factors involved in its enactment.

In similar vein Ramsay, Harold, Hawk, Kaai, Marriott and Poskitt (1990) highlight that with research data involving the likes of audio tape, it is sometimes necessary to go back to field participants for further information in order to understand the data. Using a transcript excerpt from Garfinkel's (1967) work to illustrate their point, Ramsay et al observe that, "without further information this [transcript] tells us little about the events that had actually occurred and indeed may lead to incorrect conclusions" (p87).

In the current project constructing meaning from the video tapes was envisaged as a collaborative affair involving the voices of centre participants as well as mine as facilitator. Within this, it was seen to be important that the superior contextual knowledge of the centre participants was respected. It was also recognised, however, that status and power differentials amongst the participants, especially between myself and centre participants, were in danger of cutting across such a process.

To take the above a step further brings us to other issues the project set out to explore, namely that of differing views and perspectives amongst the actors involved, not to mention the notion of what some feminist post-structuralist writers term the constantly shifting subjectivity, such that an individual's perspective on events changes, for example, over time (Lather, 1991, pxix).

The role of the researcher facilitator

Numerous writers have highlighted the pivotal role of the researcher in qualitative research (e.g. Lather, 1986, 1992; Merriam, 1988; Sears, 1992). Sears (1992) for example, argues that the methodological integrity in conducting qualitative inquiry ultimately rests with the integrity of the researcher (p149). In addition, as discussed earlier, writers like Sears (1992) and Ellsworth (1989) argue that the position of the critically-based, qualitative researcher is especially partisan and thus even more problematic.

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Critically-based researchers argue that it is the *kind* of power/autonomy relationship established between the researcher and participants that is the key factor in ensuring the integrity of the inquiry. In particular, they suggest that collaborative methodology can provide a safeguard against what Lather (1986) terms the danger of "rampant subjectivity" on the part of the researcher (p271). Winter (1989) suggests that collaboration between the researcher and the field participants allows access to complexity and alternative perspectives and that it allows the researcher in analysis "to move outwards from inevitably personal starting points towards ideas that have been interpersonally negotiated" (p56). Lather (1986) argues that collaborative or multiple perspective methodology is necessary for enhancing the "construct validity" of the research (p270).

This video-focus project used a number of collaborative processes in an attempt to counter the power differentials between myself as facilitator-researcher and the centre participants. Strategies to strengthen the voices of the participants and the validity of the study findings included:

(a) using direct quotations extensively throughout the report to enable the participants' voices to come through and as Winter (1989) advises, including extracts substantial enough to stand on their own and make a point in their own way, rather than using a one or two-line quotation to illustrate a point.

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(b) feeding back the 'bare bones' of the findings, including the categories emerging in the data analysis, to the participants, at the second cluster meeting, prior to completing a draft report

(c) providing participants with the findings and discussion section of the report in draft form, for feedback

On the other hand it should be noted, that in the video-focus project I was in many respects an outside facilitator, and that as discussed earlier, a number of critical educators are of the view that outside facilitation of action research is less than ideal (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Tripp, 1990; McTaggart, 1991); indeed some writers see it as likely to undermine collaborative process (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

My status as outsider in the video-focus project was not just a matter of my having come from outside the centres involved in the project. I was also accountable, and thus linked, to the three different institutions I was to report to i.e. the Ministry of Education, the College of Education, and the University. These allegiances seemed likely to compound my outsider status.

I was not, however, a complete outsider. Anne Meade (1985) described her position as researcher in *The children can choose : A study of early childhood programmes in New Zealand,* as "an insider

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(from the outside)" (p121). My position in the video-focus project was also something of an insider-outsider mix.

In terms of insider status, I too, like the participants, was a member of the early childhood community. My professional history gave me some appreciation of the context in which the centre participants worked and practical expertise to draw on. I believe that such background experience generally accorded me greater credibility and, with some participants, it constituted a considerable intersection of interest.

Winter (1989) suggests that the insider researcher's accountability to their community can work to the advantage of the research by imposing "a rigorous intellectual discipline, ensuring that the conclusions of the work are broadly based, balanced and comprehensively grounded in the perceptions of a variety of others" (p23).

I saw my continuing membership of the early childhood community as something that could also help keep me accountable for the integrity of my work, for example, with respect to what Dadds (1995) refers to as "practical validity" (p138). Perhaps too, it could be said that 'the community' acted in some sort of monitoring role with respect to the interests of the centre participants.

On the other hand, as Webb (1990) suggests, where insider researchers need to preserve the goodwill and trust of colleagues to maintain their professional role both during and after the research, this could be viewed as a constraint likely to distort the findings (p249). Krieger (1982) argues that insider researchers from marginalised groups have a particular vulnerability in this regard. For example, she talks about the pressure on the insider lesbian researcher from the lesbian community to have "her studies mirror not the reality of that community but its self-protective ideology" (p108). Given early childhood's position as a marginalised sector within the education system, perhaps my situation as a researcher-facilitator, with an insider interest, who is in-the-main supportive of critical theory, could be said to be somewhat vulnerable in this regard.

In light of the sorts of issues raised by both critical educators and those offering post-structuralist critique alike, and given my own discomfort and uncertainty concerning the role of the researcher-facilitator, especially as the advocate of critical process, my approach tended to be somewhat exploratory and tentative. I wanted to explore the possibilities of strengthening the collaborative process, while also maintaining a prominent focus on critique and on ethical considerations with regard to the centre participants.

This chapter has outlined what the research process of the video-focus-project involved for each of the centres. It has sought to clarify the context in which video-feedback was used in the video-focus

project, in particular the use of video feedback in the context of curriculum development and action research. It has also discussed the role of facilitator-researcher and highlighted some key issues concerning the position of the critically-based researcher. The question of the facilitator's insider/outsider status was a key focus. As will be seen in the following chapter, these themes are a continued focus in the study findings.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study focused on the use early childhood practitioners made of video-feedback of curriculum 'in action' in their centres, with regard to:

- curriculum development in their centre;

- 'engaging' with *Te Whaariki;* and

- their own professional development

While acknowledging that there is considerable overlap between professional development and curriculum development, this chapter looks at each of the above areas in turn and considers them as outcomes of the study. Section one focuses on video-feedback for curriculum development; section two on video-feedback and *Te Whaariki*; and section three on video-feedback for professional development. A central theme in all three sections is the potential of video as a tool for critical pedagogy. This is a continuing interest in the fourth section of the chapter, which focuses on other key elements of the research process of the video-focus project, in particular on the role of the facilitator-researcher and participant feedback on the research process. Section five concludes the chapter with a discussion of ethical issues relating to the use of video feedback in curriculum and professional development.

The data used in this chapter draws on individual interviews with project participants, and on written feedback from individuals and from centre-groups via journals, cluster meetings and in response to the report draft. Where individual interview material is referred to, an alphabetical coding is used to differentiate between the 27 participants, and protect their identity. However, where participant responses are deemed to be 'on sensitive ground', and/or where use of the alphabetical coding is not seen to protect identity sufficiently, the coding "anonymous" is used instead. Where written feedback from journals, from cluster meetings, or in response to the report draft is referred to, this is noted.

7:1 video feedback and curriculum development

This section reports on the use participants made of video feedback in curriculum development, that is on how video feedback impacted on the 'weaving' of curriculum at a centre level. On this count, participants reported a number of ways in which video feedback had been helpful:

(1) identifying problem areas-

We came into this knowing that we had some real issues to face...[in part that there was] something wrong with what we were doing and that basically we were too personally involved to see

what it was. Then when we saw the video it was like 'Oh, is this what it is?' (Participant P).

(2) seeing other approaches-

you noticed how wonderful some [team members] are, how good they are at catering to the kids' needs...like [team member's name] was just brilliant, the way she...(Participant E).

(3) 'de-automising' : rethinking habits and routines-

I had never really thought about it. It was something I had [also] let them do, then seeing it on video, gosh...it made me rethink allowing them to do that (Participant P).

(4) rethinking policies-

what we saw on that video, what we wanted to change...we did put down things like behaviour management policy because...it was a very limited policy...I mean it was very much how we would control [the children's] behaviour, how we would modify their behaviour...it didn't talk about them developing pro-social behaviour at all. Never even thought about it... (Participant K).

(5) discussing staff differences-

I think too the other aspect [is that] what I would have seen as a bit of a problem other people didn't and vice-versa so then we could thrash it out, like we did at that second meeting with you. I mean there were some issues that some people thought were an issue, some people didn't, so it was actually talked about. I think if you just

saw it written down on paper it wouldn't have the same effect (Participant K).

(6) making plans-

in terms of planning it certainly stops you and makes you focus and think about what is happening (Participant R).

The first video and the second video had really positive spin-offs in terms of making our programme planning quite a bit more easier and quite a bit more reflective. ...[I]t has also given us an opportunity to work in not so much a deficit model. [We felt we were continuously plugging gaps in lots of different ways]...We used the video to set term goals for our term ...that is where our term goals come from. It's where our planning for individual needs comes from (Participant H).

I would really like to transcribe that [video episode] because I think that is a really valuable observation. It really amazed me how [the child] worked the keys. He has obviously had some experience on the computer. And I thought 'We can probably build on that'. He obviously has an interest in that area and I think we could build and extend it-give him those opportunities again and he may be interested in trying our computer, our proper plugged in one (Participant L).

(7) effecting change-

I think that was a very critical thing that started up. It changed our whole evaluation system and changed it to cater to the children's needs a lot more. So that was really positive and had a huge effect on the quality of interaction with the kids (Participant E).

(8) monitoring progress-

It was really positively reinforcing about what's happening in our centre and you can see evidence of our programming and all the hard work and the effort that you put into it (Participant H).

I felt a lot happier about the second video. I felt that we were actually making some progress which... 'cos interestingly enough I actually watched the first video again

Intvr. After the second one...?

Yeah. And I thought ...we have made some progress. The children ...on the whole they are a lot more involved and ... staff were more involved and there was less 'to-ing and fro-ing' and much more settling down and doing what we were supposed to be doing, I suppose (Participant P).

(9) initiating discussions between parents and staff about individual children -

from the excerpt of the video I realised ...that she has had problems and we really haven't empowered her as much as we could. Her mother said this to me later and she's right (Participant A).

a much more valuable tool for families to actually see than lots of the written stuff that we have on children, particularly in this area...it's much more alive than a piece of paper (Participant H).

(10) communicating aspects of centre philosophy, values, aims, or practices-

It's that whole link with the community really. It's all there for them to see and that is pretty exciting really because that is something

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which is very hard to do. It is probably the hardest part of our job and I don't think I've worked in a centre yet that has done it very well. And I think this is a way that it could be done without it being threatening to anybody (Participant B).

Participant B's comments highlight the potential video has for presenting experiences, a viewpoint, a message, a philosophy, or an approach in a way that limits, if not avoids, the judgemental or patronising qualities that so frequently characterise teachers' verbal information-sharing endeavours with parents, or for that matter facilitators' exchanges with professional development participants.

One of the key attributes of the video feedback, as identified by the participants, was the amount of information it gave about individual children:

> I have learnt quite a lot about ... different children through the video, quite a lot- like [name of child], I never realised how much he used his words with children, whereas with adults he tends not to. Just really important little aspects like that, that are really quite major (Journal, Centre E).

> Some of the children we just don't hear a peep out of, but we know that they speak with other children, but when you come into hearing distance they stop talking. So, just hearing their language skills (Journal, Centre B).

Video sometimes provided insights which, as the two above excerpts indicate, participants did not readily or normally get:

The things that stood out for me [were] the things that were going on behind our back (Participant P).

There were several instances of video feedback challenging the adult to rethink their perception of the child, as for example in this parent's account of an episode she found "sort of interesting":

At one point at the sandpit...kids were playing with hoses and my little boy was joining up his hose and another little kid came along and he wanted it and you know [my child] obviously didn't want him to have it so the child went and pinched a piece from further along and [my child] got up and did this yell of frustration and hit at him and that was something that I wouldn't have thought he'd do...that was sort of interesting to see, see it happen and this other child was bigger than him. And actually he went for the wrong one. He went for the one that, just the nearest one that was standing there and not the one that pinched the hose (Participant D).

On the other hand, participant responses also highlighted the danger of making what Biggs (1983) terms "the empiricist error" (p211), of perceiving the video record as a 'stand-alone' copy of objective reality rather than *an* account, embedded in a particular context. As one of the participants aptly put it:

You tend to think the video is ... the session, but actually it's not. It's windows here and there...like looking through portholes at pieces of the session (Participant D).

I find Participant D's description of video as giving you a "window" in i.e. an insight into, but by implication not 'the whole picture', a useful analogy. Participant D went on to suggest that when trying to reach

conclusions, it was important not to take videoed episodes too much at 'face value', but also to look into the context. She cited the example of a young child who was videoed sitting observing for several intervals over quite a prolonged period of time:

> someone said...'that child shouldn't have been there all by himself' ...in fact ...that particular child is...very good at saying what he wanted, but that was his time for sitting there and watching the action (Participant D).

The importance of taking account of context in interpreting, analysing and evaluating video observations was something Participant G also raised:

> Like any observation it doesn't really tell you the whole story unless you have got the background (Participant G).

Thus rather than supporting a positivist view of video as offering one valid, objective and indisputable account, such comments highlight the importance of superior knowledge pertaining to the insider perspective.

Perhaps then video could be best described as offering a particular standpoint, albeit with certain 'advantages' and 'disadvantages', from which to view reality. Certainly participants identified video observations as having many advantages over written observations describing it variously as 'fuller', far more detailed, more "accessible",

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more "immediate" and more "real". The result, as one participant described it, was that:

video is 'in your face'. You've got to deal with it really (Participant K).

Perhaps too, the verisimilitude of video feedback was a factor in some participants' finding it easier to use in follow-up analysis and planning. It did seem that because video was experienced as more tangible, more immediate and more real, it tended to make follow-up planning more pressing and less of a 'paper' exercise. Thus the usefulness of video was not limited to what Tripp (1990) terms the 'fact-finding' phase of the action research cycle, but also offered advantages to both the analytical and planning stages of the cycle.

Another particular strength of video feedback was how readily it lent itself to group processing. As already indicated, this is especially pertinent to, and for, an early childhood context because in early childhood centres, planning, evaluating and enacting the curriculum tends to involve more group process than in other educational sectors. In comparison to videoing the individual teacher and children in the school classroom, the videoing of an early childhood session records much that is of collective interest and concern to the team.

Group viewing of the video feedback was regarded by the participants as providing a very useful catalyst for discussion and debate.

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Participant comments about the benefit of having other people's perceptions, included seeing things they hadn't seen and raising points they hadn't considered. For Participant A it was this process that enabled her to move into analytical mode :

> On my own I didn't really have a clue what to do. I just thought 'it looked quite good'. There seemed to be a few interactions, but I didn't really do much with it at all. I think I needed to bounce off others...that's me. To actually analyse it is really quite a complicated skill. If you have people to bounce a question off you, it is a help (Participant A).

> And people can talk about it together and often when you can't see the answer yourself, if there's a group of you talking about it then things start to fall into place. You've got the views of each other and...it's sort of a collective pool of...knowledge...thinking power (Participant D).

On the other hand, another participant commented that having the video feedback to look at on her own had enabled her to work in depth and at her own pace i.e. to go back to some episodes "two or three times", or to stop to make notes or to delve into *Te Whaariki* .

When looking at the use participants made of the video feedback as a tool for critique, it may be of help to consider the following variation of the technical, practical, critical typology discussed earlier, such that Tripp (1993) suggests four different kinds of judgement as necessary to professional teaching:

1. *Practical judgement* which is the basis of every action taken in the conduct of teaching and the majority of which is made instantly.

2. *Diagnostic judgement* which involves using profession-specific knowledge and academic expertise to recognise, describe, understand and explain and interpret practical judgements.

3. *Reflective judgement* which concerns more personal and moral judgements involving the identification, description, exploration and justification of the judgements made and values implicit and espoused in practical (teaching) decisions and their explanations.

4. *Critical judgement*, which, through formal investigation involves challenge to and evaluation of the judgements and values revealed by reflection (p140).

In looking at the video episodes the participants selected as significant, and at how they processed them, one is able to identify these different sorts of judgements operating. One such episode involved a young child tipping the remaining contents of his cup back into the pouring jug. In response to this perceived health hazard, staff immediately came up with the practical solution of replacing the original jug with a lidded one. Diagnostic judgement was required when staff drew on the video feedback on children, e.g. the insights concerning language use referred to above, to make decisions about how to best approach working with the children concerned. A more reflective and arguably more critical response seemed evident in episodes such as that described in excerpt (4) : rethinking policies earlier in this chapter. In this excerpt Participant K explains that prior to watching the video feedback, staff had seen the centre as needing to sort out its "behaviour management policy". She describes their focus at this point as being "how we would control [the children's behaviour]". Participant K goes on to say that what staff had "never even thought about", up until viewing the video, was where the child

figured in all of this, in particular that is, how one might go about helping the children develop their social skills.

The situation Participant K describes, provides an illustration of what Grant, Richard and Parkay (1996) refer to as the different ways in which teachers "frame" their observations. In particular Grant, Richard and Parkay distinguish between viewing events through "management lenses" and viewing events through "pedagogical lenses":

> A teacher who sees a noisy, inattentive class as a pedagogical problem will hypothesize different solutions than one who interprets it as a management problem. Both teachers may see the same details, but place them in different frames (p7).

I would suggest that Participant K's account describes such a shift from management lenses to pedagogical lenses, that is from a systems or product orientation, to a more child-focused orientation, in which the pedagogical interests of the child are starting to be taken into account.

There were numerous other instances in this study where practitioners were tending to operate from a management rather than pedagogical orientation, especially where conflict situations or the daily 'routines' of the centre were concerned. For example, when enmeshed in a conflict situation participants were frequently more focused on bringing the situation 'back under control', than considering whether the strategies adopted were in the best pedagogical interests of the child/children

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involved. Viewing the video feedback sometimes brought the interests of the child and pedagogical concerns back into the forefront prompting questions such as 'what had the child/children *really* learnt from the episode? was this desirable? what was desirable? and so on. Sometimes in the absence of any reflective or critical edge to participant responses to the video feedback, I myself tried to facilitate this by floating a few such 'prompting 'questions. This raises the key consideration of the role of facilitator, but given that this is the focus of a later section of this chapter (ref 7:4), perhaps at this stage it suffices to say that quite often a questioning strategy such as this was fairly successful; sometimes it drew a blank and sometimes it triggered a distinctly defensive response.

Like many of the writers whose work I have considered in the course of this study, Tripp (1993) argues that fostering reflective and critical judgement in teaching is important, but he also emphasises the place of practical and diagnostic judgement as described above. Tripp suggests that rather than becoming fixated on reflective or critical judgement, the researcher-facilitator in collaborative action research projects such as the current study, should also become involved in participants' practical interests. He comments:

> Although critical judgement may, in some senses, be regarded as a further professional activity to practical, it is also the antithesis of experience and routine, and as such it inhibits the normal transactions essential to effective teaching. One can become too critically minded to be of any practical use. Mastery and use of the methods of analysis for all four kinds of judgement are therefore essential to professional teaching (p140).

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Perhaps it could be argued therefore, that one of the strengths of video was its ability to contribute to these different sorts of judgement, that it was able to serve different purposes, different agendas. One participant put it this way :

> for me it was very multi-useful because I got different things and I got to use it to look at *Te Whaariki* and I got to look at certain routines and then I got look at it for myself, how I reacted to certain things with the children and other people and then I got to use it...for observations of ...children...(Participant J).

On the other hand, as the next chapter section on *Te Whaariki* will further highlight, there is a danger that video might only be used to 'feed' a technical, relatively superficial analysis, so that the underlying rationale of centre practice is never examined and therefore never challenged.

In summary, participants reported that video feedback made a positive contribution to centre curriculum in a variety of ways. Such instances ranged from helping to solve minor practical problems through to strengthening the pedagogical orientation of centre practice. Participant responses most commonly emphasised the information that video-feedback offered them about the children. This was not just information as 'facts' about children, but information as 'insight', frequently offering 'food' for further reflection and study. In addition however, participant experiences with video feedback highlighted that

while video could offer many compelling advantages as a curriculum development tool, one needed to keep sight of the context in which the video feedback was embedded. Finally, in the process of 'excavating' and constructing meaning from video 'texts' of curriculum in action, many centre participants did seem to become more open to what processes such as analysis, comparison, debate, reflection and critique could offer curriculum development in their centre.

7:2 video feedback and engaging with *Te Whaariki*

This section reports on the use participants made of the video feedback of curriculum 'in action', from the sessions videoed at their centre, to help them engage with *Te Whaariki*. Participants were asked to select 'significant' episodes from video feedback from the second session videoed, and to then consider how the episodes selected, related to *Te Whaariki*.

For many participants this seemed to provide a manageable, yet meaningful way to start working with the curriculum framework:

> In the beginning ...I wasn't sure what it was... I thought a lot of... *Te Whaariki* was meant as a Maori language course or something...and then when you say 'It's draft guidelines for the curriculum', that even sends it sort of further from the way of understanding but...watching the video and then talking about it and how it related to what *Te Whaariki* is ... probably brought it all together (Participant N).

> I...like what we did...just going through and deciding what [each episode] came under [and] if we thought we needed improvement because that broke it down and it was quite a simple process...(Participant K).

The idea that video could be a useful way of helping those coming new to *Te Whaariki* find meaning in the framework of Principles and Aims, also came through in participant suggestions that video could help make the language of the guidelines "accessible" to parents.

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However, video also allowed those who wished to explore some of the key tenets of *Te Whaariki*, to do so in some depth. For example, there were a number of instances of video enabling staff to explore the how the notion of relationships as curriculum, what Whalley (1997) refers to as "a pedagogy of relationships", translated into practice. This was so because video lent itself well to the type of close analysis that something as complex and ambiguous as relationships, demands. For example, the video record could help staff to shift perspective, to consider the 'same' event from the various points of view of the children involved, to 'spotlight' each child in turn, to stop, to confer, to replay.

Participants commonly emphasised how important it was that the project was practice-based:

> I am a person that must work from examples...Once I have got one example...and one on the video of...and I thought 'Oh, that is a concrete example'. Now that to me helps. I don't seem to be overly good on just general theories, if they can't nail it down and give me something...(Participant A).

> *Intvr So to move you further ahead, what sorts of things do you think will be best for you to do.. If you could just say 'I'd like this and I'd like that' and ordered whatever you wanted ...what would you ask for?*
>
> I would ask for more practical. Like the second video, what we did with the episodes. I would like to have lots of time to practise (Participant T).

I had hoped that one of the real strengths of video would be its ability to help facilitate a more interactive relationship between theory and practice. The following excerpts from Participant J and Participant P illustrate this interactive process at work :

I guess because [prior to the project] I didn't have a very good understanding [of *Te Whaariki*] at all, like I read it originally, but I hadn't used it. I had just used little bits of it, that felt safe ... The viewing took a long time...[I spent] quite a lot of hours. I mean I could have done it really quickly, but I chose not to do it that way. I chose to read everything as I went through and read about the process and the planning and go back over things and think 'Oh yeah, that could be that. That could be that'. But I wouldn't just look at the goal, I would kind of read all about it. Yeah, I felt like that is the way I got to know it...and it kind of got me thinking as I was going...about what do we do in the centre and what *Te Whaariki* says about provisions for infants, toddlers and older children. I spent a lot of time thinking about those and what we should be doing...what we're not doing, things like that...really quite valuable to me ... (Participant J).

Participant P suggested that using video feedback in conjunction with the *Te Whaariki* framework, prompted practitioners to shift the guidelines out of a purely theoretical domain and led them to really engage with the question 'what are the implications for practice?', as this participant put it, "actually having to focus on it, which this project does". Participant P also observed that a 'straight' reading of *Te Whaariki* did not necessitate the same follow-through into action :

Whereas I think just reading [*Te Whaariki*], it is a very wordy piece and you think 'Oh yeah, I agree with all that.' I think 'Of course this is logical, of course this should be happening' or 'This shouldn't be happening'. That is terribly logical then you go 'Okay fine.' and you forget about it (Participant P).

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An additional comment that participants commonly made was that through their experiences in the project they were working with *Te Whaariki* in a more focused and reflective way:

> At the beginning of the video [project] I had glanced through the aims and practices and that was about as far as I got. Now I actually think about it (Participant P).

A number of participants, like Participant P in the following excerpt, wanted to 'get behind' the language, to the spirit of the document:

> I have...more understanding of what it is that makes up–not so much as quoting chapter and verse...it is more as I said working out why [a certain thing] is part of [the Aim] 'Belonging' and why. It is more the philosophies behind the actual curriculum as opposed to knowing the curriculum chapter and verse (Participant P).

Working with *Te Whaariki* also prompted a number of participants to examine some of the largely unconscious assumptions that guided their practice :

> Whereas before I wouldn't actually think about it particularly. It would just be 'Oh we need to do something about that', but I never thought why we need to do anything about it. But having to gel it with *Te Whaariki* made me think about it more (Participant P).

Sometimes however, the level of engagement with *Te Whaariki* was relatively superficial, as for example, when participants seemed to

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regard the beginning and end of the exercise of exploring the relationship between curriculum practice and *Te Whaariki* as acquiring what Cullen (1996) terms the "overlay" of the new terminology (p118). The following comments of Participant G help to illustrate such an approach:

> I think the best person I've ever come across to explain *Te Whaariki* is [a fellow staff member]...She can look at a situation and relate it to *Te Whaariki*...you know she can sort of say " That experience was coming from [the Aim] 'Exploration' or that was coming from [the Aim of] 'Well being' ", and I am getting better at that and I can say "Right, 'Well being' is when they come into the centre and hang their coats up and things like that (Participant G).

The sort of approach Participant G describes, can be compared to a sort of 'sticky labelling' process, in which the components of the framework are taken as essentially positivist and unproblematic and any given practice episode is seen to have only one 'reading'.

However, there were other instances of participants looking to 'label' video episodes, that somehow seemed a little different:

> we decided to use the video to get into *Te Whaariki*...Some of the [video episodes] were just trivial, but it was just a useful exercise to go through (Participant R).

Here, when Participant R talks about selecting "trivial" video episodes to undertake a familiarisation "exercise" concerning the *Te Whaariki* framework, there is a sense in which more reflective and critical

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interests relating to practice are being set to one side, in the interests of getting 'up to speed' with the new terminology. Perhaps one could argue that in such instances it was not so much a matter of critical analysis not 'coming into the picture', but rather of it being put 'to one side', possibly for fear of causing the familiarisation process to get bogged down.

How participants viewed *Te Whaariki*

Virtually all the participants appeared to view *Te Whaariki* in a positive light. Most frequently affirmed were the framework Principles, especially that of Holism[2]. And yet, although participants were particularly affirming of *Te Whaariki* advocating an holistic approach to curriculum, many still seemed quite nonplussed by how many different framework Principles or Aims (later recategorised as Strands) any given practice episode might relate to.

Consistent with Murrow's (1995) report and with earlier findings (Haggerty and Hubbard, 1994), many participants spoke of *Te Whaariki* as articulating either (a) what early childhood practice was all about or (b) what was already happening in practice. Some who suggested the latter, appeared to take this to mean that practice need not really change, as for example in the following excerpt from Participant R:

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[2] The early childhood curriculum should reflect the holistic way children learn and grow.

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I think it mainly is just a communication tool...We already have the planning and so on...I mean I think it is broad enough to fit us in and it is nice to have the language..., but it is not as if it is something we weren't doing, it is just a case of where we fit in. How can we use the same language to explain what we are doing? (Participant R).

Others however, spoke of *Te Whaariki* as having been a catalyst for change. For example, one participant talked about *Te Whaariki* having "changed...the programming" in that it gave them a better sense of direction and one that made more sense. Participant H observed that in her centre using *Te Whaariki* had meant they worked a lot more with children's strengths. She contrasted this with their earlier focus on "plugging gaps", what she termed "a deficit model".

One issue that was of particular concern to a number of participants, was how they were to know whether what was happening in their centres was of high enough standard, when evaluating their curriculum practice or programme provisions in relation to a particular *Te Whaariki* Principle or Aim. Participant A commented, for example, that when looking at an Aim such as 'Exploration' the "hard part ..[was the] question ...'How much is enough?'...".

Such concern was often related, in part at least, to uncertainty or apprehension about how the Education Review Office (ERO) would interpret the guidelines. Participants were frequently concerned about what ERO's expectations of centres would be, what it would deem to

be an acceptable standard. Participant A, for example, talked about having to wait to see "what is expected".

In addition, such concern was usually tied up with participants' own efforts to come to terms with *Te Whaariki*. Even participants like Participant A, who appeared clear about and comfortable with the main tenets of *Te Whaariki*, identified assessment as a key area of challenge. After observing that evaluating 'Exploration' was no straightforward matter, Participant A commented, "You know you can't tick a little box...which is good". While Participant A understood and approved of *Te Whaariki's* approach to assessment and evaluation being more complex than the "tick a little box" approach, such as a skills-based or checklist approach might use, she saw much work ahead in the task of translating *Te Whaariki's* approach into practice, in what she termed "the assessment phase".

There were other participants whose understanding of the guidelines seemed quite 'piecemeal', who did not seem to have a very comprehensive or in-depth grasp of the curriculum approach that *Te Whaariki* embodied. Without such a grounding these participants were often confused by the many different interpretations of *Te Whaariki* that they came across and tended to favour interpretations that were overly narrow and overly simple. For example, they might have no difficulty with the notion that you could 'implement' *Te Whaariki* by having a 'theme' for the term, which would determine the parameters of the experiences to be offered to the children, and this theme would

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simply become 'Belonging' or 'Contribution' in the same way that 'seasons' or 'colours' might once have featured. This suggested that without adequate professional support the *Te Whaariki* framework of Principles and Aims was in danger of being used in as arbitrary a fashion as subject-based frameworks may have been formerly.

Participants who saw themselves as having a clear understanding of the *Te Whaariki* curriculum model were, in turn, somewhat perplexed by such arbitrary practices ostensibly being able to be justified as consistent with *Te Whaariki*.

In thinking back over the experiences of participants in the video-focus project, I wonder if the video-focus project's quest for a better understanding and sharper critique of *Te Whaariki*, could have been better assisted by a stronger focus on helping participants site the Guidelines within the wider curriculum discourse. In particular it seems to me that as is suggested in the study title's reference to 'siting *Te Whaariki*', enabling participants to make broad comparisons between different approaches to curriculum may help to facilitate a clearer overview of *Te Whaariki* and its defining characteristics, and may open up the possibilities for critique, simply through acknowledging that there are alternative models of curriculum.

In this section I have suggested that considering *Te Whaariki* alongside a video 'text' of centre practice was a very useful means of helping those coming new to *Te Whaariki* to 'engage' with the

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curriculum framework. It was particularly useful in helping practitioners and parents consider *Te Whaariki* curriculum framework concepts in relation to their own centre context and in getting practitioners to start using the guidelines in practice. The video-focus project evidenced considerable interaction or 'interplay' between theory and practice, whereby practitioners focussed and reflected more on *Te Whaariki* and explored the curriculum practice of their centre and some of its underpinning assumptions. The video 'text' was also able to usefully resource more in-depth consideration of some key curriculum framework concepts. In addition however, there were a number of participants who in using the video text to help them become familiar with the *Te Whaariki* framework, did not move beyond a superficial and overly narrow, prescriptive interpretation. The responses of other participants appeared to qualify these findings, through seemingly suggesting that the initial stages of gaining familiarity with *Te Whaariki* might simply be too early for practitioners' interpretations of *Te Whaariki* to necessarily reflect a critical edge. Regardless, the difficulty practitioners experienced grasping the complexity of *Te Whaariki* is clearly an issue. It is suggested that these findings support calls for greater acknowledgment of the theoretical richness embodied in *Te Whaariki* (e.g. Cullen, 1996). Like Cullen, I would suggest that assisting participants to 'site' *Te Whaariki* in relation to the wider curriculum discourse offers a way to help achieve this.

7 : 3 video feedback and professional development

The first section of this chapter reported on the ways in which video feedback of the enacted curriculum was seen to impact on curriculum development in the centres. This section reports on the overlapping question of how the video feedback impacted on the professional development of the participants themselves. It is suggested that in an early childhood context, where a team of adults are involved in curriculum construction, this area of overlap tends the increase through the critique of centre curriculum or the study of one's workplace practice seeming to automatically impinge on team dynamics. Thus the centrality of the team dynamic to the early childhood curriculum development process, can tend to introduce a host of possibilities and complexities, which may be markedly different from many school settings, where individual practitioners tend to be considerably more self-contained.

Using video to study workplace practice: an exposing experience?

A number of participants reported that the video feedback prompted them to look at themselves and their own professional practice:

> I think it made me look at how I was developing professionally (Participant G).

That has made me personally much more aware of how I deal with situations (Participant J).

As discussed earlier, Marion Dadds (1993) suggests that if such a self-study process is to go further than simply scratching the surface of self-understanding, self-exposure has to be "the order of the day" (p288). Certainly for a number of the participants in the current study, this aptly described what the video-focus project involved for them:

I felt it would leave [us] open and we would be quite exposed, but then that it would have a positive effect of allowing us to examine ourselves...and grow...realising that it was going to be like peeling off layers and [it] would be quite difficult and [we would be] challenged by it.
Intvr. Looking back how do you feel about your [initial] response now?
Well it is definitely what happened I think (Participant R).

Some participants were clearly very focussed on 'getting beneath the surface' of their practice ; others were not so keen:

it was quite a negative focus in some ways...but you see...I value the opportunity to dissect what I do and what we do and don't do and how we function...I was quite keen to do a more thorough analysis of [the videoed episode], whereas I got really strong messages from [team member's name] that she didn't (Participant C).

The members of one centre reported back in the final cluster meeting, that for them examining their own individual practice had not featured very significantly in the project. On the other hand the centre's group

statement from the cluster meeting was not entirely consistent with the responses of some team members in their individual interviews.

While exposure did emerge as a key theme in this study, as suggested by the findings above, there was enormous variation in the level of exposure participants reported experiencing and a complex web of factors seemed to influence how much or how little exposed participants felt. For example, it became increasingly apparent that because the video-focus project involved collaborative inquiry rather than the essentially individual self-inquiry such as Dadds (1993, 1995) writes of, exposure to 'others' was a significant factor.

As Participant C explained it :

> I believe in [the] value [of the analysing process]...because I think they are appropriate questions to be asking...but...it is exposure,...exposure to others,...exposure to myself (Participant C).

There was also, as expected, some correspondence between the level of exposure individual participants reported and the extent to which they featured on video. Generally those not videoed, reported fewer and lesser feelings of exposure. Thus, as anticipated, where videoing involved self-feedback, rather than more general feedback on centre curriculum, this tended to be experienced as more exposing.

The "negative focus" which Participant C refers to in the first of her excerpts above, was also a factor in how exposed individual participants felt. If participants viewed the video feedback as inordinately 'negative', and/or if they were concerned beforehand that it might be negative, this tended to increase their sense of exposure.

Some degree of apprehension at the prospect of being videoed was not uncommon, although this usually lessened considerably once participants had had their first videoing experience:

The second video was more comfortable and I think if it became a routine thing, having the video around, it would make me more comfortable (Participant T).

However, for a couple of the participants, anxiety levels were from the outset, considerably more intense. Participant G reported her first response to the prospect of being videoed as:

Fear

Intvr. Fear?

Fear

Intvr. What were you worried about?

Oh, that I wouldn't perform properly and that maybe my standard wasn't good enough (Participant G).

Participant C commented:

> I didn't realise how tense I was until the end of the session. You didn't even have the video on and I forgot the tune to Humpty Dumpty (Participant C).

The experiences of Participant C and Participant G, and indeed those of many others in the study, seem to lend support to Dadds' (1993) view that the process of evaluating one's own workplace practices is an emotional experience not a purely cerebral activity (p301). Or perhaps it is as Bohm (1985) suggests, that "emotion and thinking are almost inseparable...just different levels of the same thing" (p46, cited in Schratz and Walker, 1995, p104).

For no participants were emotions consistently negative. For example, Participant G, who spoke of her initial fear of being videoed, later commented:

> I had actually advanced myself, because I'd actually been aware that there was no interaction and I had made a really conscious effort right up until the second video to actually improve that, because I was always aware that I was not interacting and...I actually forced myself and after a while it became so natural. I felt very comfortable and confident, so I was feeling a lot more confident in the second video and not quite so concerned (Participant G).

Significantly, all participants thought continuing to use video in their centres would be worthwhile:

Intvr ..do you see video as having potential here?

Oh definitely. I mean if you want me for a convert, for all the trauma I certainly believe that it is a valuable tool (Participant C).

Most participants seemed to find most of what they viewed affirming:

[as I was watching the video] I was thinking '...Now, how am I going to come through this?...It would be interesting to see how I think, on reflection, I have actually handled these situations. It was actually good at the time. I felt good about most of them...so watching it was quite affirming (Participant A).

At the same time, a number of participants were quite concerned or dissatisfied about some of the things they saw on the video feedback. Two participants, in particular, reported that they found the video feedback distinctly disturbing. One of these participants, who described the overall process as "gruelling", reported her response to viewing the first session's video as follows:

It took a number of days for my cycle of what happened to unfold and perhaps initially there were things that horrified me, but there were other bits which [were] okay and then the things that were negative became very central to my thinking, especially in terms of my own teaching practice (Participant C).

Other participants did not appear to judge themselves quite so harshly:

You can then sit down and say 'Well, I could have done that'. At least to discuss the possibilities of what other things you could do.

At the time you can only think of so much and do so much. I think that can only make you a better teacher in the end, by analysing what you are doing (Participant B).

Or perhaps, to draw on Dadds' (1993) analogy, it was a case of these participants simply not perceiving quite the same disjuncture between the 'self' they saw on video and the 'self' they thought they were, or the 'self' they wanted to be (p287). In addition the above excerpt from Participant B seems to reflect some distancing between the self as viewer and the self as actor, which as discussed earlier, is what a number of writers suggest the analytical mode requires (Biggs, 1983; Holly, 1991; Dadds, 1993). The following excerpt from Participant J is another that highlights a sense of detachment, of stepping outside the familiar:

It is almost like you are not even looking at your own centre, kind of, almost. You know the kids and the people, but it is quite different because you can take a critical view...I think it has made me personally much more aware of how I deal with situations (Participant J).

Overall, the variations in response amongst the participants tended to raise the question, to what extent such differences were a function of personality differences amongst the participants :

I have got a lot of personal issues about my own confidence (Participant P).

Besides issues to do with one's own emotionality, or in Participant P's case self-confidence, problems could also occur, as Dowrick (1983) points out, because individuals see themselves not so much as worthless, but as powerless (p108), or at least disempowered in some way. And so, for example, one of the three participants who changed jobs at the end of the project said she had done so in the hope of finding a workplace where she could work in the way she wanted to and where she could receive more professional support. .

Participant B focused on the issue of power within the context of projects like this, which use video as feedback:

> It probably depends on the attitude of the people being videoed as well, whether you take it as being a negative checkup situation, or as something that you can grow from...The thing is by us having it ourselves or organising it ourselves, in a way, the power is ours, so therefore it is safe. You know, we are the ones doing the analysing (Participant B).

In this excerpt Participant B differentiates between using video as feedback such that participants see themselves as the object being 'checked up on', and using video feedback for critique to improve practice, in such a way that participants retain sufficient control of the process. Participant B seems to suggest that the latter involves participants' retaining of primary 'ownership' or responsibility for analysing the video.

Participant B identifies the issue of power and how it is exercised as a key issue, in terms of how exposed or "safe" participants feel. Linking issues of safety with issues of power as Participant B has done, can be seen as consistent with the views of writers like Biggs (1983) and Ellsworth (1989), who suggest that where relationships of power and status operate within a group so as to threaten the safety of individual members this can render the learning climate dysfunctional.

Studying one's workplace practices : the situational context

Dadds (1993) suggests that :

> [The] pain and discomfort in the self-study, learning and development process may be partly contingent upon the company and circumstances we keep. Professional development through self study cannot, thus, be well understood independently of its social and professional context (p290).

Certainly it helped to better understand the risk of exposure some participants saw themselves taking, and how this might have constrained the use they made of video feedback for critique, to look at what they had to say about how risk operated in their particular situation. Participants referred to risking exposure from a variety of quarters including centre peers, parents, employers, others in the project and others in the early childhood community. The following statements illustrate how participants explained this risk:

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risk of exposure to centre peers:

> I suppose the biggest minus would be the reaction of the adults and the way it could be quite destroying. You have got to be a bit careful about some things [on the video]. I didn't pick up on [them], but I have heard comments later that some people have been quite critical of certain things, like 'So and so didn't... (Participant A).

risk of exposure to parents:

> and thinking 'Oh my goodness this is on video and she is screaming'...I probably wouldn't have behaved any differently, but it was 'Oh her mother is going to see this. My goodness.' It was stressful (Participant A).

risk of exposure to employers:

> I have a job to keep (Participant G).

risk of exposure in the early childhood community:

> ...and then there is all that judgement that goes on...I mean early childhood is a really small world...(Participant C).

risk of exposure to other project participants:

> I don't know that I would necessarily expose myself [in small group discussion at a project cluster meeting], but it would depend on the

dynamic of how it was set up and in particular the make-up of the small group (Participant C).

risk of exposure to researcher-facilitator:

I had to choose to let go my concern about what you might think of me and just be as honest as I needed to be (Participant C).

Participant A's reference to "centre peers", in the first of the excerpts above, highlights that in a programme of centre-based, collaborative inquiry, such as the video-focus project, the group dynamic amongst centre practitioners is a key factor in how individual members approach the challenge of critiquing workplace practice.

Participant A signals that for her the biggest drawback about using video feedback was that members of the team who received negative feedback from other team members could well find this "quite destroying". One might see such a stance as concerned with providing individuals with the psychological safety they needed. On the other hand one could view such a stance is protectionist, along the lines of Goffman (1969, cited in Dowrick and Biggs, 1993) and Schratz' (1996) observations, referred to earlier, concerning the tendency of groups to wish to protect members from negative critique. It could be further argued that such protectionist tendencies concerning the wellbeing of the work team and/or individual members undermine collaborative self-critical inquiry.

The question of support was one that Participant C identified as critical:

I think that one of the important features of the whole process is the importance of support because...I went through a bit of a process of 'Should I really be teaching? Am I capable of this?' (Participant C)

In Participant C's situation it was another centre colleague who helped counteract Participant C's tendency to "get stuck [on the] things that were negative" (Participant C) and be overly hard on herself. Clearly though not all participants would necessarily receive such support within their work environment, which raises the question of what onus the professional support programme itself, should carry.

Also noteworthy is the fact that as with the teacher in Dadd's (1993) study, it was the strategy of also drawing attention to "the positives", which Participant C identified as especially useful in helping her sustain her self-regard through the critical and challenging self scrutiny she had become involved in. This situation highlighted yet again the issue of the compatibility of the role of support and the role of critical advocate.

Comments such as Participant G's earlier, concerning the possibility of jeopardising relations with her employer, presented quite a different scenario to the collegial support Participant C referred to, and highlighted that there can be centre situations that are less than

conducive to the study of workplace practice. I have no doubt that such is often the case and thus, like Dadds (1993), I would call for greater attention to be paid to the learning environment of workplace study, however the findings of this study also underscore the complexity of such a task. For example, where participants share the same workplace it might seem reasonable to assume that their situations would have much in common. In effect however, seemingly similar circumstances were often experienced and perceived very differently by the individuals involved, one of many indicators of the need not to lose sight of the individual perspective.

The research component of the video-focus project was certainly one aspect that drew markedly different responses from amongst the participants. While most participants appeared to have little or no concern about the research 'overlay' to the project, both Participant C and Participant G identified this as a key component in how exposed they felt:

> It is a function of it not simply being an aspect of professional development using video, but rather a *research* of professional development using video and that I think impacts...if we were going through this process without the research running in parallel then we wouldn't be sitting here with this ruddy great microphone knowing this was all going on to tape...all of those things impact on just how honest you can be and I choose to be as honest as I can,... because that is what is going to be most valuable for myself and for everyone. But once again it gets back to that exposure (Participant C).

Participant G remained fearful throughout the project that "incriminating" comments made on tape in an interview could be seized by the authorities. She said:

> what I am saying is that you [the researcher] might have to use it. I mean you might *have* to... Some of these things you just say they won't be used, but you never know. They might be (Participant G).

Other participants' responses to the question of how the research component affected their involvement in the project, were of quite a different complexion:

> I mean personally, like I knew it was research but it wasn't important to me as who was researching it. I think any research in early childhood is sort of for the benefit of early childhood centres. I mean as far as I know no-one really commented on like, 'I wonder what the Ministry is thinking of ...what we are doing'. I mean I certainly haven't given it another thought as to who is going to use the tapes or for what (Participant S).

> When I read that question I couldn't sort of think of anything, like I thought 'Oh, why have they asked that?' But yeah, so I don't really have a reaction to it (Participant J).

> It probably gives it more purpose. I mean people might feel well you know 'What's this?' just sort of a waste of time. It's going to be something useful. A useful outcome...It's helped (Participant D).

In summary, the findings in this section appear to indicate that video feedback impacted on the professional development of the individual participants in many and varied ways, seeming to suggest that the

effects of video feedback are to be regarded as highly contextualised. Nevertheless, a number of significant themes did emerge and can be identified. These included:

(i) a view of the individual participant's perspective as important, complex, multi-faceted and shifting

(ii) the need to 'deconstruct' the essentially cognitive discourse of professional development to better take   account of the role of the affective domain

(iii) the need to better understand the sense of exposure seemingly associated with putting one's workplace practice under one's own scrutiny and/or the scrutiny of others- potentially exacerbated by using video feedback

(iii) questions concerning the levels of 'safety' and support that participants required and how this could be provided; questions concerning the compatibility of the functions of support and critique and questions concerning the dynamics of the giving and receiving of negative feedback

(iv) the complex dynamics of the 'relations of power', how these operated within the workplace and within the video-focus project and how this impacted on participants' responses

7.4 : the research process

This section discusses the project findings in relation to the research process. The first part of the section concentrates on the role of the researcher-facilitator. The latter parts of the section focus on participant feedback involving other aspects of the research process, including the project sessions held, the various means of data gathering used, and a discussion of the constraints on the research process.

The role of the researcher-facilitator

Tripp's (1993) work, uses an approach in which he, as the outside facilitator, assisted practitioners to critically analyse journalled incidents as the basis for action research; the approach used in this project is quite similar. Tripp described his role as follows:

> As a collaborative action research facilitator, I use the critical incident file to help teachers to identify, articulate and examine their professional awareness...not to direct what they should do. Direction, if any, comes in the form of asking difficult questions, of asking them to take account of how I see things (p18).

With video episodes in place of Tripp's "critical incident file", I saw myself as researcher attempting to encourage critical process in

similar ways to Tripp. At times this approach appeared to meet with a degree of success, by dint of:

(a) the questions posed:

> It has been excellent. It has been wonderful, because it has been quite a different focus. You ask some really good reflective questions, that [we] probably wouldn't have got just from ourselves. That's good (Participant A).

> At one of our video [follow up] sessions, when we were discussing a conflict situation you asked 'What would the child have learnt from that experience?".[It] turned us all around to focus on how the children felt.[That] was excellent (Written feedback from circulating the draft report).

(b) offering alternative perspectives:

> It was someone who could come in and make you think about it in a different way because you had your own mindset or whatever on how things work and if someone else from outside can come in and challenge that [it] gives you another way of looking at it (Participant B).

(c) not 'driving' the sessions:

> *Intvr... it seems to me that there is a delicate balance sometimes between facilitating and directing and that for me certainly is an issue in the role of facilitator.*

We never felt directed. It's difficult to put your finger on examples ... It's [being given] different options to how you analyse (Participant C).

However, I came to see the issues surrounding the facilitation of action research as far more complex than Tripp's (1993) account above might lead one to believe. For example, as indicated earlier, asking 'difficult' questions was not always successful. There was a risk of such questions precipitating a defensive response and even perhaps for this to be accompanied by a level of 'disengagement' from, or rejection of the critical process.

The interpersonal aspect of facilitation

In the current study it seemed neither possible nor desirable for the relationship between myself as facilitator and the participants, to be as dispassionate as that commonly portrayed by advocates of critical action research (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Tripp, 1991, 1993). For one thing, as highlighted in the previous section of this chapter, there were key issues to do with safeguarding the psychological safety of participants, which needed to be taken into account when considering the facilitator's role, especially the aspect of being a critical advocate.

The importance of the interpersonal dynamic between participants and facilitator was something that a number of participants referred to:

I have chosen to be very honest through this entire process, where, if there wasn't the rapport there is, I wouldn't have done that (Participant C).

The greater a participant's sense of exposure, the more important issues of trust, confidentiality and rapport became:

So I think you have to build up your trust [of the facilitator]...I mean you have to. Probably in the interview...[name of team member] probably expressed a lot of things she felt on that first day because she knew you, whereas it was something I didn't feel comfortable doing...The next time I would feel quite comfortable, because I know it won't go any further. It is not going to be discussed. [However] I had to build that trust up first (Participant G).

My own experience in the video-focus project was of becoming increasingly aware of how personally challenging some participants were finding the process and of feeling at somewhat of a loss as to how to best support the individuals involved. For me, one of the greatest challenges was attempting to combine a support role with that of critical advocate. For example, on one occasion when a participant commented on how many 'negatives' the video feedback had thrown up for their programme, I responded to her despondency by observing that they did tend to be quite hard on themselves. Thinking about this incident later I wondered whether such a comment could be taken as indicating that some lessening of the depth or intensity of their analysis or evaluation was in order. If so, might not my attempt at support have had the potential to undermine the critical focus? On the other hand, what should the facilitator of critical process do, if faced

with an individual who seemed dangerously vulnerable, or a team of staff whose morale seemed at rock bottom?

Tripp (1990) talks about the researcher-facilitator facing the dilemma of trying to negotiate a balance between directly helping participants and in this way perhaps lessening their autonomy and withholding assistance and so perhaps allowing participants to make known mistakes or 'reinvent the wheel'. However, such an account seems to portray the questions facing both facilitator and participants in relatively dispassionate terms, suggesting that the issues involved are purely cognitive. The fact that my experience of facilitating was otherwise, raises the sorts of issues that Ellsworth (1989) and others have highlighted in challenging critical educators about the emphasis they place on the rational domain, in particular the issue of how rationality is defined and whose interests this serves.

Power/autonomy

Trying to find an acceptable balance in terms of power/autonomy in the relationships I established with participants, proved enormously challenging. However, I did find that the focus on action researching my own practice during the course of the project, was of some help in this regard. It made me feel, that as Winter (1989) puts it, I too was putting myself "at risk" alongside other participants (p60). Sharing my view of the research findings at the second cluster meeting and circulating the draft report to participants, proved to be invaluable

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avenues for submitting my account of my practice to the critique of the centre participants. I believe this process helped put me and the participants on a somewhat more equal footing.

Because I regarded my practice as under scrutiny, as many participants did theirs, I believe I was able to attain a better understanding of what a number of participants were going through. I too, for example, experienced the discomfort and uncertainty of the self-study process. I too could feel somewhat demoralised by negative feedback as for example, where a journal entry in response to my promoting close attention to what children were learning, gave a detailed normative assessment of a child's progress in the acquisition of 'pincer grip'.

In my effort to facilitate participant autonomy, I was very conscious of the need to not be overly directive, however, I found that while the amount of direction I offered participants in the project was workable for some; for others it was problematic. For example, a number of participants reported that they had difficulty knowing what was expected of them, particularly in the early stages of the project:

> ..the least useful [part of the project]...I think it was all useful 'cos I learnt different things from different things, but I think probably just the [training needs analysis meeting] when we talked about what we wanted 'cos no-one knew (Participant J).

It could be argued that the sort of uncertainty or lack of direction which Participant J alludes to, can be seen as an inevitable by-product of the emergent collaborative process; however, this is not to say there is no problem to address here. It could also be argued, as does Participant J, that the project's initial efforts to establish collaborative process and the autonomy of the participants, were unrealistic, because practitioners were expected to take a lead at a time when they were not ready or sufficiently prepared to do so.

In contrast to participants like Participant J, who experienced a disconcerting lack of direction in the initial stage of the project, there were also participants who *did* have certain expectations about the direction the project would take, but who found these expectations were not met:

> I suppose I thought we would do this and I would rush away and I would have all these wonderful written notes or we would have a programme written. That was my expectation. I thought...we would have this wonderful programme at the end of it and...realistically that didn't happen. We still had to do that part for ourselves. So it was a learning curve, but I think we did that with our programme. ...I think we did go ahead that step. So probably my expectation was that, that is what would happen and it didn't, but that was actually okay at the end of it...instead [at project sessions] we actually sat down and nutted out quite a few things (Participant K).

In many respects it did not concern me that in the project, as Participant K observed, you did not have "things handed to [you] on a silver plate". Handing centres a "little plan [with] 'these are the things that weren't appropriate and these are the things [you] were doing very

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well' " (Participant K), is not, I would suggest, what *Te Whaariki* is about. Indeed, I found it quite affirming when Participant K suggested that the project focussed you on your own professional practice and really challenged you to think:

> That is what I visualised happening, but that didn't actually happen, but I think we went through a really good process and it really got me thinking 'tick,tick,tick,tick.'...I actually found it really good...the whole process...I suppose you were looking at your own professionalism really (Participant K).

However, as facilitator-researcher, if I was the one who was really determining what the essentials of our approach were to be, then this raises questions about participant autonomy and the integrity of collaborative process.

Insider/outsider

As discussed in chapter four, many of those who advocate critical action research, suggest that the kind of power/autonomy relationship established between the facilitator and the participants is significantly affected by whether the facilitator comes from *inside* or *outside* the participant group. So important is this positioning held to be that the involvement of outside facilitators in critical action research is regarded by many as a contradiction (McTaggart, 1991), or at the very least, not truly desirable (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Tripp, 1990).

It could be argued, therefore, that had the participants and I been members of the same group; had we been peers on an equal footing, perhaps differences in expectation such as those above could have been raised and addressed far earlier in the process. Such an argument appears to have some merit. However, in this project, I had considerable difficulty determining quite what my positioning was, since there seemed to be a far-from-straightforward mix of *insider* and *outsider* characteristics in my relationships with participants. This is illustrated in the discussion of *insider* and *outsider* roles which follows.

Being an insider

On the one hand, as indicated in chapter six, the participants and I were all from inside the early childhood community. On the other hand, my status as insider/outsider shifted somewhat according to which service the participants had gained their early childhood experience in. For example, since I did not have any previous experience within Montessori early childhood services, as a researcher within that context, I would be said to be from outside the service.

From my own point of view, I found it very important to be enough of an insider to feel sufficiently conversant with the professional context participants were working in. With the Montessori centre, for example, I felt that my ability to work with the centre was somewhat constrained by my lack of in-depth knowledge of the Montessori approach. This view was echoed by one of the Montessori staff, who suggested in her

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final interview that although "it wasn't a major thing... a [more] in-depth picture...might have helped you" (Anonymous). When I flagged this at the second cluster meeting as an issue I would pick up in the final report, subsequent written feedback from the Montessori participants was "it was not a real issue for us." Nevertheless, I still feel that a more in-depth understanding of Montessori would have given me a better understanding of the curriculum issues this centre was grappling with.

I also had little previous direct involvement with Playcentre, although here the differences in approach did not seem all that great. I felt less of an outsider. This view appeared to receive a measure of support from one of the playcentre participants, who seemed to position me as outside the service, but as just "a bit different". She also seemed to think that having someone come from outside the service, but not too far outside the service, may have been an advantage:

But also it has been an extra bonus because probably your experience has been a bit different as well (Participant A).

Within the context of this complex overlay of insider/outsider status, there was the additional issue of my having known a number of participants through being their tutor at the College of Education, in either pre-service or post-qualification courses. I tended to think this experience would reinforce the perspective of me as an *outsider,* because of the status and power differentials between tutor and student in award-bearing courses.

When asked in the final interviews how they thought this earlier college connection had impacted on our relationship in the project, several participants talked about the fact that having me as project facilitator had involved a change of relationship. For Participant T, this change was to do with removing barriers and overcoming the distancing:

> ...at college there was a barrier there between a tutor and a student, but when you come here to work there is no barrier. Like you are here to help us and we will come to you and it's really close...there was no problem for me (ParticipantT).

One participant, who reported finding me a "hard lecturer" in a post-qualification course she had been involved in, described the differences between the college context and the project, as follows :

> I think when you are at college you are still very aware you are back to being a student again...whereas I have found this a lot easier process...and I have found you very accepting (Participant K).

When Participant K differentiated between the college courses and the project, she did so on the basis that for her, college courses involved going "back to being a student again", being assessed and undergoing a loss of status; whereas she described the project as "very accepting". This seemed to suggest that within the project relationships were on a more equal footing...just how equal is not clear.

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Participant C, identified the earlier connection at college as having had somewhat contradictory effects:

> *Intvr. So would it have been easier...if we had [had] no [earlier] connection?*
>
> No, I don't think so. It might have been easier, but it wouldn't have been as valuable I don't think, because there would have been all that stuff with building a rapport and all of those sorts of things (Participant C).

When Participant C suggested that it might have easier had we not been previously involved together at college, I suspect this could well have been to do with the sorts of issues concerning assessment, status and power referred to above. However in suggesting that our previous relationship had also had a positive impact in terms of rapport and value, I think that Participant C was identifying our relationship as a 'mix' of outsider and insider elements. Despite the positional barriers, Participant C and I had established a relationship through our college connection. We knew each other and we had a number of early childhood and educational interests in common.

There were other participants who also indicated that having known me before had had a positive effect:

> when we knew it was going to be you we felt really comfortable about that, so that made a big difference (Participant Q).

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One participant wrote:

Not sure [that] it would have worked for me personally had facilitator been unknown (Anonymous contribution, small group discussion notes, second cluster meeting).

On the other hand, others thought that having known me previously had been of negligible significance:

Maybe I felt a bit more comfortable, but I don't think it would have changed anything ... I wouldn't have approached it any other way (Participant J).

Finally, one must also note that since I, as researcher-facilitator, collected all the data, it is also likely that it would have been rather difficult for participants to report that having known me previously had a negative impact.

Being an outsider

My outsider status came, in the first instance, from being outside all five centres. When participants were asked in the final interviews, how they found working with someone from outside the centre, their responses were positive:

I think staff felt quite comfortable about being honest about things and I think that is the other thing about having someone from

outside is that they can actually be quite honest about things (Participant J).

Some seemed to think it necessary to have outside facilitation:

Well I don't think you could do it unless you had someone from outside (Participant J).

Again it is important to bear in mind the difficulties participants could have faced in giving 'negative' feedback on this, directly to me. I think it would have been better had the final interviews put more emphasis on *comparing* insider and outsider facilitation so that the focus was sharpened, but 'depersonalised'.

It was suggested in chapter six that the project's research links with the College of Education and the Ministry of Education were likely to further contribute to the perception of me, the facilitator, as an outsider. This was evidenced in section three of this chapter, in Participant G's conviction that, despite assurances to the contrary, if 'at the end of the day' the Ministry of Education wished to access the video tapes, I as facilitator-researcher might "have to" let them.

One remaining issue to note with regard to outsider status, concerns my cultural background as a Pakeha in relation to two participants whose cultural backgrounds were Samoan and Tongan background respectively. As indicated in chapter six, I was clear at the outset of the project that I did *not* have the necessary "cross cultural

competence" to operate in two early childhood services, that is Kohanga Reo and Pacific Island language nests (Bishop and Glynn 1992). However, when it came to the selection of the participant group I was unsure how to proceed and though I had concerns about my ability to do justice to the voices of participants from backgrounds significantly different from my own, I opted not to include ethnicity amongst the selection criteria. During the course of the study, I found myself revisiting the question of my "cross cultural competence" in relation to individual participants. I noticed that both the Samoan and the Tongan participant seemed particularly reticent at group meetings. Having tried some strategies to make the group discussions more inclusive, I tried exploring the issue a little further in the final interview:

Intvr. Do you think that there [was] any cultural [aspect] to your comfort level?

Definitely

Intvr. So if you were in some group situations you would be more comfortable than with others?

Yes and I feel much better if I am asked to say something in group activities. Most of the time I will just sit and listen and observe, but I think it is to do with my personality as well and a cultural thing that you have to sit and listen to what other people say, but at the same time...that other people give you space and the time to say something or even to ask if there is anything to add in or something (Participant T).

This was a situation in which I felt very much constrained by my Pakeha background and at somewhat of a loss in terms of knowing what might work well for these participants. It seems to me that there

are particular issues concerning the role of facilitator in situations involving participants from cultural backgrounds significantly different from one's own and this is an area that needs exploring further. For example, it seemed a clear illustration of Metge and Kinloch's (1978) notion of cultures "talking past each other", that in a number of project sessions, Participant T was in a sense waiting to be invited to input, while I was thinking that asking for Participant T's input might be putting her on the spot.

However, one should not overlook the fact that as Participant T noted, the way she responded was a matter of her own individuality as well as her cultural background. I see this as supporting the view that although questions of group and position are very significant, relationships between the researcher and participants are complex and one needs to go beyond such questions, to consider the individual and the specific context of any research situation. For example, as shown by the experiences of another participant, who reported being "talked down" by other staff in a group session, having difficulty getting your voice heard was not something confined to the non-Pakeha participants, nor was it confined to the facilitator-participant dynamic.

In conclusion then, although the findings discussed above do highlight the importance of status and power differentials between the facilitator and the participants, the way such differentials operated in this study were by no means straightforward. Having experienced the states of insider and outsider as complex, mixed and shifting, I have some

difficulty relating to the seemingly tidy insider/outsider categories, held to play such a prominent role in differentiating between the facilitation of technical, practical, and critical action research projects (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Tripp, 1990; McTaggart, 1991). Furthermore, it seems to me that one cannot rule out problems of domination and subordination in a group of so called 'peers', a view which is consistent with the position advocated by writers like Ellsworth (1989), who as seen earlier, suggest that no group and no position should be regarded as exempt from becoming oppressive to others (p114).

Postscript

During the course of the project, I became increasingly convinced by the view Harding (1987) expresses as follows:

the best...analysis...insists that the inquirer her/himself be placed on the same critical plane as the overt subject matter... That is, the class, race, culture and gender assumptions, beliefs, and behaviours of the researcher her/himself must be placed within the frame of the picture that he/she attempts to paint...We need to avoid the 'objectivist' stance that attempts to make the researcher's cultural beliefs and practices invisible while simultaneously skewering the research objects beliefs and practices on the display board (Harding, 1987, cited in Cherryholmes, 1993, p9).

In my journey as facilitator-researcher, I came to experience at first hand what Lather (1991) refers to as the lesson of "the new French feminisms", i.e. the recognition that, "I am a constantly moving subjectivity" (p xix). Surveying the literature was an ongoing process throughout the project, and in moving back and forth amongst various contestatory curriculum discourses alongside the experiences of the project, I found my own position shifting. While my initial post-positivist orientation was reaffirmed, I found I had to reassess initial resistance to siting myself as a feminist as I came to recognise my misperception of feminist discourse as narrow and uniform. In addition, while I continued to see the project as having emancipatory potential, I became more conscious that there were a number of facets of critical theory discourse that I found problematic. This came about through a dialectic between much convincing critique offered by post-structuralism and my experiences in the project.

Participant feedback on the research process

Selection of participants :

As I noted in chapter six, the over-arching criterion for selection for the video-focus project was to have been that participants wanted to be involved in the project and that they shared an interest in its aims. In effect, however the decision to take part was made at a centre level and as highlighted by the following comments, a decision made at this level could mean that the voice of certain individuals did not get heard:

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because it really, it was sort of a thing that was put on me by- because I was working with somebody. You were consulted, but you were told you had to do it anyway, more or less, but in a nice way.

Intvr. So say if you'd been asked if you wanted to be involved and you really were able to say whether you did or not, what would you have chosen to do?

Probably not cos I'm an escape artist anyway (Anonymous).

The preceding excerpt is a clear indicator that not all the individuals who became involved in the project necessarily wanted to do so. Through highlighting a situation in which the power of one or more in the group has predominated over the wishes of others in the group, this excerpt also highlights the dangers of working at a group rather than individual level and offers further support to the post-structuralist emphasis on 'difference' and on analysing how power operates in context-specific ways. For example, the situation for the participant at this centre contrasts with that of Participant M, from one of the other centres:

The first [session] was quite informative and that was good just to see what we were getting into and everything, because there had been quite a big discussion to see if we did have the time etc (Participant M).

Individual interviews

As indicated, there were two sets of individual interviews; the initial interviews took place after the first substantive project session (the

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whole-centre needs analysis session); the final interviews took place prior to the last face-to-face session (the five-centre cluster meeting). These interviews seemed to play an important role in helping to establish a relationship between the researcher-facilitator and individual participants. They were especially helpful with regard to the playcentre, because of the large group of participants involved. One of the playcentre participants spoke of the interviews "drawing people in [making them] feel part of what was happening" (Participant E).

I think it significant that the two participants who spoke most infrequently during group meetings were both considerably more forthcoming during individual interviews. One of these participants took one and a half hours for her first interview. This was half an hour longer than the one hour scheduled and longer than almost all other participants.

The individual interviews in this project were particularly useful in surfacing feedback of a more personal nature and in eliciting suggestions as to how the project could better support participants through the study process. Interpersonal dynamics were often discussed more easily in individual rather than the whole-centre sessions. However while the individual interviews were especially valuable in the insights they offered, one discussion group at the final cluster meeting raised the issue of "people telling the [researcher-facilitator] things but not telling the group" under the heading "ethical dilemmas" (Written notes, cluster meeting two). This

centre group saw this as conflicting with the project's emphasis on working together as a team. This suggests that the benefits of individual interviews need to be considered alongside the possibility that they could undermine the group dynamic and could contribute to a climate of suspicion about who is saying what.

There was some negative feedback from participants about the first interview, mostly concerning their uncertainty about what was expected. Generally speaking, it would seem that participants would have been more empowered had they had a clearer understanding of what the initial interviews would involve.

Participant K was one participant who seemed to find the first set of interviews quite disempowering :

> I hated the first interview...I felt I was on a fish hook...It made me think, though...Like you [the facilitator-researcher] ask 'What do you think?'-What do you think?...So, you actually have to think about it (Participant K).

Another participant's suggestion for helping to address the power differentials in the interview situation, was for the tape recorder to be placed within the participants' reach, so they too could exercise some control over it i.e. if desired, they could turn the tape off.

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There were participants who commented positively on the way the interview contributed to the process. One of the playcentre participants who had contact with playcentres involved in other whole-centre professional development initiatives commented :

They were great. We liked that...individual interview compared to the centres that haven't had it. I think it's been wonderful... It was really helpful to talk it through and then we sort of shared a few notes later (Anonymous).

The Cluster Meetings

As noted in chapter six, part of the rationale for the cluster group meetings was to provide opportunities for participants to compare experiences as a means of helping wider critical perspectives develop. Hence, cluster groups were envisaged as a very rudimentary form of the "critical community" Kemmis (1982) had in mind in the Deakin University project, referred to in chapter six. Opportunities for participant discussion were seen as making an important contribution toward progressing this aim.

The idea that small group discussions, in such a context, could provide a useful mechanism for participants to look critically at what was happening in the project, seemed to be supported by a number of participants. One participant commented that small group sessions:

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...allow time to discuss both the positive and negative aspects of the project (Anonymous feedback notes ,cluster meeting two).

As one comes to more fully appreciate the degree of control pertaining to the role of facilitator, it becomes more apparent how important opportunities for practitioner-only discussions are. Unfortunately, the discussion sessions in the cluster meetings tended to suffer the consequences of an overly full agenda. As one participant described it:

it was just beginning to take off re discussion at [the] end...[what] the different concerns were...seeing where some agreed, others didn't (Anonymous feedback notes cluster meeting two).

For the cluster meetings to provide a meaningful avenue for peer support I am inclined to agree with the participant who thought that for this to "gel", more meetings were probably necessary (Participant C).

The need to further strengthen overall provisions for peer support within the project was highlighted in one participant's suggestion that it would have been better :

if we had more contact between centres...we kept wondering...what [the other centres] were doing (Participant R).

Journal

A number of writers have argued that the process of keeping a journal can make an invaluable contribution to the process of examining one's practice (Dadds,1995). In this project, the journal was most successful with certain individuals, who were highly motivated, and/or where the journal came to be of functional use to the centre, rather than only for the project. And so, for example, one participant who initially did not expect to gain much from the journal, wanted to see it incorporated into the centre's ongoing planning and evaluation:

> Well I have found that really good. I mean I've been a bit slack in the last few weeks...I would actually like to keep the journal going. I think it is actually really important. Can't believe I'm saying that. God Almighty! (Participant K).

Participant R, on the other hand, spoke of writing the journal "for you" [the research], though she too seemed to think that had they really felt they 'owned' the journal, they might have made better use of it :

> ...whereas I think if we were keeping it, I think we might have kept it more if it had just been for us (Participant R).

Almost all participants reported having difficulty finding time to keep the journal, nevertheless a number of participants reported finding it worthwhile:

But you know, I found the journal really useful (Participant P).

...to have it written down and to actually stop and think about it,...but once again it's sort of been the time. It's been us sitting down at lunch time writing anything we can think of, when all we really want to do is flop,...but yes it has had lots of benefits (Participant M).

Factors Constraining the Research Process

Tripp (1993) aptly cautions, "research that ignores the way in which the conditions of teachers' work affect their practices presents a highly simplified and very negatively biased picture of them and their work" (p3).

Participants identified a range of contextual factors they saw as impacting on their involvement in the project and impinging on the quality of centre practice. Some were seen as specific to the service concerned. For example, one playcentre participant observed:

But there is that professionalism, a lot of people in playcentre are not really aware that they are professionals and they haven't made that step yet. They just want to keep things nice and the kids to have a good time. That is okay but just something like this, [they] haven't got that sort of interest (Anonymous).

One of the kindergarten participants identified one of their main problems as ratios :

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right through the video...we have pinpointed that we don't have adequate adult/student ratios here..(Anonymous).

Physical environment

There certainly were differences between the five centres, not the least of which were the differences in physical environment. One could not help but contrast the limited, somewhat bleak outdoor space of one of the childcare centres, with the expansive outdoor space of the kindergarten and all the opportunities for exploration that this offered.

The importance of physical environment and its role in the curriculum 'whaariki/mat' was very convincingly illustrated by one centre's experiences during the course of the project. At the start of the project the main play area in this centre consisted of a four small rooms to the right and left of a central corridor. Rooms were regularly closed off because staff did not think they could be adequately supervised. This placed limits on the availability of certain activity areas e.g. the block room and meant that children became accustomed to adults choosing and changing the curriculum options available at each stage of the day. It also meant that staff kept on the move to keep an eye on children out of their line of vision. Staff did not tend to settle themselves in an area or work with children at an activity for prolonged periods of time. Clearly there was a myriad of ways in which the physical environment was shaping centre practice.

Between the first and second videoing sessions the walls were removed, to create one, open and very spacious play area. The walls coming down precipitated many changes. Especially significant was the way staff began to anchor themselves with children and that this paved the way for more interactive and responsive relationships to emerge. Some dramatic improvements were soon to be observed in children's overall levels of involvement.

Finance

For the two centres sited in lower socioeconomic areas, finance was identified as an especially difficult problem, in terms of what did and didn't get done. This was most evident in the follow-up sessions in which the video feedback was discussed and centre participants struggled to generate financially viable strategies to deal with the problems identified. References to financial constraints in the final interviews were however few, cryptic and, one might think, resigned:

> Well it is on the plan, it is just a case of when and does that take priority over... I mean money is a real issue (Participant P).

> Financially it won't work...(Participant G).

Time

As found in the Wellington case study *Te Whaariki* trial (Haggerty and Hubbard, 1994), time constraints proved a major factor in how participants involved themselves in the project:

> I think the process was good. You just needed more of it (Participant R).

> We know what we are capable of. We know how to do it. It's just we don't have the time (Participant H).

As the comments of these two participants indicate, time constraints related both to the duration or the 'amount' of the project itself, and the amount of time participants were able to devote to it. Participant R's comment about "needing more" of the project process, is one that raises the key issue of whether the project went on for long enough, whether there was 'enough' of it. Perhaps it could be said, that in light of the complexity of *Te Whaariki*, and the extent of the challenge that taking a critical approach to practice represented for some participants, the two cycles of video-feedback which the project allowed for were simply not adequate. One can but speculate how participants would have fared had the project gone for longer, or been more intensive, but certainly all centres reported having difficulty finding time to devote to the project. Several participants reported finding the project very time-consuming, particularly the viewing and analysing of the video feedback, that was required between project sessions.

Some participants admitted they had not managed to commit the time they saw the project as needing:

> I don't think we have put in 100% of what we could. We could have put in more but we weren't able to basically. It would be nice to have had more time to do it (Participant B).

One participant reported that some short cuts had detracted from the process:

> the second [video follow-up session] probably wasn't as effective [as the first] because we really should have seen the video first and then we could have gone on to the next step...because you probably did need to see it at least twice (Participant M).

Another participant, whose centre struggled with a paucity of staff meetings, felt that the need for centres to meet and work between project sessions, needed to be stressed more:

> I really feel that if you were to do it again that if you can't come to more meetings with the individual centres, the individual centres need to spend more time having meetings and they actually should be contracted in, because it is really easy to say 'Oh, you'll need to talk about that before next time and it doesn't happen. It would be a lot more useful and you'd get a lot more out of it if you did (Participant P).

Like the participants, I too was conscious throughout the project of how lack of time was one of the most pressing constraints. I did not always find it possible to keep up with the research timetable. A

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particular frustration for me was not being able to keep enough data analysis happening alongside research sessions. The data feedback session at the final cluster meeting suffered as a result. Unforeseen circumstances also resulted in most participants only receiving a week to respond to the draft "Findings and Discussion" chapter of the interim report to the Ministry (Haggerty, 1996).

Clearly there were constraints associated with the collection of the data, including the difficulty of participants being expected to feedback any problems, reservations and criticisms they had about the project directly to me. In the interests of further empowering the participants and strengthening critique, it would seem worthwhile to investigate ways to help counter this, in any future studies of this nature.

In summary, the findings discussed in this section concerning my role of facilitator-researcher and participant feedback on the research process can be seen as strengthening those reported in the previous section of this chapter (ref. 7:3). In particular the findings in this section lend further support to post-structuralist and feminist initiatives, discussed in chapter three, concerned with bringing the voice of the individual into the foreground (e.g. Miller, 1992). Similarly, while the findings in this section highlight the importance of structural status and power differentials such as those between employer and employee in the workplace, and the researcher-facilitator and participants in the project, as would be consistent with a critical perspective, the findings also portray the operations of power within the project as intricate and

shifting and quite context-specific. Such findings can be seen to provide support to those who argue a post-structuralist view of power, as better able to take account of the multiplicity of the power dynamic (e.g. Ellsworth, 1989; Lather, 1991; Jennings and Graham, 1996).

7.5 : using video feedback : issues

During the course of the video-focus project a number of issues arose concerning the role of the person undertaking videoing, what should and should not be videoed and who should 'own' or be able to access the tapes. This section explores these issues and their impact on the project.

Videoing the practitioners

As discussed in the methodology, it was intended that my role as videoer, particularly in the first videoing session, was to keep the main focus on the children and their experiences and not to focus extensively on the adults. In practice this did not always work out. For example, it tended to become difficult to keep a strict limit on the amount of video footage of adults in situations where:

-there were generally very high levels of interaction between an adult participant and children

-the children were involved in less independent activity e.g. with participants who worked with infants and toddlers rather than with older children

-participants were involved in large group or whole group activities

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-the physical layout of the environment, or the way it was used, had children and adults together in a relatively confined space

In practice, I allowed my own judgement to play a more significant role than intended, in how vigilant I was about averting the camera from episodes that adults were involved in. I found myself drawn to stay with episodes of conflict or potential conflict and videoing adults intervening in these situations did tend to make for quite an "exposing" experience for the adults.

I tried to be particularly careful if I thought an adult was very anxious about being videoed. However, with adults I thought less likely to be concerned about the presence of the camera, I was less restrained. I took chances and subsequent feedback indicated that in doing so I sometimes misjudged the participant's 'comfort level' with the video. For example, during the first round of post-video, follow-up sessions one of the participants talked about how stressful it had been having me video her taking a music session. Having this participant raise her discomfort, helped bring home to me the implications of overstepping the boundaries of my role as videoer, as discussed with and agreed to by the participants.

We seemed to reach a partial resolution to the difficulties raised by agreeing that some sort of video protocol needed to be established, so that participants in the process of being videoed could indicate if they wanted the camera to go elsewhere. A waving away by hand was

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decided on, and this was later discussed and accepted at the first of the two, five-centre cluster meetings. However, the underlying issue here, in terms of attempting to have the project reflect and promote critical pedagogy, concerned the likelihood of my actions further compounding the existing power differentials between myself and the participants thereby threatening the possibility of collaborative process. I would now not only look to self-monitor more closely in this regard, but to promote more proactive monitoring on the part of the participants. As discussed in chapter four, difficulties such as the above are not uncommon in action research projects involving outside facilitators. One might well argue, like Ellsworth (1989), that such difficulties are endemic to critical pedagogy, but I am of the view that it is in the interests of empowering participants to combat and minimise such power differentials.

Videoing children

The approach I used in videoing children was similar to that used with adults, in that I was guided by how comfortable I perceived children to be with the video. However, I can see in retrospect that I was more conscious of the need to be sensitive to the children, than I was with the adults and I was certainly a lot more vigilant about averting the camera. Feedback from the adult participants seemed to indicate that this approach had worked well:

I thought it was amazing. It was really good...You were so unobtrusive. You didn't affect the play at all or what was going on

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and you were [able to interact when a] child demanded that interaction. Like both times with [two children's names], they wanted to talk so you just [responded] (Participant E).

I was amazed. I mean only a couple of times did you actually see some children looking into the camera and waving...and the others seemed like it wasn't there...When I watched it I was expecting every head to turn and stop what they were doing and things. It was really amazing that they continued and didn't seem to care (Participant S).

There was a child on our session who wasn't happy about the video...but it wasn't a problem because you stayed away from her. You realised that and didn't intrude (Participant I).

There was, however, one episode in which I felt my presence had been overly intrusive. I was asked to follow up on a child because staff were concerned about her level of involvement in centre sessions. I endeavoured to carry this out, but found that the little girl concerned became aware of my presence quite quickly. Her body language indicated she was not comfortable with my videoing her. She moved away from the area I was in. I responded by trying to be more unobtrusive. I was 'discovered' twice. I tried again later in the session and by maintaining a 'safe' distance between us, I videoed one episode from across the room, using the camera's close-up facility. In thinking further about this episode, I believe I became too caught up in trying to meet the staff request for feedback and not sufficiently focussed on the interests of the child. Clearly, this is something which needs to be closely monitored not only in 'outside' professional support projects such as this one, but also in situations where practitioners themselves are undertaking video observations.

My role as videoer came under scrutiny again in four conflict episodes. These were episodes in which the well-being of the 'victim' or 'would-be victim' of the conflict situation seemed sufficiently at risk, for me to ask myself, 'should I be videoing this or should I be intervening?'. I use the term victim rather than child here, because one of these episodes involved the mishandling of a pet guinea pig; the other three episodes involved physical conflict between children.

In one of the conflict episodes there was no possibility of staff intervention because the children were out of sight of all staff. Because of this, it seemed obvious that I needed to intervene, although my intervention was not quick enough to prevent a child from being hit. On re-examining this episode on video, I thought that given a couple of seconds time lapse to 'change gear' from observer to actor, my response had been acceptably prompt.

In the other three episodes which occurred in areas that appeared to be closely monitored by staff, I decided staff intervention was imminent and elected not to intervene. Subsequent developments suggested that the question 'when is it an appropriate point to intervene?', needed to be relooked at. Staff at one of the centres where two of the episodes occurred, were concerned about the issue of observer intervention and raised it at the second follow-up session and again more fully in their final interviews. As well as their concern for the 'victims', these staff spoke of their concern about how lack of

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intervention by the person videoing might be interpreted by children as "condoning" what was happening.

These concerns not only suggest that my approach to the role of videoer in this project needed to be re-examined, but they also highlight the need for ongoing monitoring of what is videoed. Such monitoring clearly needs to involve the participants and I would suggest that parent input into this would also be desirable. Furthermore I would suggest that an even broader discussion of ethical issues needs to be had if video is to continue to be used for curriculum or professional development. And so, for example, while video may be able to offer invaluable feedback to a centre in which a culture of aggression has become established, or where a particular child is continually caught up in conflict, one also needs to question what the implications may be of videoing such 'negative' behaviour.

Parent access to the videos

Another issue that emerged during the course of the project involved parents' access to the videos. Participants in some centres were not comfortable with the idea of sharing the unabridged videos with centre parents. Again the episodes that were the subject of contention usually involved children in conflict situations. There appeared to be three different sources of participant discomfort about sharing such episodes with parents. Firstly there was concern that allowing parents access to these episodes might impact negatively on the child or

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children concerned. Some participants put forward the possibility of parental 'over-reaction' to such episodes, citing experiences of parents wanting something done about a child who hit or bit, so that the child concerned had become something of a victim. Participants also raised privacy issues e.g. did those who were not parents of the children involved, have any right to see these episodes and so on. Concern was also expressed about episodes being seen as reflecting negatively on staff practices and/or the centre and its practices.

Although the project did not include any specific provision for parents to view the videos, there had been an expectation that parents would be able to access the videos, as indicated in the poster informing parents about the project and requesting their written consent for the videoing. This poster included the reassurance that "the videos will not be seen by anyone outside of centre staff, centre parents and project staff" (Appendix E).

From my own point of view, in terms of being accountable to parents for what happened in the project, I was keen for parents to have access to the videos, seeing it as important that parents were able to monitor and give feedback on such a key component of the project. The desirability of such openness seems to me clearly highlighted in the discussion above. However, I have come to see the issues as more complex than I had initially envisaged. Perhaps there are instances where the well-being of a child could be compromised if all parents at the centre were able to access particular video material.

There may even be situations where the interests of a particular child would not be served by their own parents accessing certain material. It has been suggested that practitioners in a project like this ought to be able to exercise some degree of control over the videos, but questions remain as to 'how much?', 'under what circumstances?', and where this leaves the parents' interests, or for that matter the interests of the children. In conclusion, as indicated, there is clearly a need for further discussion of privacy issues amongst the various 'stakeholder' groups. In particular, further clarification is needed on the implications of the Privacy Act and other associated legislation.

Overall, the findings reported in this chapter have highlighted that in considering the various uses centre participants made of video feedback of centre sessions, one needs to remain conscious of video feedback as embedded in a particular context. Thus, for example, the collaborative nature of the video-focus project, is to be distinguished from an essentially individualistic, self-study focus and can be identified as a significant factor in the nature of participants' responses. Likewise, the early childhood context of the study, highlighted that complex team dynamics can come into play in the critique of curriculum practice, when the construction of curriculum involves a substantive collaborative component on the part of practitioners.

As noted, there was quite a range to participant responses. For example, on the one hand, there were participants who did not appear

to move beyond the use of video feedback for "technical, functional, short-term ends" (Zuber-Skerritt, 1996, p14). On the other hand for a number of participants video feedback could and did provide, to use Biggs' expression "the raw material of...reflection" (p221), recordings with enough detail to resource substantive, considered study of children and workplace practices. In similar vein, when it came to *Te Whaariki* some participants did not seem to move beyond the uncritical acquisition of the new terminology. Others however viewed the task as "engaging with" *Te Whaariki* (Carr, 1994) and the challenge of translating into it practice, rather than as 'implementing' *Te Whaariki* correctly. For many participants the video 'text' facilitated them moving backwards and forwards between theory and practice exploring, analysing, comparing and critiquing.

Relations of power within individual workplaces as well as within the project itself, emerged as a significant factor in participants' responses. Also significant were the associated issues of participant 'safety' and support in terms of participants undertaking the challenging process of examining their workplace practices, a process made potentially more 'exposing' through the inclusion of a video feedback component. Another key theme concerned the need for professional development discourse to take better account of the role of the affective domain.

The findings reported in this chapter suggest some tension between the function of support and the function of critique. In particular they

highlight the need to know more about the giving and receiving of negative feedback in relation to effecting change.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

It has been suggested that there was a certain 'chameleon-like' quality to the use of video feedback in this study, in that participants used the video feedback of curriculum in action at their centres in so many different ways. However, in addition to a considerable range of participant responses being identified, a number of contextual factors emerged as significant. The first section of this chapter discusses the findings in relation to the study's aim of using video feedback to help the participants work with the *Te Whaariki* curriculum guidelines. The second section focuses on the study's efforts to explore the use of video as a tool for critical pedagogy. The last section looks at the use of video feedback in the study of one's own workplace practices.

Video feedback and *Te Whaariki*

In this study it was hoped that the process of placing the 'text' of *Te Whaariki* alongside the 'text' of one's practice, through the medium of video, would help to facilitate a more critical 'reading' of each. It was an exercise that appears to have met with mixed success.

Some participants who used video episodes to help them gain familiarity with the *Te Whaariki* framework did so without attempting to go much beyond a surface level 'reading' of either. I have compared

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such an approach to a process of 'sticky labelling', comprising a ready, that is relatively unthinking, identification of practice episodes as exemplifying this or that category of the *Te Whaariki* framework. Some participants showed no indication that they might move beyond such an approach. On the other hand, with other participants, it seemed that the labelling process was more a function of their level of familiarity with *Te Whaariki*, than any inability to make critical judgements *per se*. These participants seemed at first to 'suspend' their critical judgement, until they felt sufficiently 'au fait' with what *Te Whaariki* was about. Thus it appeared that these practitioners struggled to become conversant with the *Te Whaariki* language before being able to converse in and about it; as the study progressed and familiarity with *Te Whaariki* deepened, these participants' responses took on a more critical edge.

It became increasingly apparent that there was a danger that video feedback could be used to 'fast-track' familiarisation with *Te Whaariki*, whereby the process went no further than the uncritical acquisition of a new set of labels. As a result, especially prominent in this study was the issue of how to facilitate the shift from overly narrow interpretations of the guidelines, that is positivist, prescriptive or normative approaches, to an approach that reflected an appreciation of the theoretical complexity of *Te Whaariki*, in particular its emphasis on the importance of cultural context. The likelihood of early childhood practitioners experiencing difficulty with such complexity, as noted, has already been foreshadowed by other writers (Nuttall and Mulheron, 1993; Cullen, 1996). This study reinforces the view that the *Te*

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Whaariki curriculum model is complex and embodies a considerable challenge for the early childhood community and that practitioners need to be supported in their efforts to become conversant with what *Te Whaariki* is about. The study suggests that the use of video feedback to ground explorations of *Te Whaariki* in a centre context, may be particularly useful in this regard, in helping to illuminate and exemplify the highly contextualised nature of curriculum. The study also suggests that such video 'texts' of curriculum in action, can provide a means of exploring in depth, the implications of key concepts in *Te Whaariki* in relation to centre practice. However, having also noted that video can be used to facilitate a prescriptive reading of *Te Whaariki*, it is suggested that incorporating a stronger theoretical focus on locating *Te Whaariki* within the wider curriculum discourse may help counter this, by encouraging comparison and, through this, critique.

Video as a tool for critical pedagogy

With regard to exploring the typology of technical, practical, and critical pedagogy, which was a central theme in this study, I would suggest that while the participants' responses lent support to the view that teaching requires on-the-spot, practically-oriented decision making (Tripp 1993), they also indicated that teaching requires a great deal more than technical proficiency. While there were many times in the study when video feedback was used for technical, 'quick-fix' problem solving, there were also numerous situations in which participants saw a need to critically re-examine their 'taken-for-

granted' assumptions. Of particular significance were instances of video helping to effect a shift from a management or technical orientation, in which the child's perspective and the primacy of pedagogical concerns were in a sense 'lost sight of', to an approach which kept these considerations to the forefront. Such an approach seems aptly described by Van Manen's (1991) term "pedagogical thoughtfulness", a concept that suggests an attitude of critical reflection combined with an attitude of caring.

I would add that while there were times when the video's intense focus on the children succeeded in prompting practitioners to set aside their management 'lenses', to refocus on or reconsider the child's perspective and bring pedagogical issues to the forefront, there were also times when achieving such a shift required additional probing on the part of the facilitator. On the other hand, and for a whole range of reasons, such probing was not always successful. Certainly the role of facilitator emerged as a key, complex and problematic component of the process.

Participants reported that one of the greatest strengths of video feedback was the detailed information it gave them about the children. As well as helping to strengthen a child-centred focus, the use of video as feedback frequently helped to strengthen participants' powers of observation and encouraged them to reflect more about what they were doing. Video could thus be said to reinforce an approach in which observation helped to 'inform' action.

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Notably however this study can not be said to give unequivocal support to more traditional notions of critical pedagogy (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). In addition to calling for greater attention to the affective domain, the study findings offer a degree of support to post-structuralist critique in a number of areas, in particular the attention to 'difference', the greater prominence afforded the individual and the micro-context and the more 'relational' analysis of the operation of power.

Video and the study of one's workplace practice

A number of writers have argued that some level of personal threat is inevitable in the process of critiquing one's own practice (eg Stenhouse, 1986; Winter, 1989; Dadds, 1993). The findings of this study suggest that introducing a video feedback component into the self-critique process can tend to increase that sense of personal risk. An increased sense of risk may be even more likely if as in this study the use of video feedback involves one's practice not only being exposed to self-critique, but to the critique of others.

For two participants in the study the sense of exposure the video-focus project appeared to precipitate, both in terms of self-exposure and exposure to others, was concerningly acute. Although these two participants were not alone in experiencing the sort of cognitive and emotional "dissonance" which Dadds (1993) describes between 'the

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self' viewed in the video feedback and 'the self' we think we are or would want to be (p287), theirs seemed to be a considerably more disturbing experience. Certainly, the emotional turmoil which these two participants reported experiencing during the course of the project, was in itself substantive support for Dadds' (1993) call for discourses of human emotion to be integrated into what tend to be essentially cognitive accounts of professional learning (p60). Their experiences highlighted what Dadds (1995) has termed the "dialectic between the head and the heart" (p122) and the importance of efforts to better understand the psychology of what is going on for individual participants.

The two participants, who reported finding the process most disturbing, were also especially concerned about the research component of the project. In addition to certain apprehensions about the research findings, they had concerns about the confidentiality of the data. One was particularly concerned that video data could be accessed by the Ministry of Education (MOE). Such findings seem to suggest that the complexities of the research overlay of the video focus project did not make for what Dadds (1995) terms the "ideal research speech situation" (p6). This was particularly so because of the types of power issues associated with the involvement of an 'outsider' institution such as the MOE.

Participants in this study did seem to respond in quite varied ways in what they took from the video feedback, in terms of their own

professional practice. It was difficult, at times impossible, to unravel quite why this was so. Why was it for example that some participants made little or no attempt to 'delve below the surface' to critique their own practice, even when there seemed to be substantive video feedback which they could have made use of? How was it that while two participants seemed for a time swamped in the wake of the emotional disturbance the video feedback precipitated, other participants, who were also clearly dissatisfied with their own practice, were able to stay a little detached, to take a more analytical approach, to 'play' conceptually with possible alternatives? The study quite possibly may have raised more questions than it answered, but a number of factors can be identified as seeming to play a role in the use participants made of video feedback in critiquing their own and their centre practice.

Where the project's primary emphasis was on the implications of the video feedback for *curriculum* practice, rather than the professional practice of individual participants, this emphasis would appear to have been of some help in lessening participants' sense of exposure, through siting the video feedback in a broader, more contextualised, more analytical, less intensely personal framework.

Exposure was not reported as a *major* issue for very many participants in the video-focus project, but it was clearly an issue of significance, especially for certain participants who came 'under the spotlight' and when the participants concerned, regarded the feedback as 'negative'.

Because the video-focus project was collaborative and workplace-based, this brought issues concerning the risk of 'exposure to others' into particular prominence. Such issues were more prominent, for example, than in the essentially individual, self-inquiry of studies such as Dadds' (1993, 1995). In addition, I have suggested that the risk of 'exposure to others' for the participants in this study, tended to be greater than it would be for practitioners in, for example, a school setting, because the more collaborative nature of early childhood curriculum means that in critiquing centre practice, it is difficult to avoid critiquing the practice of other team members.

There were times when the collaborative nature of the inquiry process and/or apprehensions about repercussions in the workplace constrained the critique of member participants. On the other hand, as some participants pointed out, there were also times when group process and a sense of collaborative responsibility clearly enriched the analysis process. For example, having group input sometimes provided a greater range of examples of different ways of approaching things, both in terms of the practices that were viewed and how they were analysed.

Personality differences between participants seemed to be significant, as for example with regard to levels self confidence, sensitivity, or emotional vulnerability, and in terms of the individual's own emotionality and how this was managed. On the other hand one could

argue that for some participants perceiving themselves as powerless rather than worthless, was more the issue.

Power issues to do with the centre context were very prominent. Some participants did not find their centre situation conducive to the critiquing of their own or the workplace practice. The 'dynamic' of the centre team itself was a key factor in this. As well as the problem of participants not feeling sufficiently supported in their critical endeavours, there seemed to be particular issues concerning the giving and/or receiving of negative feedback.

While there was some evidence in this study of team members giving negative feedback on particular workplace practices and to a lesser extent on the practices of another team member, there seemed to be remarkably few reported instances overall. Those that were reported needed to have been more adequately followed up by the researcher. Clearly there is a need to know more about the dynamics of giving and receiving negative feedback and its potential for effecting change, particularly in relation to the context of the workplace. Some writers have suggested that colleagues in one's action research community can make an important contribution as *critical* friends (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Dadd's 1993), but in light of the findings above, I would suggest that when the context of that action research community involves the often intense and quite intimate connections of the early childhood workplace, the possibility of role conflict can be great, as can the possibility of the context to subvert the critical process.

Although the study highlighted how important it is that participants are able to access the support they needed to sustain the process of self-critique, it also highlighted tensions between (a) safeguarding the psychological safety of individual participants and ensuring them sufficient support and (b) pushing forward the challenging process of collaborative critique.

Tensions between attending to the safety of participants and facilitating critique did not just pertain to the centre context, but to the project generally. For example, it seemed that how exposed or 'safe' a participant felt in the project could be linked to whether they felt able to exercise sufficient control over the process, in particular the video feedback and how it was analysed. On the other hand, it also seemed that sometimes it was only through probing, analytical questioning on the part of the facilitator that participant perceptions could be shifted from uncritical affirmation of practice to a more critically analytical stance.

This study highlighted a number of ethical issues that need addressing if using video feedback for professional development or curriculum development purposes. Questions concerning who should 'own' or control the video tapes and who should be allowed access also came to prominence through participants needing to confront or consider conflicts of interest between children, practitioners and parents. Questions were also raised as to what should and shouldn't be

videoed and who should decide? Pivotal to these questions, in terms of the current study, was not only the kind of power/control relationship established between videoer-facilitator and practitioners, but also that established with and between the other stakeholders, most importantly the children and their parents.

In conclusion

Winter (1996) suggests that writing up an action research report is "an act of learning [in which] we write [most importantly] for ourselves, so that, when we read what we have written, we find out what, in the end, we have learned" (pp26-27).

In terms of my learning, this action research study has alerted me to further complexities in the use of video feedback in a pedagogical context and highlighted a number of ongoing methodological and ethical issues. In particular I have come to view practitioners' responses to video feedback as more contextually embedded than I had initially appreciated. I have thus become increasingly indebted to post-structuralist notions of the self, of 'difference', of power and of the importance of micro-context in my efforts to understand and theorise participants' responses within the project. I am also more conscious of the problematic nature of the critical researchers' position in relation to other participants in projects such as that reported on in this study. Overall however, I continue to be convinced of the potential of video as a tool for critical pedagogy, of its ability to resource a dialectic

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between theory and practice and I continue to argue such a dialectic in the name of growth and understanding.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Proposal for centre sample, Wellington College of Education, Te Whaariki Research Group

The research project will use criterion-based sampling and proposes the following criteria :

The over-arching criteria will be the participatory criteria such that the sample will comprise centres and participants who wish to be involved in the project, who share an interest in its aims and who wish to engage in its process.

The centre sample:

Given the participatory criteria, we would see the group of five early childhood centres including :

at least one centre from each of the playcentre and kindergarten services

at least one full time childcare centre

at least one centre catering for infants and toddlers

both private and community-owned childcare centres

differing group sizes

differing adult/child ratios

centres servicing multi-ethnic communities

centres with a sizeable proportion of families on lower incomes

We would not look to include centres from either Kohanga Reo or Pacific Island Language Nests because we as researcher/facilitators

do not see ourselves as having what Bishop and Glynn (1992)[3] term the cross-cultural competence necessary to work in these settings.

The participant sample :

Although in a number of ways the "unit of study" for this project is the early childhood centre, the individual participants are also a key focus in the study. We therefore also need to attend to the sample of practitioners. The criteria proposed are that the group include [4]

practitioners with differing levels of training and experience.

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[3]

[4] Bishop,R. and Glynn, T. (1992), He Kanohi Kitea : Conducting and evaluating educational research. New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies, 27(2), pp125-135

Appendix B : centre and participant profiles

Centre A

Centre A was a playcentre. It was licensed for up to 25 children aged between birth and five years. It serviced a total of 45 families with a total of 70 children on its roll. The average daily attendance was close to twenty five, usually with about four children under two and a half years. The playcentre opened for six sessions i.e. five morning sessions from 9.15 to 11.45 and a Wednesday afternoon session from 11.45 to 2.15. The Wednesday morning session was a "junior playcentre" session, involving children under two and a half years of age, whose parents or caregivers stayed, along with the playcentre supervisor.

The playcentre was situated in an outlying, dormitory suburb. The families who used the playcentre were almost all local and described by one of the team members as predominantly middle class, with a couple families in the lower income bracket and a small number of families on higher incomes. The ethnic origin of the children was described as almost all Pakeha New Zealanders.

The playcentre premises were a modified house, comprising an open plan play area, an adjoining book area-come-parent space, a babies sleeping room, a small kitchen, toilet facilities and an adults "training room". The outdoor space was described as "challenging" in that most of it was on a slope, leaving little flat useable ground.

The Participants at Centre A

Participant 1 was the team co-ordinator. She was forty three years old with five children. She had two girls aged nine and three and three boys aged fourteen, twelve and five. Participant 1's involvement began in 1983 in the Hutt Valley. She moved to this playcentre soon after and completed her Federation Certificate in 1990. She gained her equivalency in 1994 and attended A.S.T.U. courses through Massey on such topics as music, special needs, changing perspectives in children's child development and adult learning and teaching process. She completed her Massey certificate in early childhood in 1988. Participant 1 had been a child development tutor for Playcentre since

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1987 as well as part of the education team. She had recently attended a week long course focusing on *Te Whaariki* which was run by Wellington College of Education. Participant 1 was also a trained nurse.

Participant 2 was thirty one years old and had two children with a third soon due. She had been involved with playcentre for three years, beginning in Hamilton and moving to two years previously. Participant 2 was half way through her part three playcentre training.

Participant 3 was thirty four years old and had a three year old girl. She had been involved in Playcentre for about one year, beginning in Auckland and moving to this centre in the last term of 1994. Participant 3 had trained as an occupational therapist.

Participant 4 had been involved with Playcentre for eight years. She was thirty three and had four children aged between three and ten. Participant 4 obtained her Playcentre Supervisors Certificate in 1990. She had also been involved in professional development through early childhood courses at Wellington College of Education and Canterbury University. Prior to her involvement in Playcentre Participant 4 studied business and economics. She found these skills valuable in her playcentre role and was continuing her studies in this area. Participant 4 attended playcentre herself as a child and considered her mother's involvement in early childhood to be an important factor in her decision to seek training.

Participant 5 was twenty five and had been involved in Playcentre for eighteen months. She had two children aged two and four. Participant 5 was working on part two of her playcentre training. She worked as a nurse before having children and recently studied English literature at university. Participant 5 was involved in teaching speech and drama to children.

Participant 6 had been involved with Playcentre for almost two years. She was thirty four, the mother of a three year old girl with another baby due in September. Participant 6 was working on part three of Playcentre training. Prior to her involvement with Playcentre Participant 6 gained a Bachelor of Science and Computer Science as well as a Masters in Electrical Engineering.

Participant 7 was thirty four and became involved in Playcentre two and a half years previously. She had three children aged five, three and one and was working on part three of her playcentre training. Participant 7 had attended a course on *Te Whaariki* the year before. She had a degree in horticulture and was a trained teacher working with new entrants and J2's for two years, before moving to relief teaching.

Participant 8 was twenty eight years old and had one child at playcentre with another due in October. Participant 8 had been involved with Playcentre for one year and was working through part three of her training. She was keen to continue training and was aiming to begin part four in 1996. Participant 8 recently attended a positive parenting course at Tawa College and a "toddler's course" at Parents Centre. She was a qualified librarian and had more than six years experience in library work.

Participant 9 was thirty seven years old and had a four year old girl. She had been involved in Playcentre for three years and was working on part four of the playcentre training. Participant 9 had some knowledge of Playcentre through her sister and her initial involvement stemmed from a desire to meet other adults. She recently attended a course relating to *Te Whaariki* at Wellington College of Education as well as one run by the Playcentre Federation. She also attended a positive parenting course. Participant 9 worked as a Barnardos caregiver and was caring for a baby girl.

Participant 10 had two children aged seven and three. She had been involved with Playcentre for six and a half years and had completed part three of her training. Participant 10 completed parts one and two relatively quickly, but found part three took a further three years to complete. She did not intend to continue with the training because her children were older and she had other time constraints. Participant 10 was a lawyer and worked as a legal editor. She had continued to work part-time for most of the previous seven years. Participant 10 completed various courses in communications, English literature, typing and computer.

Participant 11 was thirty eight years old and had three children aged eleven, nine and six. Participant 11 worked for a short time as a relief teacher in a kindergarten. She became involved with Playcentre in 1987 while looking for a suitable early childhood environment for her eldest child. Participant 11 completed her Federation certificate in

1992 and worked in a paid position with the under two and a half year olds. Participant 11 continued to attend courses and was extremely positive about the new skills and knowledge she was able to gain even after the "completion" of her training.

Participant 12 was twenty seven years old, had a four year old boy and was working on her part two training. Participant 12 became involved in Playcentre two years previously while in Christchurch and had been at this playcentre for about a year. Participant 12 in the past had cared for other children, in her home, on a full day basis and was at the time caring for a child about five hours each week.

Participant 13 was forty one years old and had four children aged 15, 13, 10 and 2. She became involved with Playcentre twelve years beforehand and completed parts one and two of the training during the first few years. Participant 13 had recently returned to Playcentre and had begun working on part three. She had found the system somewhat changed. Prompted by a personal interest she attended a Maori language course run by Whitirea Polytechnic.

Centre B

Centre B was a kindergarten. The kindergarten was able to take forty children in the morning and afternoon sessions. Though able to take children from two to five years, as the head teacher explained, the number of children in the two to three year age category was limited to 10% of the roll.

The head teacher described most of the families using the kindergarten as in the lower income bracket, with "a smattering" of middle income parents. Most of the families lived locally though a small number came from an nearby suburb, where the kindergarten waiting list was much higher. The head teacher identified 80% of the kindergarten families as of Pacific Island origin. The majority of these were Samoan families, though there were also families of Tokeleauan, Niuean, Fijian and Rarotongan backgrounds. Of the 20% remaining the head teacher estimated there was a fairly even distribution of Maori and Pakeha.

The indoor premises comprised one fairly large, open plan play area with one further, adjoining play area, set up for dramatic play during the course of the study, adjoining toilet facilities and office space and a semi-partitioned kitchen area. The outdoor area was well sited for sun, mostly in grass and very expansive. It was so large that the head teacher reported that with only three staff, supervision was sometimes a problem.

The Participants as Centre B

Participant 1 was thirty two years old and completed a two year kindergarten diploma course in 1984. She had been working at this centre for five years and was now head teacher. Participant 1 had previously worked at a another kindergarten for one year. She had been continually involved in professional development since her training completing courses on, behaviour management, special needs, peace education, music as well as various one day courses and other AST papers. Participant 1 trained as an office assistant and had work experience in a laboratory. She had been involved in voluntary work with Crippled Children and the Blind Foundation.

Participant 2 was thirty four years old and had a four year old son. Participant 2 began his training in 1983 when he completed year one of the two year kindergarten course at Hamilton Teachers College. He returned to early childhood in 1990 to complete his training at Wellington College of Education. Participant 2 worked part-time at a creche, mainly in the toddlers area, for a year before beginning work at this kindergarten thirteen months previously. He had recently attended a course on *Te Whaariki* run by the Kindergarten Association.

Participant 3 was twenty two and competed her three year college diploma in 1992. This was her first job in early childhood and she had been at this kindergarten for two and a half years. Participant 3 completed an AST paper called "Extending Children's Thinking" and for the previous two years had been involved in a Maori language course.

Centre C was a Montessori Centre. It was licensed for up to twenty children and catered for children between the ages of two and a half and five. It was open for five morning sessions from 9 till 12 and on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons from 1 to 4. Attendance at the morning sessions averaged around twenty and in the afternoons around 17. The centre was servicing 36 families.

The centre was housed in a school classroom, which was set slightly apart from the other school buildings. The building consisted of one relatively large, open-plan room with adjoining toilet facilities and a very small kitchen-come-storage facility. The outdoor area was flat and sunny and though relatively small, there was immediate access to the school's adjoining, relatively expansive, grassed play area.

The head teacher and owner described the families using the centre as predominantly upper income, though there was one family that met the income limit for the childcare subsidy. The families using the centre were predominantly Pakeha New Zealanders, though the head teacher identified one child as Rarotongan and three children as Asian.

The Participants at Centre C

Participant 1 was forty years old with two teenage children. She became involved with Montessori while her children were young and completed, by correspondence, a Montessori training course. The course was based in London but included a practical three week workshop in Christchurch. It took about a year to complete. Participant 1 followed it up with a trip to the United States where she completed the AMI course. This was full-time for six months. Prior to her involvement in Montessori, Participant 1 was a community worker, holding a community work diploma, and was involved in setting up community creches as part of her work.

Participant 2 was 27 years old. Prior to beginning her four-year early childhood diploma in 1989, she worked in Montessori for two and a half years. During this time she completed, by correspondence, a one year Montessori training course. On completing her college course she worked for two terms in a kindergarten and had begun work at this centre at the beginning of the year. Participant 2 had recently attended

an inservice course on *Te Whaariki* which was run by the Kindergarten Association.

Centre D

Centre D was an inner city, employee facility offering both part-time and full-time childcare for children between the ages of three months and five years. The centre had nineteen places, six of which were for under twos. The average attendance was between seventeen and nineteen. The centre was open from 8 to 5.45.

The families who used the centre came from a variety of suburbs. The parent user group was described by the supervisor as predominantly middle income, though the centre had a couple of families who qualified for the childcare subsidy and " quite a few " in the higher income bracket. The families who used the centre were almost all Pakeha New Zealanders, though the supervisor identified one child's ethnic background as Pakeha-Maori; another as Pakeha-Malaysian.

The centre was in a lockwood building, in what had been office space. The building comprised a large open plan playroom with an adjoining kitchen, staff room, office and toilet facilities. Off a short corridor at the far end of the playroom, were two sleep rooms and an under-two play area which incorporated changing facilities. The outdoor play area was of reasonable size and consisted of a much used deck area, along with areas in grass, bark chips and tarseal.

The Participants at Centre D

Participant 1 was thirty two years old and was the supervisor of this centre. She trained in 1981 gaining her New Zealand Certificate in Childcare. Since that time, Participant 1 had gained her equivalency as well as four higher diploma papers. Equivalency papers included topics such as: human relations, special needs, Maori language and art. She had also attended many ECDU courses a well as WEA courses on topics such as conflict resolution. Participant 1 worked at three centres for a total of ten years and had for much of that time

been a supervisor. She had taken part in a number of professional development courses.

Participant 2 was twenty seven years old with a four and a half year old child. She had been working in early childhood since she was fifteen. Participant 2 completed NZCA inservice training while based in Lower Hutt and had worked in childcare with periods of work as a nanny since that time. Participant 2 had begun work at this centre two years previously, having had about six years of centre experience. During the previous two years she had attended several SES courses and had completed an AST course.

Participant 3 was twenty seven years old and was born in Tonga. She began her involvement in early childhood as a volunteer. Participant 3 completed her childcare certificate in 1989 and has worked at various childcare centres since then generally in the under two year area. Participant 3 was due to gain equivalency having completed several inservice courses including human relations and equity as well a stage one courses in education at university. Participant 3 had also attended several inservice courses covering topics such as music, Te Reo Maori and the use of natural materials.

Participant 4 began her early childhood involvement as a teacher aide in a kindergarten in 1985. After some work experience and periods of nannying she began her college Diploma in 1990. Participant 4 had worked at two centres since completing her training and had begun at this centre mid 1993. Recent professional development included union involvement, ECDU courses and ASTU papers run by the College of Education. Courses included topics such as human relations, extending children's thinking and associate teaching.

Participant 5 had a four month old baby. She had completed the N.Z Nanny Certificate in 1991 and then started working at this centre. She completed two ASTU papers through Massey University - "Working with Parents" and "Working with Under Two's".

Centre E was a recently established, owner-operator centre. The centre was a 'mixed-age-range' centre, catering for children from four months through to five years, taking children on a part-time and full time basis. The centre was licensed for a total of 20 children, 8 of whom could be under two. The average attendance was around 14 per day, though fluctuating roll numbers was a problem. The centre also had an extremely high ratio of 'special needs' children. It was open from 6.45 to 5.30 daily.

The centre was situated in an inner city suburb though not all the families using the centre were local. Families came from quite a wide geographical area. The supervisor described the families using the centre as almost all lower income. She estimated that 90% of the children on the roll were non-Pakeha, that most of the children were Samoan, some were Maori. One child was Ethiopian.

The centre premises were a converted house. At one end was a kitchen, dining room and an under two's play area, each of fairly moderate proportions. Beyond the dining room off a central corridor, were a succession of small rooms, comprising of toilet and storage facilities next to the dining room and office and sleeping facilities at the far end. In the middle, there were three separate playrooms, though during the course of the project, the walls between these were removed to make one large play area.

There were two outdoor areas, one grassed; one in concrete and bark chips. Because the grassed area was only dry enough to use for a couple of months of the year, this meant that the outdoor space available was limited. Staff commented that even the area in year-round use, was badly situated for sun

The Participants at Centre E

Participant 1 was the owner-operator of the centre. Participant 1 was thirty three years old and had two children aged five and eight. She trained in 1981, gaining her New Zealand Certificate in Childcare. Participant 1 had gained her equivalency as well as a higher diploma. Courses included such topics as programme planning, human relations, children's drama and art. She had nine years experience in childcare before setting up this centre. Participant 1 had continued to be involved in professional development throughout her career.

Participant 2 was forty six years old and had two children aged thirteen and ten. She began her three year early childhood training at Wellington College of Education in 1991. On completing this she worked as a family day care co-ordinator and had began work at this centre mid 1994. Prior to her involvement in early childhood Participant 2 worked as a nurse aide and in office work. Participant 2 had become involved in playcentre with her children and set up and worked in an aquatic centre creche for two and a half years. Recent professional development included an inservice course on *Te Whaariki.*

Participant 3 was thirty four and had a daughter and a stepson aged seven and eleven. She trained at polytechnic in 1983, gaining her New Zealand Certificate in Childcare and had completed three equivalency papers since that time. Participant 3 had attended several ECDU courses and had been involved in centre based ECDU training and support. Since the completion of her training participant 3 had worked as a nanny, as well as in childcare, and had began at this centre mid 1994

Participant 4 had three children aged between twenty one and fourteen. She was born in Samoa and trained there as a nurse. Participant 4 trained in early childhood in 1989 completing the one year childcare certificate course. Prior to this she completed a six week special education course and a social work course and worked as a volunteer social worker for a year. Participant 4 had worked full-time in childcare from 1990 until 1994. This was followed by a year of relieving work before starting at this centre. Recent professional development included an early childhood music course.

Appendix C

Interview Notes for First Individual Interviews

Contact person

age range of children allowed (distribution)

age range of children attending(distribution)

No of children able to attend... average/usual attendance pattern

How would you describe the community you serve. No of families (as at start of project and if significantly different as at end of project).

Can you give details of the different ethnic backgrounds of the families you work with.

To what extent are different income groups represented amongst the families you are working with...Can you estimate the percentage of low, middle, middle-high, high

(If respondent unsure of categories suggest income ranges)

Up to 30,000, 30,000-45,000,45,000-55,000,Over 55,0000

How would you describe the physical environment here (indoors and outdoors)

What would you describe as the significant features of your centre?

Questions for all participants

Age

Do you have children? If so, names and ages of children

Can you tell me about your training background

Since training what sort of professional development/ in service have you been involved in? Any particularly helpful? How? Why? Any particularly disappointing? Why? In what way?

If appropriate, Te Whaariki, Any Courses? Have we covered?

In terms of this team how important do you regard the training factor, different sorts or levels of training./ How do you see the different levels of training in/amongst the team/s impacting on the way the team works?

Work history

When started in current job

Can you identify any people/courses/experiences you regard as having had a very significant and very positive influence on the way you work?

People/courses/experiences not so positive, that may have prevented you from making the progress you wanted to or approaching things the way you wanted to

What do you see as the strengths you bring to the programme, to the team?

What do you see as areas you might refer to as "not one of my strengths", areas you see yourself as needing to work on/ of weakness/your problem areas in relation to programme and the team

If I asked you what aspect of the programme you personally would like to see your Centre working on ,how would you respond? What do you think about (the direction emerging from the training needs analysis session)

If I said you could walk into your centre next ... and have one thing in the programme changed, what would you choose?

Te Whaariki

What opportunities to explore ? Impressions?

Can you tell me what has happened so far with getting started on the journal?

Do you have any questions about the project?

What would you personally like to get out of being involved in this project?

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What would you like your centre to get out this project.

Is there anything you'd like to say/talk more about we've not covered /haven't spent much time on? Any last minute thoughts?

Appendix D

Final interview questions

Te Whaariki Video Research Group

Introduction:

I have outlined below the areas I would like to explore in the final interviews and the sorts of questions I'd anticipate asking, so you have the opportunity to consider them beforehand, **but** don't panic if you don't get the chance look through them beforehand they are not compulsory reading!

I will not be 'sticking to' these questions too rigidly. Not all questions will be appropriate for all interviews and in some interviews additional or follow-up questions may suggest themselves as the interview progresses. Remember too, of course, you can pass on any question.

The purpose of the final interviews is to surface as much feedback as possible about how helpful you as centre participants have found the various sessions we have had together and in particular how you have found the process of using video in terms of :

(a)providing feedback on your centre's programme practices and perhaps too on your personal practice

(b)helping you engage with Te Whaariki

Video

What were your initial responses to the prospect of having sessions videoed?

***1 Can you describe the involvement you had with the videos that were taken?

Can you describe how viewing the videos was organised ?

What were your overall impressions of the first video? Of the second video?

Can you pinpoint any critical episodes on the first video that gave you particularly valuable feedback about the programme, about the children and their curriculum experiences*** about your own practice?

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Did you want to make any changes to the programme/*** to your personal practice as a result of the first video?

What did you do about this?

What about the second video?

Were there any differences between the first and second round of videoing you want to comment on?

Were there any differences between the actual video content you wanted to comment on?

How did you find the follow-up sessions?

What do you regard as the biggest pluses and minuses of the video component of the programme.

Can you suggest any improvements to the way the videoing was handled?

What, if any, potential do you see for video within the planning and evaluation processes within this centre?

Can you explain your viewpoint as fully as you can e.g. why you think it would be useful/ of limited use/ inappropriate?

Using the Te Whaariki framework in processing the videos

This was picked up in different ways by different centres, but usually involved some variation on looking at how episodes from the video related to the Te Whaariki framework of principles aims and goals. Can we firstly clarify what that process involved for you in your centre and could you then let me know how useful a process you see this as being for gaining a working knowledge of the framework?

Te Whaariki

How are you currently feeling about Te Whaariki?

Has your attitude to Te Whaariki changed during the course of the project? If so, can you explain how?

How would you compare the understanding you now have of Te Whaariki with your understanding at the beginning of the project... any changes?

If so, how have these come about.?

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What have you found most difficult about working with Te Whaariki?

What have you found most useful about Te Whaariki ?

What do you see as the best strategies for your centre to try now, to make further headway with Te Whaariki?

My role as facilitator /researcher

How have you found having me come in, someone from outside the centre, to facilitate the project? What have you found most helpful/ most difficult?

What do you see possible advantages and disadvantages in having an 'outside' facilitator ?

*** What about the impact of me not having a Playcentre / Montessori/ Kindergarten background?

If we were about to start the project again, i.e. a sort of 'Take 2' what changes could you suggest I try in the way I approach the role of facilitator?

Other aspects of the project

Thinking about the project as a whole, what have you found most useful/ least useful/ most difficult...?

Can you give me any particular feedback on any of the following:

training needs analysis session

first cluster group meeting,

first interviews,

journal keeping

(We will need to identify which sessions you were able to attend)

What do you think about the fact that the project has looked to involve all centre staff/ as many of the playcentre team as possible ?

Can you identify any resulting advantages/ disadvantages for you or your centre?

If we were looking to do a retake of the project here, what changes would you like to see made to the way the sessions were approached?

College /Ministry links

Do you think the fact that the project is a research study that is linked to College may have impacted on the way people have responded to it ?

If so, in what way/s?

Likewise, do you think the fact that the project is tied up with the Ministry of Education may have impacted on the way people have responded to it? If so, how?

Overall

Is there anything we haven't covered that you want to comment on?

Appendix E

(This was presented as an A3 size poster on yellow coloured card with the logo used for project material)

Te Whaariki Research Project

PERMISSION TO VIDEO YOUR CHILD

What will we be videoing?

We will video two sessions. Our focus will be what children are experiencing during those sessions.

What is it for?

We have been contracted by the Ministry of Education to work with a small number of early childhood centres, to help them work with the newly developed curriculum guidelines: Te Whaariki

As part of our programme of work, we want to see if video observations give staff useful feedback about the children and the centre programme.

Who are we ?

Maggie Haggerty is the main researcher-facilitator for the project and the project forms the basis of her university thesis. Anne Pairman[5] is the assistant researcher-facilitator. We are both attached to the Wellington College of Education. and have worked in early childhood for a number of years.

What will happen to the video?

We will make a copy of each video for Centre staff to work with. We will later meet with staff to see if they find the video contributes anything to their planning or evaluation.

The videos will not be seen by anyone outside of centre staff, centre parents and project staff .

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[5] As things eventuated Anne Pairman did not work as assistant-researcher-facilitator on the project. I worked on my own.

We will be trying to describe how useful centres find video in our end-of-programme report to the Ministry.

When the project is complete, the tapes will be wiped.

Appendix F

Sample Te Whaariki Research Project

Centre 1

I agree to my child being videoed as part of the Te Whaariki research project. I understand from the information I have received how the video will be used

Child's name	Address and Phone number	Parents signature
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Appendix G

Giving feedback

In responding to the draft I have forwarded you, it would be helpful if I could get as much feedback as possible about where/whether you think I'm 'on track', where you think I'm not and so on.

As you read through the chapter feel warmly encouraged to write comments alongside any section you like.

If you can't think of anything specific to say or want to 'fast-track' you might like to consider the following code for responding to paragraphs or sections as you go:

2 ticks = very much agree

1 tick = agree blank = no opinion

? not sure about this

??really not sure about this

* = don't agree

** = strongly disagree

Where possible if you could initial or name your contribution this would be helpful for me but anonymous is fine. I realise it can be hard to give 'negative' feedback in a situation like this ... most important is getting the feedback.