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COOPERATING TEACHERS' IMAGES:

A STUDY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS

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ABSTRACT

Cooperating teachers are seen to have an important role in enabling the practicum to be a powerful experience for student teachers. Little is known, however, about the processes involved in cooperating teaching in early childhood education and the nature of the lived experience of cooperating teachers in preschool settings. This thesis reports on a study which explores the tacitness of the cooperating teachers' personal practical knowledge and of their experience of the practicum.

The power of the study lies in the voices of the cooperating teachers which are portrayed through their narrative accounts. Greater insights into what occupies the minds of the cooperating teachers were gained through interactive narratives as the cooperating teachers shared and responded to each others' themed stories. Observations undertaken in the preschools, the themed stories, cooperating teachers' metaphors of experiences and the images conveyed in photographs of adult/child interactions, were explored through focussed conversational interviews.

Findings indicate that the cooperating teachers' personal practical knowledge constructed the images they held of student teachers, themselves as a cooperating teacher, their relationships with the 'placement' university, and the nature of cooperating teaching. Cooperating teachers' conceptions of desirable attributes of early childhood teachers are exposed throughout the study and result in a clarification of the concept of care as it applies to the education and care of young children. The study also reveals the artistry involved in cooperating teaching and gives recognition to the importance of the early childhood cooperating teacher as a centre based teacher educator.

The thesis concludes with a discussion of implications for further research into the role of the cooperating teacher in early childhood education and for changes within the practicum.

DEDICATION

To my mother who was my teacher throughout the years of my early education by correspondence and whose vision it was that I should continually strive to achieve at the highest level possible.

The power of one is the courage to remain separate, to think through to the truth and not to be beguiled by convention or the plausible arguments of those who expect to maintain power...

-Bryce Courtney, *The Power of One.*

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INTRODUCTION

Practice is not just a user but a generator of knowledge, but as a generator of knowledge there's a great deal of difficulty in describing what it is that's known and how it's known. Teachers are often not very good at saying what it is they've learned to do... I find it takes a lot of work to get to the place where teachers will talk concretely about their own experience (Schon, 1992, pp.2-3).

The role of the cooperating teacher has been seen to be an important one in student teacher practicum experiences within early childhood education as well as within other forms of teacher education. Many practising teachers remember their preservice practicum experiences as being an important influence on their learning to teach. Student teachers value opportunities to engage in practical experiences and indeed the professional experience components within most preservice professional programmes are highly valued by the participants.

The supervision of student teachers has been assumed to be a major responsibility of the cooperating teacher. There has been considerable criticism, however, of the supervisory aspects of the cooperating teacher's role. One of the outcomes of the criticism levelled at the adequacy of student teacher supervision has been a call for supervisor training in order to enhance the effectiveness of the cooperating teacher's work with student teachers.

Existing training models have not readily been adopted within early childhood education. There appears to be a need for a greater degree of match between what the cooperating teachers perceive to be their needs, between their role and the expectations that are held of them, and the context or the nature of the profession in which they are engaged.

Little is known about the expressed needs of early childhood cooperating teachers. In fact, there is little in the literature which provides insights into the nature of their lived experience as cooperating teachers. The challenge in this study was not only to explore the nature of early childhood cooperating teachers' work but to find ways in which to come to know and understand that work. Since the study was concerned with the thoughts and practices of the cooperating teachers there was an affinity with Schon's (1992) concern that while '(practice)... is a generator of knowledge, ... as a generator there's a great deal of difficulty

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in describing ... (not only)... what it is that's known... (but)... how it is known' (p.2).

Research on teacher thinking has provided some avenues for exploration of possible approaches to be taken in the study; however, most of the research has been conducted, interpreted and reported by university personnel acting as researchers. It is only of recent times that teachers themselves have been involved as collaborators in research about their practices. To gain understandings of what guides those practices it is necessary that the teachers themselves become primary researchers. As such, they may then become empowered to act and bring about the changes that are required in order to enhance their practices. Rather than being assigned responsibility without authority, as collaborative researchers they are enabled to express their understandings and speak with authority (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). The literature currently suggests that cooperating teachers have little voice in the criticisms that are made of their practices.

The aim of this exploratory study is, therefore, to gain insights into what goes on in the minds of five early childhood cooperating teachers as they undertake responsibility associated with having a student teacher in the preschool settings where they work. By providing such insights it is envisaged that university personnel responsible for organising practicum experiences for student teachers, student teachers and cooperating teachers themselves will have a much clearer perspective of the nature of the early childhood practicum and the cooperating teacher's role within it. There is then a better position from which to argue support not only for the cooperating teachers in their role but to address the nature of that work and what the expectations are of the cooperating teachers, university personnel and the student teachers themselves.

The research approach that was taken in this study was one of narrative inquiry. Observation, focused conversational interviews, entries in a research journal, and the exploration of photographs and artefacts all provided data for the development of themed stories and story reconstructions. It was through storying and restorying, and the sharing of narrative accounts and reflections on these, that the cooperating teachers' perspectives were revealed and understood. These shared activities were important in crystallising the data expressed through this study in a way which has endeavoured to reflect the embodied nature of the cooperating teacher's understandings.

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The first chapter provides an overview of the context in which the study is located. Through a review of relevant literature, the chapter identifies the concerns that are raised about the nature of the practicum and the cooperating teacher's role within it. A brief comment is made concerning the socio/political context within which the practicum exists.

Chapters Two and Three address the research approaches taken in the study. Chapter Two provides the basis for methodological decisions which reflects the nature of the investigation, the role of the researcher, the context of the study, the techniques that were used and the rationales for the choice of techniques. It is Chapter Three that discusses and displays the processes involved in moving from field text data to understandings of that data and then to its reporting.

The next four chapters expose the data through key images which represent the cooperating teachers' thoughts and actions. Chapter Four identifies the nature of cooperating teaching through the experiences of Julie, one of the cooperating teachers. It demonstrates an engagement in the artistry of cooperating teaching as Julie worked with wisdom and intuition in responding to her understandings of the student teacher for whom she was responsible. From this broader perspective of the nature of cooperating teacher's work Chapter Five further explores Julie's concerns about particular attributes of the student teacher by focusing on the images which the cooperating teachers held of student teacher 'style'. These images reflect what the cooperating teachers perceive to be important attributes to be found in early childhood professionals.

Given that there is some understanding of the nature of cooperating teaching and the images that cooperating teachers hold of qualities indicative of the professional early childhood teacher, Chapter Six reports on the cooperating teachers' perceptions of their role. It uses the cooperating teachers' metaphors to express their perceptions of the nature of the practicum and of their role within it. Since cooperating teachers are expected to act in cooperation with the university's teacher education programme, Chapter Seven links the cooperating teacher's perceptions of their role with their expectations of their relationship with the university and explores how the images they held of relationships with the university were enacted.

The discussion in Chapter Eight draws on the literature to provide a further interpretation of the field text data. Since the nature of the study was exploratory, the data sources were reflective and interpretative. As the nature of the inquiry was ongoing there was a need to situate understandings not only within the context known to the cooperating teachers but also within a broader context of the literature, to seek further understanding and possible explanations. Chapter Eight, therefore, provides further interpretations through drawing on the literature as a resource.

Chapter Nine addresses the outcomes of the study within the context of the literature reviewed in Chapter One and what was revealed through the conversations with the cooperating teachers. The implications of cooperating teachers' conceptions of student teachers, themselves as cooperating teachers and their relationships with the university are considered in the discussion. The study concludes with implications for further research and the identification of changes that are required in current practices and how these may be achieved.

CHAPTER 1

THE COOPERATING TEACHER WITHIN A PRACTICUM CONTEXT

The word 'practicum' describes the field or clinical component of preservice professional preparation (Fleet & Le Claire, 1993). Other terms for the practicum include 'teaching experience' (University of Newcastle, 1992a), 'teaching practice' (Macquarie University, 1992a), 'practical experience' (University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, 1992a) and 'practice teaching' (University of Western Sydney, Nepean, 1992a). Within the practicum student teachers engage in 'a purposeful series of supervised professional experiences... (designed to enable them)... to apply, refine and reconstruct their theoretical learning, and develop their teaching competencies (Turney, Cairns, Hatton, Towler, Eltis, Thew & Wright, 1982a). Supervision is most often undertaken by cooperating teachers and university supervisors. Purposeful activities in which the university expects student teachers to engage are listed within practicum curriculum guidelines. Student teacher competencies are identified within student teacher assessment documents and are most often assessed by cooperating teachers and university supervisors.

Since the establishment of a need for teacher training (about the turn of the century), the focus on the field experience component of teacher development has moved from an apprenticeship model of in-school experience to college-based training with limited access to in-school experience (Turney et al., 1982a). More recently, with the restructuring that has occurred within higher education and the amalgamations of teachers' colleges and universities there has been considerable debate about the balance between field components of initial teacher education programmes and expectations that student teachers gain a more theoretical and 'knowledgeable' base from which to determine appropriate practices (d'Arbon, 1993; Gardner, 1993; Turney et al., 1982a). While the existence of the practicum continues to be supported in recent research, in government and professional reviews of the practicum and in policy documents, it is said to generate 'more division of opinion than any other aspect of teacher education' (Queensland Board of Teacher Registration, known as QBTR, 1994a, p.133).

Those professionals who are primarily responsible for student teachers in the practicum are cooperating teachers or associate/supervisory teachers. Their role is seen to be critical to the quality and success of teaching practice for the student teacher (Olson & Carter, 1989; Richardson-Koehler, 1988; Schools Council, 1990). While the literature on the practicum and the role of experience in learning is extensive, little has appeared in the professional literature about what being a cooperating teacher is like from the cooperating teacher's perspective. The two exceptions that have been found are in the work of Wood (1991) and Jones & Godfrey (1993) who have written briefly of their approaches to working with student teachers in elementary classrooms within the school system. They reported on the importance of student teacher/cooperating teacher relationships and the strategies they used in fostering those relationships within the practicum.

In a literature search (see Appendix 1.1 for electronic data sources which were searched), no studies were found that focused on the lived experiences of early childhood cooperating teachers in other than school settings. This study therefore asks the question - *what is it that early childhood cooperating teachers identify as being important as they observe, reflect on and respond to student teacher behaviour during the practicum?* In asking this question it is realised that the study is open ended. As an exploratory study, it therefore takes a broad sweep across the nature of early childhood education and the responsibilities of being an early childhood teacher, for it is within that context that the early childhood cooperating teacher works.

Since specific literature on what goes on in the minds of early childhood cooperating teachers is negligible, it was necessary to locate the study within the broader literature on the practicum in teacher education. However, that literature is quite vast. Therefore, it was decided to approach the literature review by focusing on key aspects of the practicum considered to best represent the nature and context of the practicum as it may be construed within early childhood settings, and the ways in which it is constructed.

This chapter explores the nature of the practicum and identifies those factors considered to contribute to its powerfulness. It then focuses on the practicum context and factors influencing its functioning. Finally, the chapter identifies the need for cooperating teachers to have an opportunity to express their conceptions of their role.

THE NATURE OF THE PRACTICUM

In order to gain a perspective on the practicum this section of the chapter addresses understandings about the importance and functions of the practicum and the role of the cooperating teacher. It then focuses on the opportunities that the practicum provides for student teachers. These learning experiences are most often facilitated by the cooperating teacher who has the responsibility for ensuring that student teachers have opportunities to meet the requirements of the practicum curriculum guidelines.

IMPORTANCE OF THE PRACTICUM AND THE ROLE OF THE COOPERATING TEACHER

The importance of the practicum within initial teacher education has been supported in recent research, government and professional reviews and in government policy documents, identified later in this chapter. There is no doubt that it continues to be considered as an integral component of most preservice programmes yet it remains one of the most contentious areas within teacher education (QBTR, 1994a; Schools Council, 1989). The debate about practicum issues involves not only the organisational and financial aspects of managing the practicum but the practicum curriculum and the key personnel involved - teacher educators, cooperating teachers and student teachers.

University employed teacher educators who act as university supervisors are most often the link between the university and the practicum placement site. They may operate in a supervisory role and act as resource persons. One of the difficulties with their rare appearances at the practicum site is that lack of familiarity with that context restricts their ability to make judgements about the student teacher's responsiveness to children's interests and level of functioning within that context, and to provide analytical feedback (Knowles, Skrobola & Coolican, 1995; Glickman & Bey, 1990). Infrequent visits do not lend themselves to the type of trust-building and reciprocity necessary for a collaborative, reflective feedback session with the student teacher (Richardson-Koehler, 1988). Another difficulty is that the university supervisor's role has often been characterised as overlapping with that of the cooperating teacher (Glickman & Bey, 1990; Turney et al., 1982a; Wright,

1995) and this has largely been seen as an outcome of lack of clarity of their role (Koerner, 1992). It is largely the cooperating teacher, therefore, who has considerable responsibility for the student teacher.

One of the major concerns of cooperating teachers is about their effectiveness in enabling student teachers to become teachers and this appears to be related to their expressed need for supervisory training (Glickman & Bey, 1990). In a study of student teachers placed in elementary and secondary schools Killian & McIntyre (1986) found that cooperating teachers who were trained were more likely to be consistently involved with the student teachers and to provide sequential and systematic feedback to the student teachers in evaluating their work. Using the responses gained from student teachers to open ended questions, they found that training in supervision skills resulted in the cooperating teachers providing a more stable field experience for student teachers, more specific feedback and more effective experiences for the student teachers (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Killian & McIntyre, 1986). While supervision training may do little to alter the context in which the practicum takes place, there is a need for further consideration to be given to the nature of supervision training and how to enhance student teacher development (Killian & McIntyre, 1986; Zeichner, 1992).

A narrow view of a teaching practice model assumes that student teachers can be instructed in the necessary skills and knowledge, and after practising these in the field, can be assessed on their level of competence. Such a model gives little recognition to recent research in teacher thinking (Ben-Peretz & Rumney, 1991; Cole & Knowles, 1993b), the complexity of teaching practice (Britzman, 1991; Bullough & Knowles, 1991) and the concept of personal practical knowledge (Clandinin, 1985; Clandinin & Connelly, 1987; Elbaz, 1983). There is a need to recognise the multidimensional and integrated nature of the personal, professional and contextual aspects of teaching (Wright, 1995). If teaching requires 'comprehension, reasoning, transformation and reflection' (Shulman, 1987, p.13) then careful consideration needs to be given to how this can be facilitated through the experiences in which student teachers engage during the practicum.

Experiences alone may be insufficient in enabling student teachers to gain the greatest benefits from practice teaching. Adults learn more effectively when they have opportunities

to engage in reflections on their experiences (Boud, 1993; Brundage & Mackeracher, 1980; Knowles, 1984). Engagement in reflective practices can provide a positive approach to constructive criticism and an acceptance of responsibility for change. It is argued that the value of the experience lies in the thought and subsequent actions associated with that experience (Johnston, 1994). Such activity often requires that the cooperating teacher engages in analytical and reflexive discussion with the student.

The recent research on teacher thinking supports a more inquiry-oriented approach to practice teaching (Cole & Knowles, 1993a). Such an approach is concerned with the development of practitioners who are reflective about their teaching rather than adopting a technicist/rationalist approach in which attention is given only to the technical skills of teaching (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Marland, 1993; Richardson, 1990; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1991). Therefore, an important aspect of the practicum is for student teachers to engage with children in those activities and practices which are sensitive to the enhancement of children's learning (McNamara, 1995). Meaningful practice must therefore be 'context sensitive, purposeful and articulated, participatory and collaborative, knowledge based, ongoing, developmental, and analytical/reflective' (Zeichner, 1986, p.26).

The concept of the reflective practitioner has received considerable attention in the literature (Calderhead, 1989; Clift, Houston & Pugach, 1990; Gore, 1991; Lovat & Smith, 1995; Schon, 1983; Smith & Hatton, 1992; Zeichner & Liston, 1987; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1991). Within the practicum, those practices which are reflective rather than routine are more likely to facilitate professional growth (Schon, 1987). 'Growth' is understood here to mean that which involves an increasing capacity to adapt and adjust to new situations and in the process to secure meaning from the experience (Beattie, 1995b; Dewey, 1916). It is influenced by a number of factors including personal expectations, the context in which learning occurs and the learning strategies applied within those contexts as well as the nature of the 'professional' work in which one will ultimately be involved (Elliott & Calderhead, 1993). It has been found that cooperating teachers who have a 'language of practice' (Yinger, 1990, p.89) are more able to communicate their knowledge to others and guide student teachers in reflecting on their own practices (Olson & Carter, 1989).

It is through observations of and participation in day-to-day experiences associated with teaching that student teachers may begin to appreciate the complexity of the cognitive and affective nature of teaching (Bullough & Knowles, 1991; Clandinin & Connelly, 1986; Elbaz, 1983; Fieman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; McLean, 1991; Nias, 1989; Yonemura, 1986). However, the extent to which this occurs may be limited by the perceived artificial nature of practicum experiences. The opportunities that student teachers have to experiment and experience the consequences of their actions are limited by the cooperating teacher's willingness to enable and allow that to occur (Johnston, 1994; Koerner, 1992). This observation suggests that the cooperating teacher has a role to play in enabling student teachers to engage in reflective practices (Richardson, 1990). As Piaget suggests, 'following the rules of others through a morality of obedience will never lead to the kind of reflection necessary for commitment to a set of internal or autonomous principles or moral judgement' (cited in DeVries & Kolberg, 1990, p.31).

The tension between the security of student teacher modelling of cooperating teachers and engaging in risk taking is of concern in early childhood education where so much of what teachers do occurs within relationships between themselves and each child. If student teachers observe adults engaging in inappropriate practices it is particularly worrisome in terms of Dewey's concern about practices being 'miseducative' (Dewey, 1938). Student teachers may not be aware of the appropriateness or inappropriateness of practices. If they conform without recognising the existence of a problem then their own behaviour could be deemed to be inappropriate. If they conform and yet recognise the difficulty then the situation can be quite stressful and morally challenging (Edwards, 1993).

There are other stresses associated with the practicum. These include such things as a high workload of written requirements and consequent demands on student teacher time and energy. They also include the application of a supervisory model in which the cooperating teacher takes a major role. These factors may mean that the practicum may be a disempowering rather than empowering experience for the student teacher (Lambert, 1992). While this situation impacts on the functioning of the student teacher, it is the cooperating teacher who manages the student teacher's well being within the practicum environment.

The focus on 'learning by doing' in real life situations also underpins a constructivist

approach to learning where problem-setting and problem-solving are part of the 'making sense' of professional practices (Yinger, 1987). Early childhood teachers, in adopting a constructivist approach to young children's learning, recognise that young children develop their own understandings through interacting with their environment. What is unclear is the extent to which the same understandings can be applied by cooperating teachers in their work with student teachers.

Already there is an expressed concern by early childhood cooperating teachers about the lack of time to engage in practices associated with student teacher supervision (Goodfellow & Kelly, 1991). The time required in fulfilling the expectations of their role and possible role overlap are not the only concerns of cooperating teachers. In one of the few studies that sought information from cooperating teachers about what it is like to be a cooperating teacher, Koerner (1992) was able to identify five themes which emerged from what the cooperating teachers reported to be consequences of having a student teacher in the classroom. These were: a) interruption to their work with the children, b) a feeling of displacement from the central position in the classroom, c) disruption to the classroom routine, d) breaking the isolation of being the only teacher in the classroom and e) the demands that the responsibility for a student teacher made on the cooperating teacher's time. There is, therefore, some displacement felt by the cooperating teachers when a student teacher is present.

Extended practicum periods at the undergraduate level have been financially impossible. One solution has been the development of internship models within early childhood education as well as other teacher education programmes (Davies & Pollnitz, 1994). Internships in early childhood education were only available after this study began. However, they are seen to offer an important context for professional development in providing a 'better quality of in-school experience' and 'the development of clearer working relationships' (d'Arbon, 1993, p.66).

While the practicum continues to be viewed as an important aspect of professional preparation (Preston & Kennedy, 1995), it is not without its critics (Neill, 1993) and tensions concerning roles, beliefs and practices of key personnel (Cornbleth & Ellsworth, 1994). Concern over role overlap of key personnel involved in the practicum suggest that

there is a need to identify characteristics of student teacher learning within the practicum and the cooperating teacher's role in facilitating that learning.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT TEACHER LEARNING WITHIN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PRACTICUM

Given a favourable context, the practicum provides an extensive array of opportunities for student teachers. Generally, it is considered that placement in field settings with practitioners provides opportunities for student teachers to develop their own approaches to teaching through the observations they make, the experiences in which they engage, and the conversations they have with practising teachers (Boydell, 1986; Britzman, 1991; Clandinin, 1985, 1986; Clandinin & Connelly, 1986, 1987, 1991a, 1991b; Elbaz, 1983; Fieman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Goodman, 1985; Handal & Lauvas, 1987; Johnson, 1984; Yonemura, 1982, 1991). In particular, the practicum provides opportunities for student teachers to observe skilled practitioners at work and be exposed to the nuances of the profession (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Lambert, 1992; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984), to participate in purposeful experiences associated with teaching while under the supervision of qualified and experienced teachers and to engage in reflective discussion designed to assist in refining and clarifying their own images of teaching (Clandinin, 1985; Johnston, 1992, 1994; Koerner, 1992; Richardson, 1990; Spodek, 1991; Zeichner, 1986).

The discussion now considers three particular kinds of opportunities in more detail as they apply within the 'multi-dimensional and interactive nature of personal, professional and contextual aspects of early childhood education' (Wright, 1995, p.145). These are opportunities to observe skilled practitioners at work; to appreciate teaching within a context; and to be involved with experienced practitioners.

Opportunities to observe skilled practitioners at work

Given that the practicum in school contexts provides opportunities for student teachers to observe the classroom teacher at work then it can be argued that the same may well apply in early childhood contexts. They also have opportunities to become aware of the political, administrative and economic factors which impact on early childhood services and contacts

with parents as they observe, participate in and become part of the everyday life within the service.

Teaching in early childhood occurs on an individualized basis, continuously throughout the day during play periods and routine times (such as lunchtime), as well as at designated group times. In addition to a responsibility for children, the early childhood teacher has responsibilities for other staff, for the establishment of positive relationships with parents and administrative/management skills. There is little free time when the early childhood teacher is not involved with children (Fleet & Clyde, 1993). Student teachers, in being accommodated within the early childhood teacher's regular contact with children, also have many opportunities to develop an appreciation of what teaching in early childhood involves (Johnston, 1992).

Opportunities to appreciate teaching within a context
Practicum can provide the context for student teachers to develop understandings within a professional knowledge base. Early childhood teachers in preschools are continually involved in relationships with children and with the other adults with whom they work as part of a staff team. Teaching in early childhood cannot occur without being influenced by the lives of the adults and children involved (De Vries & Kohlberg, 1990; Lambert, 1992; McCarthy, 1990; McLean, 1991). The quality of relationships between adults and children in terms of adults' social, cognitive and language interactions has the potential to affect the quality of life experienced by each child (Clarke-Stewart, 1987; McLean, 1991; Phillips & Howes, 1987; Phillips, Scarr & McCartney, 1987).

An understanding of the nature of relationships is only one aspect of the broad knowledge base required of early childhood teachers yet it is an important factor and one to which the student teacher cannot be immune. Early childhood teachers are responsible for all aspects of the young child's development, physical safety and well-being as well as the 'whole' child's experiences within the early childhood setting (Katz & Goffin, 1990). These teachers require a broad knowledge base in order to be able to work effectively with young children. It includes: an understanding of human development; appropriate curriculum theory, development and evaluation; an understanding of teaching/learning as it applies to young children; an understanding of research supporting principles of early childhood education;

management, administration and professional development strategies (Ebbeck, 1991; Fleet & Clyde, 1993; McCarthy, 1990; NAEYC, 1991).

In addition to knowledge and skills in working with children and adults, dispositions or 'attitudes of mind' (Katz & Chard, 1989, p.30) are an important consideration when identifying attributes of an early childhood teacher. It is argued that the 'core dispositional behaviours desired of preservice student teachers' (Zimpher & Howey, 1992, p.23) are one aspect of preservice teacher education programmes that are in need of more careful examination.

Early childhood teachers need to have what Almy describes as a strong 'sense of self' (Almy, 1975, p.265). That is, they need to be sufficiently aware of their presence and their own values and beliefs. They need to have a self-confidence which enables them to work effectively in relationships with both adults and children. The practicum provides a context in which relationships associated with early childhood teaching are exposed. Therefore, the cooperating teacher has an important role to play not only in modelling the nature of those relationships but in supporting the student teacher's own development of effective relationships.

Student teachers who have opportunities to share in cooperating teachers' insights into their own work are more fortunate. They are most likely, through discussion and analysis of planning and practices, to be assisted in the development of a personal style of practice which is characterised by the deliberate reflection on and thinking through of concrete experiences in which they have been involved. While field experiences have the potential to enable student teachers to feel and behave professionally, little is known about how this occurs (McCarthy, 1990).

Opportunities to be involved with experienced practitioners
Experiential learning theory supports the use of concrete experiences as a basis for making sense of practices (Kolb, 1984; Letiche, 1988). Caution must be shown towards a view that supports a theory/practice dichotomy where it is considered that all that is learnt on campus is theory, and practice is learnt in the field (McLean, 1991). The approach taken in setting the parameters for this study is not such a unidirectional one. While student teachers may

try out professional knowledge gained through coursework, recognition is given to the necessity for a two-way process in which practice also informs (personal) theory (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991c; Johnston, 1994; Ross, 1990). For many student teachers, the observations they make and the experiences in which they engage will challenge the personal theories they bring with them to the practice teaching situation (Bruner, 1990; Lortie, 1975; McNamara, 1995; Olson, 1995).

Discussion between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher is an important aspect of both the public and the lived experience of student teaching (Guyton & McIntryre, 1990). 'Learning to practice' says Yinger (1990) 'involves learning to... think and act...in ways appropriate to the demands of practice... (that is)... to learn the language of effective practice' (p.89). This language is constructed of behaviours, activities and routines identified through actions but also in the images of being a teacher and of teaching (Clandinin, 1985; Johnston, 1992). The foundations of such practices lie in the ability of the practitioner where what is valued is a reflective attitude and the ability to analyse, reconsider, reconstruct and problem solve (Wubbels & Korthagen, 1990). What is important here is that the student teacher requires an adequate knowledge base upon which to reflect on practices (Snider & Fu, 1990). It is also important that cooperating teachers are able to make their own implicit understandings explicit so that the student teacher can better appreciate the 'professionally confident, collaborative and supportive' (Wright, 1995, p.145) dimensions of teaching. Student teachers may then share in the 'practical pedagogical wisdom of exemplary teachers' (Lampert & Clark, 1990).

Understanding of relationships stands the early childhood cooperating teacher in good stead not only when conveying to student teachers important aspects of their work with children but also in their own interpersonal relationships with the student teachers themselves. The field of social psychology was sourced by Stones (1984) when considering the role of the supervisor within the supervision process. He describes how the establishment of positive interpersonal communication is primarily dependent upon nonverbal communication skills. Those of particular importance are: eye contact and facial expression; perceiving and responding with empathy, warmth and respect; gesturing and sensitivity to personal space; body positioning and, voice tone and modulation (Stones, 1984, p.28). Such attributes, which facilitate the development of relationships, have been shown to be important within

'mentoring' programmes (Elliott & Calderhead, 1993). They also have application within early childhood education because of the nature of the early childhood teacher's work (Almy, 1975; Fleet & Clyde, 1993).

While the practicum can provide an array of opportunities for student teacher learning there are, however, a number of conceptual barriers to such learning. These may result from inadequate conceptions of reflection in teacher education (Zeichner, 1992). They include: the neglect of attention to theories and practices embedded in teaching; the neglecting of analysis of the purpose of practices and of the curriculum; ignoring the social and institutional contexts in which teaching and learning occur; and giving little attention to collegiality and the importance of relationships. If student teachers are to consider and make sense of issues within the practicum context, and then engage in subsequent actions, cooperating teachers have an important role to play in this process. It is the thought and subsequent action as part of sense-making that gives the practicum its powerfulness for student teachers (Johnston, 1994; Turney et al., 1982a). As has already been suggested, what is important as far as cooperating teachers are concerned, is that they move beyond their own understandings and develop the ability to represent those insights in ways in which student teachers may be able to understand them.

With regard to teaching Shulman (1987) suggests that teachers need to 'become able to elucidate subject matter in new ways, reorganize and partition it, clothe it in activities and emotions, in metaphors and exercise, and in examples and demonstrations, so it can be grasped by students' (p.13). Cooperating teachers, as teacher educators within the practicum, may well need to engage in the same processes with student teachers (Gore & Zeichner, 1991; Zeichner, 1992).

THE POWERFULNESS OF THE PRACTICUM

In an extensive review of the research literature Turney et al. (1982a) reported that practice teaching was 'the single most powerful intervention in a teacher's professional preparation' (p.47). The studies that were reviewed indicated that the practicum had 'a strong impact on student teachers' views, attitudes, strategies and skills' (Turney et al., 1982a, p.14). Yet

what is not clear from the review is the extent to which the student teachers were expected (as would be the case in an apprenticeship model) to replicate the behaviours of their cooperating teacher and if it was on this basis that such an assertion was made.

In a three year study of thirty-five student teachers preparing to become primary and early childhood teachers, Johnston (1994) found that student teachers were less confident that experiences gained within the practicum had the potential to contribute to their learning. There were difficulties in what was perceived as the artificial nature of the practicum, where what actually happened did not conform to their own images of what teaching should be like. The student teachers felt like intruders into an established classroom environment where the focus was on their learning rather than that of the children. They also considered that constraints placed on them by the cooperating teachers actually hampered their professional development. Thus, the nature of the powerfulness of the practicum appears difficult to identify.

There are at least three aspects of powerfulness that need to be considered here in relation to the student teacher and, by implication, the cooperating teacher's role. The first is that powerfulness can exist in the socialisation of the student teacher through learning about the 'behavioural norms' of practice (McNally, Cope, Inglis & Stronbach, 1994; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985). Such an approach is indicative of an apprenticeship model of the cooperating teacher's role in supervision of the student teacher (Boydell, 1986; Cameron & Wilson, 1993; Stones, 1984; Zeichner, 1992).

The second, which has also been discussed, is that the student teacher has opportunities to become reflective and self-evaluative. The third is that, as an outcome of the second, student teachers are empowered to act with certain dispositions and understanding and in so doing, have opportunities to engage in 'risk taking' (Faire, 1994; Johnston, 1994). It is the self-initiated creative aspects of risk-taking that the primary/early childhood teachers in Johnston's study perceived to offer the greatest opportunity for learning in the practicum. However, there is a difficulty here where student teachers would not be inclined to experiment and take risks when the evaluation of their performance in the practicum is at stake. With practicum being undertaken within shorter and shorter periods of time, teaching for survival by adopting the practices of the cooperating teacher, rather than risking failure,

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may be being encouraged (Bullough & Gitlin, 1991).

It has been argued that if the practicum were so powerful, then supervision of practice teaching was 'the single most powerful process in that intervention' (Turney et al., 1982a, p.47). Where both the classroom teacher and the tertiary supervisor have been involved in student teacher supervision, it is the classroom teacher who has been found to have the much stronger influence on the student teacher (Boydell, 1986; Lambert, 1992; McIntyre, 1984).

Studies have shown that during teaching practice student teacher attitudes tend to move towards that of their cooperating teacher (Turney et al., 1982). Teaching behaviour of student teachers may be influenced by that of the cooperating teacher (Rust, 1988), but this may occur for different reasons. The first is that student teachers may see that by conforming, they will be more likely to pass the practicum. The second may be an outcome of the establishment of positive relationships between student teacher and cooperating teacher. While student teachers view cooperating teachers as models it is unknown how much the thinking behind the cooperating teacher's actions is revealed to or understood by the student teacher (Zeichner, 1986). If there is confusion about the cooperating teacher's role and a concern about role overlap, then it would seem that the powerfulness of the practicum is open to question and that these concerns have the potential to impact on the value of the experience for the student teacher (Dewey, 1938; Goodman, 1985; Grimmett & Ratzlaff, 1986; Lambert, 1992; Richardson-Koehler, 1988; Zeichner, 1986).

COOPERATING TEACHERS AS A POWERFUL INFLUENCE

In a survey of cooperating teachers' views on their roles, Turney et al. (1982a) found that the items on the survey form which the cooperating teachers saw as representing the main functions of their role were:

- helping student teachers to understand pupils and to interpret their behaviour and needs including their functioning within the classroom context and in relation to the curriculum;

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- providing feedback on student teachers' performance in which the student teacher is invited to recall their responses within the context of planned experiences and explore unplanned responses to children;

- observing and analysing the student teachers' teaching including their personal qualities and interactions with children;

- advising on planning for teaching by offering resource ideas as well as encouraging each student teacher's own problem solving.
                                                                    (Turney et al., 1982a; 1982b)

While many of these activities may be seen to be indicative of actions which the cooperating teacher directs towards the student teacher, supervision is much more complex than this (Borko, Lalik & Tomchin, 1987; Grimmett & Ratzlaff, 1986; Stones, 1984; Turney et al., 1982b).

A collaborative inquiry-oriented model of supervision, where critical and analytical reflection on practices is valued, requires that the cooperating teacher models being a reflective teacher. The sensitivity required within this approach is partly revealed in the insights provided by Wood (1991) of her own practices. In particular, she stresses the importance of cooperating teachers being aware of and able to articulate their own views about teaching; to demonstrate that they are in touch with the children's interests, thinking and learning style; to be flexible and open to change as the need arises; and to work collaboratively with student teachers whereby they engage in open dialogue in which there is a sharing of thoughts about the teaching process as well as collaborative curriculum decision making.

In early childhood education, the perceptions of their supervisory roles were gained from 444 early childhood cooperating staff responsible for student teachers in the practicum in preschools and daycare centres (Goodfellow & Kelly, 1991). Using the functions identified in the work of Turney et al. (1982a), the cooperating staff (82% of whom were early childhood teachers) were required to indicate the extent to which they saw each of these functions to be solely their responsibility. They saw their major responsibilities to be: organising the day so that the student teacher can meet the requirements set by the tertiary institution; liaising with other centre staff to ensure their cooperation and that there was a shared frame of reference; and fostering the student teacher's ability to relate professionally

with parents and other adults. The activities which they saw as largely being their responsibility (and about which they felt confident) were those which would enable the student teacher to fit into the ongoing day-to-day operation of the centre taking into account the established 'organisational climate' (Jorde-Bloom, 1988) or atmosphere/working relationships of the centre. Organisational climate is significant in early childhood contexts where not only do student teachers experience aspects of that climate but their presence impacts upon it.

In response to the survey items, these cooperating staff indicated that they felt less confident about taking responsibility in advising student teachers on planning, analysing, evaluating and engaging in practices designed to assist student teachers in reflection, analysis and self-evaluation (Goodfellow & Kelly, 1991). This would suggest that, while cooperating staff actively set about accommodating student teachers within the early childhood settings where they worked, they felt less confident in their ability to undertake those activities which specifically target planning and other technical aspects of the student teacher's work. They are also less confident in approaching student teachers about the student teacher's personal relationships with children and other adults and, in engaging in reflection on their practice. These areas in which the cooperating staff felt less confident are similar to the areas of concern which university supervisors have reported in a study regarding failing student teachers (Knowles, Skrobola & Coolican, 1995). That study found that university supervisors failed student teachers because of issues surrounding student teacher planning and preparation; understandings of children's needs/developmental levels; inability to develop appropriate relationships with children and care for their socio/emotional needs; and an inability to create classroom climate conducive to learning.

What could be argued is that student teachers who are more successful are those who are able to engage *in* reflexive and responsive ways within the practicum context (Johnston, 1994). The student teachers who failed were described as:

> not versed in the characteristics or skills associated with reflective practice... the careful analysis of actions, and the development of alternative strategies... (and had)... insufficient comprehension of the meaning of teaching or "what teaching is". (Knowles, Skrobola & Coolican, 1995, p.158)

If the development of reflection and responsiveness demands responsive role models then

the nature of the cooperating teacher's work as a role model requires close scrutiny.

The expectations by universities of cooperating teachers include that they not only act as role models who are observed but that they conference with student teachers about the student teacher's work (Macquarie University, 1992a; University of Newcastle, 1992a; University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, 1992a; University of Western Sydney, Nepean, 1992a). Since this conferencing requires that the cooperating teacher has something to conference about they are also involved in observation of and in providing feedback to the student teacher. This places the cooperating teacher within a supervisory role.

Cooperating teachers, therefore, are more likely to have a positive and powerful influence on student teachers within the practicum where at least two things occur. First, they are able not only to convey to student teachers the 'theories and expertise' (Zeichner, 1992, p.297) embedded in their own practices but also to explore their thinking and reasoning behind the practices in which they engage. The second is the provision of a context in which student teachers are supported in reflective analysis of their own work. There is now a need to consider the extent to which these are addressed within the concept of practicum supervision and the potential that there is for the cooperating teacher to influence student teacher behaviour both within the practicum and as a developing professional.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRACTICUM SUPERVISION

One of the major responsibilities of cooperating teachers is the supervision of student teachers. Various forms and styles of supervision have been advocated for adoption within school settings (Acheson & Gall, 1992; Boydell, 1986; Cameron & Wilson, 1993; Roth, 1989; Turney et al., 1982a). While supervision in the practicum is seen to be an 'interactive process' (Turney et al, 1982a, p.2) it has been criticised because it often is dominated by the cooperating teacher (Fleet, 1993). The area of criticism is not the supervision model per se but the process of supervision, for which many cooperating teachers have not received specific training. Without that training, it is considered that cooperating teachers are more likely to rely on what may be regarded as their own 'wisdom of practice' (Ben-Peretz &

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Rumney, 1991, p.521).

Supervision training

Supervision processes have been identified through models such as developmental supervision (Glickman & Gordon, 1987), co-counselling (Handal & Lauvas, 1987), clinical supervision (Acheson & Gall, 1992; Turney et al., 1982b), collegial and consultative supervision (Cameron & Wilson, 1993) and dialectic supervision (Chawszczewski, 1994). A review of the literature reveals two major emphases within the models - that which focuses on structure and sequence and that which is concerned with the processes. It is the clinical supervision model, as a structure, that has been promoted within early childhood education at the level of inservice (Caruso & Fawcett, 1986).

The clinical supervision model, as reported by a colleague of Cogan's, was developed by Cogan at Harvard University as an outcome of his searching for 'adequate ways to plan and supervise initial classroom efforts of... elementary and early childhood apprentices' (Anderson, 1986, p.12). Cogan was working with Master's Degree level students and sought an approach which was 'cooperative, democratic and human-relations-oriented' (Anderson, 1986, p.11). The aim of such an approach was to bridge the gap between the 'theoretical ideal' and 'prevailing reality' of classroom practice through joint conferencing where the apprentices themselves were 'a superior and highly intellectual group' (Anderson, 1986, p.13). As this approach became more systematic the sequence of events that occurred became known as the clinical supervision cycle (Turney et al., 1982b).

At the time of the model's development it had three essential characteristics which supported its relative success. First, the model was applied in a context where those regarded as apprentices were already quite knowledgeable preprofessionals. Second, it very much had a collegial orientation which was able to build on existing levels of expertise held by both the Master's Degree students and the professionals with whom they worked. The structure appeared to be more of a collaborative, reflective and critical mode of supervision (viewed within understandings of these terms during the 1980s when Smyth made these comments) and less of the hierarchical relationship between supervisor and supervisee that may be expected in an apprenticeship model (Smyth, 1986). Third, the structure acknowledged the nature of the context in which it was applied; that is, it recognised the

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importance of collegiality and the nature of interactions within early childhood education. However, more recently, this emphasis on the procedural aspects and the lack of attention given to the underlying processes has become the very thing that many early childhood teachers have considered to be its downfall (Yonemura, 1986).

Dissatisfactions have been experienced both in relation to implementing the supervision cycle (particularly the formal aspect of pre-conferencing) and the cooperating teacher/student teacher relationship. Some have become entrapped by the technique per se whereby formal conferencing (in which the supervisor confronts the supervisee) has been adopted rather than a more informal approach of collegiality and collaboration (Garman, 1986). In such instances supervision is viewed as surveillance and control. It is here that the cooperating teacher is placed in a position of authority rather than regarded as a colleague working in partnership (Cole & Knowles, 1993b; Fleet & Clyde, 1993; Smyth, 1993; Yonemura, 1991).

Collaboration is an important attribute required of staff working as team members within early childhood contexts (Fleet & Clyde, 1993; Jorde Bloom, Sheerer & Britz, 1991). The reconceptualisation of clinical supervision in which attention is given to the processes of collaboration rather than the model's systemic structure would more adequately address an inquiry-oriented approach to student teacher development (Smyth, 1991a; 1991b). It is argued that where student teachers are required to follow a curriculum constructed by others then they tend to regard knowledge as given rather than experience themselves being dynamic learners within a context (Olson, 1995). Such a view reflects Dewey's view of experience as being continuous and interactive (Dewey, 1938), and of teacher thinking as embodied (Polanyi, 1967), constructed (Duckworth, 1987) and influenced by personal practical theories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1987).

There have been many calls for supervision training made by cooperating teachers themselves and by university based teacher educators (Faire, 1994; Grimmett & Ratzlaff, 1986; Korinek, 1989). However, there has been a noticeable lack of commitment among cooperating teachers to undertake training programmes that have been offered (Faire, 1994; Turney et al., 1982a). One exception to these negative responses has been in work undertaken in collaborative supervision (Francis, 1995; Francis & Sellars, 1995). This

exception sits comfortably with recommendations that cooperating teachers need to 'develop collaborative and reflective skills' (QBTR, 1994a, p.109). Course content may have been a key factor here in that it addressed the perceived needs of the cooperating teachers. On the other hand, it may not be training per se that is the critical factor in the determination of the quality of supervision but rather the constraints of the cooperating teacher's everyday responsibilities as a regular teacher.

Both Turney et al. (1982a) and Price (1987) raised questions about the quality of the practicum, and various government reports have made quite damning comments regarding the work of cooperating teachers. This may well reflect a recent shift to greater responsibility being assigned to school-based learning for student teachers as is particularly evidenced in the development of internships and mentoring (McIntyre, Hagger & Wilkin, 1993). By implication, greater responsibility is therefore assigned to the cooperating teacher. The failure of studies to address the complexities of cooperating teachers' work and the individual characteristics of those involved in the practicum (in this case the cooperating teachers) and their relationship with university coursework and student teacher learning has been identified (Koerner, 1992; Price, 1987; Tisher, 1987). Yet little is known about what goes on in the minds of cooperating teachers as they undertake student teacher 'supervisory' responsibilities.

One aspect of the practicum in early childhood education that has been found to contribute to perceived success or failure of the practicum has been found to be associated with cooperating teacher/student teacher/university supervisor relationships. In a study undertaken by Wright (1995) data was collected, through the use of questionnaires and case study interviews, from 160 student teachers and their cooperating teachers and from 17 university supervisors. It was found that there were differences among the views of members of the triad concerning desirable personal characteristics and professional beliefs which underpinned practices and views on learning within the practicum context. It is to the focus on relationships that the discussion now turns.

Relationships within the practicum
What has been highlighted is the necessity for a more collaborative approach to the practicum to be adopted (Clandinin, Davies, Hogan & Kennard, 1993; Clandinin, 1985).

Interns within an early childhood internship programme have commented on the importance of the development of collegial relationships where there was trust and respect (Davies & Pollnitz, 1994). Cohesive relationships particularly were felt to contribute to their self-confidence as a developing professional.

Within the clinical supervision model promoted by Turney et al. (1982b) the counsellor role, encompassing interpersonal communications and relationships, was seen to be 'central to' the effective resolution of issues and problems the student teacher faces in relation to both classroom teaching and self-concept (Turney et al., 1982b, p.54). More recently, where there is a focus on problem or situation-based learning (Boud, 1993; Dockett & Tegel, 1993), case study analysis (Shulman & Colbert, 1989) and forms of reflection (Hatton & Smith, 1995) there appears to be a greater appreciation of the qualities associated with experiential learning (Boud, 1993) and living in responsive relationships (Bowers & Flinders, 1990; Hollingsworth, 1994; McLean, 1991).

The use of the term 'supervise' within a context of collaboration may therefore be quite inappropriate when it is perceived as having authoritative connotations of 'overseeing' (Stones, 1984, p.vii). It does not readily reflect the 'dialectic relationship between knowledge and action, theory and practice' (Cole & Knowles, 1993b, p.491). A novice/expert situation tends to be a hierarchical one. Aspects of that relationship, such as degree of autonomy assigned to the student teacher and how discussions between student teacher and cooperating teacher are conducted, can influence relationships. As Mitchell suggests, through her application of semantic analysis, where evaluation involves someone in authority making judgements about the activities of another then power is vested with the evaluator or supervisor (Mitchell, 1995). What may be perceived by the student teacher to be a relationship of power can be negated through alternative supervisory processes. This is only one of several areas requiring attention.

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PRACTICUM

In reviewing the literature and surveying practicum coordinators, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors, Turney et al. (1982a) identified five areas of concern which needed

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to be addressed in order to improve the quality of the practicum. These were: clarification of the purposes of the practicum; the organisation of the practicum and university/school relationships; the practicum curriculum which is considered as 'a planned and monitored sequence of purposeful activities' (p.195); supervision of the practicum; and, evaluation of student teacher progress (Turney et al., 1982a). While mindful of these five areas, this study sets out to broadly identify what the areas of concern are for the cooperating teachers who participated in the study.

Over 60% of cooperating teachers in the Turney et al. study saw the main obstacles to effective supervision of student teachers as being the lack of supervision training, lack of experience in supervision and lack of knowledge about the courses that student teachers had undertaken at the university. While all had skills in teaching, the cooperating teachers saw the need to have skills in supervision in order to work more effectively with student teachers.

The complexities of cooperating teaching have not received the same attention as research on teacher thinking which has revealed the complex nature of teachers' work (Cole & Knowles, 1993b; Shulman, 1987). Insights into the nature of cooperating teachers' work may more adequately enable supervision training to be made meaningful for cooperating teachers. In an attempt to understand what goes on in the minds of individual early childhood teachers, a recent study has sought to bring a phenomenological perspective to understanding the nature and complexities of teaching in early childhood through 'ethnographic anthropological investigation' (McLean, 1991, p.18). Insights into the context within which the practicum is located can serve as a useful beginning to the development of understanding of expectations and practicalities of being a cooperating teacher.

THE PRACTICUM CONTEXT

Two major groups of factors are to be considered here - those relating to the early childhood context and those of a broader socio/political nature. What happens in preschools where teachers and children are continually interacting with each other, is what McLean

(1991) describes as 'living'. It is the quality of the close relationship between teacher and child who live together within that environment which is highly valued. In using a phenomenological approach to her study of four preschool teachers McLean was able to explore the nature of the lived experiences of these preschool teachers and suggested that:

> teaching... (in early childhood)... might be described as a never-ending series of on-the-spot decisions, involving an impossibly large number of constantly-changing contextual factors and often conflicting concerns (p. 204)... there is no formula for teaching, no foolproof recipe to follow (p.224).

There is no set or prescribed curriculum within preschool education other than an expectation that children be able to make the transition into the next level of education, which is formal schooling (McLean, 1991; Sims, 1994). If being an early childhood cooperating teacher means that one fosters in student teachers those attitudes and skills which enable them to function effectively as a professional then the cooperating teacher needs to address those demands of practice.

UNDERSTANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD COOPERATING TEACHERS' WORK

In the search for an understanding of what it is like being a cooperating teacher it is first necessary to address the context of early childhood education. Of interest in this study is whether the roles and responsibilities of early childhood cooperating teachers as perceived by the universities are reflected in how the cooperating teachers view their role. Underlying this concern is whether, in fact, it is the practice of supervision that early childhood cooperating teachers saw as their main responsibility in relation to student teachers or whether other factors were operating within the hidden curriculum of the practicum (Fleet & Clyde, 1993; Lovat & Smith, 1995; Williams & Ainley, 1994). It is, therefore, anticipated that an understanding of the context of early childhood education would shed some light on what the cooperating teachers may value in student teacher behaviour and the strategies they may use in fostering that behaviour.

Teaching in early childhood as care and education

One of the aspects of teaching in early childhood is a concern with the ways in which young children experience their day, and to this end what ideally occurs is provision for children's

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social, affective and cognitive development (Katz, 1991). Teaching very young children includes an essential nurturing role (Ayers, 1993; Brennan & O'Donnell, 1986; Fleet & Clyde, 1993; Greenman, 1988). Such a role requires a mix of affective and cognitive functioning and this is indicative of empathetic attunement in the relational aspects of a teacher's work (Arnold, 1993). Within this role there are elements of care (Noddings, 1984). Staff working with young children are expected to demonstrate an ethic of caring within a cooperative and responsive learning environment (Bowers & Flinders, 1990; Doherty-Derkowski, 1995; Greenberg, 1992; Hill, 1994, 1995; Noddings, 1984; Wangmann, 1995). Before discussing this it is important to provide a brief contextual background which sheds some light on the concept of teaching in early childhood.

There has been an ongoing debate within the field of early childhood education in Australia concerning the nexus between **care** and **education** of young children outside the home (Braggett, 1979; Plummer, 1981; Sebastian, 1985; Stonehouse, 1992; Wangmann, 1995; Watts & Patterson, 1984; Williams & Ainley, 1994). Social, industrial, economic and political factors have contributed to the debate.

Prior to and during the early 1980's care was viewed as something which occurred within the family's responsibility (Brennan & O'Donnell, 1986). About this time, other forms of care such as daycare and occasional care became available and extended the context of care to what happens in places outside the family where children were cared for in the absence of family members. With more women joining the workforce, child care became a social and political issue.

The perceptions of parents and general community members and the working conditions for staff reflected contrasting views that children were minded in day care services and educated at preschool (Brennan & O'Donnell, 1986; Stonehouse, 1992). To some, this care/education dichotomy was quite objectionable for as far as the children were concerned the distinction was considered to be meaningless (Brennan & O'Donnell, 1986). Industrially, child care staff were not required to be teachers (although early childhood courses prepared staff to work in child care, their focus was children 3-8 years rather than the babies and toddlers found in day care), and most childcare staff in New South Wales (other than early childhood teachers) are paid according to an award negotiated by the

Miscellaneous Workers' Union rather than teacher unions.

Those who supported a nurturant view often believed that what the child learns before school entry age is of little consequence and therefore, by implication, service provision should reflect an orientation towards custodial care. This view considered that highly specialised early childhood educators were not required in services for young children other than **educational** services (that is, preschools). By implication, the use of the term **care** in relation to early childhood education was considered to be inappropriate for it devalued the knowledge and skills of those charged with the responsibility of very young children (Almy, 1975; Sebastian, 1985; Stonehouse, 1992). While child care services provide a legitimate option for employment of early childhood teachers, many recoiled from accepting the emerging challenges of this form of child care, preferring to be associated with the more traditional preschool (Sebastian, 1985).

More recently, there has been greater acceptance that caring and educating functions go hand in hand. Research (Bredekamp, 1987; Howes, Hamilton & Matheson, 1994) has led to the identification of the quality of adult/child interactions as being an indicator of high quality children's services. A major element within these interactions is the responsiveness[1] of adults who create environments in which both education and care occur (Bredekamp, 1987; Clarke-Stewart, 1987; Fleet & Clyde, 1993; Howes, Hamilton & Matheson , 1994; NAEYC, 1984; NCAC, 1993; Plummer, 1981; Wangmann, 1995; Williams & Ainley, 1994; Yussen & Santrock, 1982).

Early childhood teachers working with young children may expect to have over one thousand interpersonal interactions each day, most of these being intense, immediate and spontaneous (Ayers, 1989). Adult behaviour in child care settings has an impact on the development of 'dispositions' in young children (Katz, 1991). More importantly, it is the powerfulness of adults within adult/child relationships that has been shown to have an impact on children's emotional development (Leavitt, 1994).

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[1] Responsiveness has been defined as 'adult behaviour that is characterized by reacting appropriately and promptly to the child's verbal and non-verbal signals for attention. It includes having expectations that are appropriate for the child's age, providing activities that are age-appropriate, and being sensitive to the child's current mood' (Doherty-Derkowski, 1995, p.182).

i. Importance of responsiveness in adult/child relationships

The importance of responsiveness of adults who work with young children cannot be underestimated. There is mounting evidence linking the responsiveness of carers to higher levels of intellectual skills and social competence in young children and lower levels of unfocused behaviour (Clarke-Stewart, 1987; Doherty-Derkowski, 1995; Howes, Hamilton & Matheson, 1994; Leavitt, 1994; Wangmann, 1995). Child care accreditation documents which address adult behaviours towards young children identify responsiveness in terms of both verbal and non-verbal messages through which adults establish trusting and secure relationships with children but also the immediacy of their responses to the child (Bredekamp, 1987; NAEYC, 1984; NCAC, 1993).

In recent reviews of research findings Doherty-Derkowski (1995) and Wangmann (1995) identified that responsive caregivers:

- show high levels of positive interaction with children including the participation in children's play and the provision of 'ample encouragement';

- react appropriately and quickly to children's verbal and non-verbal cues for attention and show sensitivity to children's moods;

- provide activities that are appropriate to children's developmental levels;

- show high levels of informative verbal exchange with children, for instance, give frequent explanations to children, answer questions and read stories frequently (Wangmann, 1995, p.83).

It was these high levels of 'responsive interactions' that were linked to the development of more advanced language and cognitive development in children, to their greater emotional security as evidenced in attachment behaviour and greater task orientation (Wangmann, 1995).

A recent study of caregiver/child responsiveness undertaken by Howes, Matheson & Hamilton (1994) supports the importance of flexible, supportive and sensitive teacher-child relationships in the development of social competence in young children. In essence, responsive caregiver behaviour was found to be a critical factor in children's growth and

development. Each of the four areas of responsive care giving identified by Wangmann requires the carer to respond either through direct verbal or non-verbal engagement with children. Responsiveness needs to be at a level appropriate for each child's development; therefore, while the third item listed above by Wangmann - 'the provision of appropriate activities'- does not require direct interaction with the child, it does require a developmentally appropriate response.

ii. Importance of responsiveness in the development of early childhood teachers

A slightly different perspective on responsiveness is provided by Leavitt (1994) who studied the lives of infants and toddlers in daycare. For her, carer responsiveness involves 'reciprocity and empathy... the back and forth responding between adult and child' (Leavitt, 1994, p.73). Responsiveness requires the carer to act with spontaneity and flexibility - to 'dance developmental ladders' (Honig, 1990, p.16) with young children. It draws on the carer's ability to make conscious decisions as to whether to attend to a child or not and on the carer's flexibility to respond to children as individuals without concern that children may be treated differentially. Being responsive, she says requires the carer to be more child-aware and more reflective in everyday practices.

A distinction can be made between empathy which implies an 'identity of feelings' and co-feeling which implies that it is possible to 'experience feelings that are different from one's own'(Gilligan & Wiggins, 1988, pp.122, 132). Co-feeling can occur within carer-child relations where there is a sensitivity to how the child feels. By contrast, there is also evidence that the 'rejection characteristic' (Noddings, 1984, p.67) of non-responsive caregiving conveyed through adult behaviours such as detachment, restrictiveness and harshness can have an negative impact on young (Doherty-Derkowski, 1995; Leavitt, 1994; Wangmann, 1995).

Responsiveness is a critical element of adult/child interaction. Adults who have a knowledge and understanding of child development have been found to engage in greater responsiveness but it has also been suggested that 'some caregivers have a psychological predisposition to be responsive to children' (Doherty-Derkowski, 1995, p.63). The opposite of responsiveness are adult behaviours such as detachment, restrictiveness and harshness which have been found to have a negative impact on young children (Doherty-Derkowski,

1995, Leavitt, 1994).

A supervisory model or university practicum expectations which fail to address this aspect of early childhood teachers' work in the competencies expected of student teachers may be criticised for failing to reflect professional expectations. The context in which the practicum occurs must therefore be taken into consideration when identifying expectations of student teachers. However, those competencies cannot be determined without recognition of characteristics unique to the particular profession and the broader context in which teacher education exists.

Socio/political factors

Contextual factors which impact upon what happens in the classroom reach far beyond that environment (Kennedy & Preston, 1995; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985). It is, therefore, important for studies of teaching to acknowledge the impact that the social/political climate can have on teachers' work. Staff in children's services are very aware of the direct impact that government funding and regulations can have on the quality of their work and the access that children have to these services. Understanding of the context can, therefore, often inform and assist in understanding perspectives on the development of knowledge, attitudes and beliefs and in interpreting what teachers do.

This study is concerned with particular aspects of teaching and teacher education at a time of both public sector and government dissatisfaction with the current forms of professional education (particularly in relation to schooling). It commenced at a time when there was a 'frequently expressed need for change in education, schools and training' (Cairns & Ward, 1992). The next section looks at concerns expressed within publicly disseminated government documents and consider whose voices are being expressed therein.

Government reports and recommendations

Government reports addressing the standards and quality of teacher education have made three major criticisms. The elements criticised are:

- ▸ teacher competencies and the need to promote a more inquiry-oriented approach to teaching, which is conducive to reflective practices;
- ▸ the quality and effectiveness of the practicum; and,

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▶   the supervisory skills of staff responsible for student teachers.

Reports have specifically targeted the teaching of children of below school age but all reports have implications for those involved in the higher education sector who are responsible for early childhood teacher education.

Numerous reports and recommendations concerning higher education flooded the Australian educational arena during the late 1980's and early 1990's (Chubb, 1990; Aulich, 1990). They focused on curriculum and the quality of schooling (Carrick, 1989; Connors, 1990; Speedy, 1989), and teacher quality (Dawkins, 1990; National Board of Employment, Education and Training, known as NBEET, 1989; NBEET, 1990a). Within teacher education, the quality and effectiveness of the practicum was questioned. It was regarded as an important part of preservice teacher education yet it had 'deficiencies' (Ebbeck, 1990, p.19; NBEET, 1990a, p.88) and required strengthening (Connors, 1990; Johnson, 1990; NBEET, 1989). The cooperating teacher's role was seen to be 'critical to the quality and success of teaching practice' (Connors, 1990, p.89), yet there were 'inefficiencies' (NBEET, 1989, p.23) and 'role confusion' (NBEET, 1989, p.23; Speedy, 1989, p.119). Various reports also identified a need to address the sequence, content and duration of the practicum (NBEET, 1989; NBEET, 1990b).

Concerns were expressed about the limited view of teacher education as being technical, reductionist and routine rather than inquiry-oriented and of a reflective nature (NBEET, 1989). Calls were made for student teachers to have opportunities to reflect on their practices. Learning strategies which prepared graduates who were 'critical, analytical thinkers able to respond creatively to the challenges of a complex and rapidly changing world' (Aulich, 1990, p.57) were supported by an emphasis on the quality of teaching in schools, the supervision of student teachers during the practicum (Chubb, 1990; Johnson, 1990; Connors, 1990; Aulich, 1990).

What is critical about these reports and their recommendations is that they were largely developed by people other than the supervising or cooperating teacher within the school yet these are the people who have responsibility for student teachers during in-school practical experience (that is, the practicum). There were calls to improve the links between universities and schools, to clarify the relational roles of university and school supervisory

staff (because of role confusion and duplication) and to clarify student teacher assessment criteria and link curriculum to school experience expectations and the content of the practicum (Speedy, 1989; Chubb, 1990). In particular, the need for improvement in the effectiveness of student teacher supervision by cooperating teachers was reiterated in reports and reviews (Connors, 1990; Ebbeck, 1990; NBEET, 1989). One way of overcoming some of the problems was seen to be supervision training both for cooperating teachers and university supervisors. This was an attempt to address the perceived 'deficiencies in ... provision of practical school experience in pre-service teacher education' (Ebbeck, 1990, p.19) and 'inefficiencies ... in supervision arrangements for trainee teachers' (Dawkins, 1990, p.1).

In the Discipline Review of Teacher Education in Maths and Science, Speedy (1989) found that only a small number of the 135 pre-service teacher education programmes that were investigated had any form of supervision training for cooperating teachers. There was evidence of a lower status being given by tertiary institutions to student teacher supervision. Concerns were expressed about the additional teaching loads that were borne by academic staff who were involved in student teacher supervision. There was criticism of the nature and content of practicum handbooks and of assessment documents prepared by university personnel.

The government reports have been very critical of the practicum and, by implication, the cooperating teachers' role within it. This is in contrast to reviews of teacher education in Australia during the 1980's by academic staff within university teacher education programmes. Those reviews reflected more of a shared responsibility between university staff and cooperating teachers (Price, 1987; Tisher, 1987; Turney et al., 1982a).

More recently, the earlier dissatisfaction expressed by academics concerning recommendations in reports such as that produced by Ebbeck (1990) has resulted in a more holistic view being taken of the integrated nature of the practicum and its central focus within initial teacher education (Preston & Kennedy, 1995). Such a view recognises that 'practising teachers have a more significant role in initial teacher education, and collaboration (between teacher education within universities and schools) needs to be substantial' (Preston & Kennedy, 1995, pp.50-51). It is considered that the development

of a set of competencies indicative of criteria to be reached by student teachers upon graduation would provide a 'framework' for greater collaboration between universities, school staff and student teachers. Collegiality and relationships are not foreign to the nature of early childhood teachers' work. However, what is unclear is how the early childhood teacher's perspectives permeate the approaches taken within early childhood teacher education preservice programmes.

There are a number of issues arising from this review of selected literature which have implications for the work of cooperating teachers. Recognition is given to the integrative and interactive nature of cooperating teaching which has both moral and ethical dimensions. Teaching is contextually bound both within the nature of the person and of the structures in which it takes place. To assume that what cooperating teachers do in working with student teachers is more limited would endorse a more technocratic view of teaching. What remains unclear is how cooperating teachers 'teach' student teachers within the context of the practicum and the character and qualities of practicum contexts which foster student teacher learning (Ott, Zeichner & Price, 1990).

The review of current research reveals that the vast majority of the research concerning the practicum, and the cooperating teachers' role within it, has been undertaken by teacher educators and university academics. What is missing is opportunity for cooperating teachers themselves to be heard and this forms an important rationale for undertaking this study. Increasingly, research reflecting teacher's voices has explored the nature of classroom teaching (e.g., Nias, 1989) and of collaboration between teachers and teacher educators (Beattie, 1995b; Hollingsworth, 1994). It is through these that insights have been gained, not only into teachers' work but into the thoughts and minds of those who engage in the art of teaching. These are narratives of the personal practical knowledge of teachers and convey some of the intricacies of teachers' work. The stories within them provide insights into what is valued in teachers' work for it cannot yet be claimed that early childhood cooperating teachers have been given authorship of their experience (Olson, 1995). Further insights into the work of cooperating teachers can only enhance our understanding of how best to support them in their work with student teachers.

CHAPTER 2

ACCUMULATING FIELD TEXT DATA: STRATEGIES* OF INQUIRY

(* Strategy is seen to be the overall plan whereas techniques are those activities in which the researcher engages in order to seek answers to the research questions.)

The study sought to probe and report on the lived experience of early childhood cooperating teachers. A search of the literature provides some understanding of the roles and expectations of cooperating teachers in general. However, little research has focused on early childhood cooperating teachers. The study set out to explore what went on in the minds of early childhood cooperating teachers during periods of time when they were responsible for student teachers undertaking practica in the preschools where the cooperating teachers were employed. Sources of data were the ongoing experiences of the cooperating teachers and the personal images they held of professional practices. This chapter explores the basis for the methodological decisions which address both the perspectives that are brought to the study and the context in which the study has been undertaken. Given these perspectives and the research question, the chapter then presents a rationale for the choice of techniques used for data accumulation.

A BASIS FOR METHODOLOGICAL DECISIONS

There are five main factors which influenced the determination of approaches taken in this study. These factors are: the nature of the investigation and the research questions which gave the study its focus; the knowledge and skills the researcher brought to the study; a concern for how the cooperating teachers' voices may best be represented; the humanness of lived experience and the need to recognise the personal elements which contribute to professional practice; and the images which cooperating teachers held of professional practice itself. The philosophical underpinnings to each of these factors will now be discussed in greater detail beginning with the nature of the study itself.

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THE NATURE OF THE INVESTIGATION

The techniques that were used in this study to gain insights into the professional lives of the cooperating teachers and an understanding of their practices have been strongly influenced by both phenomenology and narrative inquiry. Phenomenological research differs from other human science approaches such as ethnography in that it is essentially interested in the humanness of what has been personally experienced (Van Manen, 1990). Both phenomenology and narrative inquiry draw meaning from within the discipline of human science and address the humanness of lived experience. They are therefore applicable to studying the multidimensional and interrelated nature of the professional lives of cooperating teachers (Van Manen, 1990; Reason, 1988; Dilthey, 1987).

If what happens in preschools between children and adults is 'living' in relationships (McLean, 1991, p.175), then it could be expected that there would be a concern by cooperating teachers for how student teachers may also live within that context. Living conveys a concept of dynamic relationships which are contextually located. What is brought to that relationship is prior personal/professional experience. In applying the 'principle of the continuity of experience', Dewey argues that 'Every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after' (Dewey, 1938, p.35). Prior experience therefore lives on in further experience.

While their prior experiences may be quite diverse, cooperating teachers and student teachers who come together for the practicum are expected to live with other adults and children in harmonious working relationships. Professionally, early childhood cooperating teachers have prior experiences as student teachers, teachers of young children and as cooperating teachers. They bring these and their own life experiences to their work with student teachers. Student teachers may bring their life experiences, their prior practicum experiences and experiences gained during schooling.

Both phenomenology and narrative inquiry accommodate the internal and existential dimensions of experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Van Manen, 1991a, 1995). Phenomenology is the study of lived or existential meanings as they are found in the events

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(or phenomena) of everyday life (Van Manen, 1990, p.11). It seeks 'to understand the nature or meaning of something' (Van Manen, 1990, p.184) and, therefore, is concerned with the experiential underpinnings of knowledge (Holstein & Gubrium, 1994). Understandings of experience are gained through 'reflectively analysing the structural or thematic aspects of that experience' (Van Manen, 1990, p.78). Therefore, opportunities need to be provided during data accumulation for thematic analysis and for reflection both on experiences and on the meaning of those experiences. Both phenomenology and narrative inquiry view experience as both temporal and storied, and they recognise the internal and existential dimensions of the human condition (Beattie, 1995a; Clandinin & Connelly, 1991b, 1994; Van Manen, 1990).

In narrative inquiry stories are used to report on and describe human action (Polkinghorne, 1995). A feature of narrative inquiry is that it is characterised by the collaborative processes associated with mutual reconstruction by researcher and practitioner of the practitioner's narrative accounts or stories of experience. My interest in narrative lies in the ways in which such an approach can provide insights into the realities of cooperating teachers' everyday thoughts and actions. Recent research on teacher thinking has moved towards gaining teachers' views on their work rather than those of the researcher and to addressing teachers' experiences of teaching (Ayers, 1993; Cole & Knowles, 1993a; Hollingsworth, 1994). This perspective acknowledges that teachers know teaching experientially and that it is embodied experiential knowledge rather than technical conceptual knowledge that drives teachers' work (Beattie, 1995; Kelchtermans, 1993). Teaching is not, therefore, seen as routine and rule bound but, like experience, it is dynamic and contextual.

Narrative inquiry provides a framework within which experience can be voiced and yet located within a context. There are at least two ways in which narrative inquiry can be undertaken, through analysis of narratives and through narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995). Analysis of narratives uses narrative accounts or stories to produce typologies or categories whereas narrative analysis uses data which consists of 'actions, events or happenings ... to produce stories such as... a historical account, a life story, a case study or a storied episode of a person's life' (Polkinghorne, 1995, p.15). In narrative analysis the events and actions are brought together (i.e., configured) as an organised whole (i.e., a plot) within the story itself. The plot unites and gives meaning to the data which contributes to

an understanding of the essence of the study. It is the researcher's task to 'configure' the data elements into a narrative account or story through narrative analysis. In this study, while the cooperating teachers told stories of their experiences, I began data analysis with the 'emplotment' (Polkinghorne, 1995, p.7) of themed stories which were written from transcript data. This was seen as a way of synthesising data and mining for meaning.

The involvement of study participants in a narrative inquiry approach has the potential to be emancipatory and self-empowering as revealed through the personal narratives in the collection by Clandinin et al. (1993). Rather than asking the cooperating teachers to be passive research subjects and conducting research **on them**, the underlying premise for the approach taken in the study was that what they had experienced could be told only by the cooperating teachers themselves. That is, they are the tellers of stories and collaborators in the narrative inquiry represented by the approaches taken in this study. They acted as the informants, participants and respondents (these words are subsequently used interchangeably) in the research. Cooperating teachers participated in conversations and more focused discussions as part of what is described later in this chapter as multiple focused interviews. They contributed their ideas and shared their experiences. As 'respondents', cooperating teachers were seen to participate with the researcher in a joint searching for meaning rather than just being providers of information through acting as informants. Through the opportunities that are provided for reflection on practice within a collaborative environment, collegiality and conversation are fostered. Thus, the atmosphere that this approach creates and the support that is provided can enable change to be readily appreciated and accommodated (Beattie, 1995b).

Experiential accounts are concerned with the processes of knowing and being (Schwandt, 1994). They are interpretations which are arrived at through processes of identification, exploration, recall, reflection. In interpreting, the cooperating teachers in this study are expected to draw on their own experiences and understandings and place these within everyday contexts and the demands of these contexts. Interpretation may occur at two levels: first, the cooperating teachers' own individual interpretations of their reported experiences; and second, the researcher's interpretation of the cooperating teachers' reporting of those experiences. Interpretations were considered to be expressions of experience. As such, interpretations found in reports of experience could never be identical

to lived experience itself (Van Manen, 1990). The selection of techniques used in data gathering took this into account.

During the process of data gathering, cooperating teachers' understandings of their practices were explored through conversations, written stories and the cooperating teachers' metaphors of experience. All of these provided interpretative accounts and opportunities for shared understandings and insights. A discussion of the cooperating teachers' metaphors and stories as forms of expression and tools of inquiry will occur later in this chapter. In the meantime, it is important to consider my role as researcher, particularly in relation to gaining insights into the tacitness of the cooperating teachers' knowledge and in being able to interpret the meanings they were trying to express. While there were a number of ways in which my position as an informed researcher contributed to the study, the understandings associated with this position was thought to be crucial in undertaking the narrative constructions that formed the basis of inquiry in this study.

THE INFORMED RESEARCHER ROLE

My knowledge as an early childhood practitioner was an important factor in resourcing, interpreting and drawing together understandings of the meaning of the experiences reported (and subsequently verified) by the cooperating teachers. As an early childhood professional with many years teaching experience, I was known to staff in the preschools in this study. I had been a Practicum Coordinator within the early childhood teacher education program at a large university and one represented in this study. Since I had undertaken numerous supervisory visits to preschools during practice teaching periods and had been a preschool teacher, I brought to the research particular knowledge and understandings regarding the profession. Such understandings facilitated the ease with which I was able to establish relationships with the cooperating teachers and other staff in the preschools with whom I came into contact.

At one level of understanding, it was expected that having a common professional language would add to the ease with which interpretations could be made. At another level it was possible to support the cooperating teachers as they searched for ways in which to interpret

their experiences. I was aware, however, of the possible tensions between being detached in order to be objective and becoming so involved that a critical analytical perspective was lost (Heshusius, 1994; Schwandt, 1994). I was also conscious of the struggle between being a 'marginal reflexive ethnographer' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 102), and feeling comfortable and at ease, in acting in a role with which I was familiar. There was a tension between sitting-on-the-edge and resourcing the needs of the cooperating teachers when they sought advice. I wanted to hear what the cooperating teachers' experiences were really like, not what they thought I wanted to hear. To write myself as researcher out of the study, however, was to deny the dependency of the data on my own knowledge, experience and understanding of the context as well as my presence in data collection (Ball, 1990). While, as a researcher, I was involved in the process of extracting meaning, the study focused on the knowing and being associated with the personal/professional practices of cooperating teachers. As researcher it was, therefore, essential for me to find ways in which the cooperating teachers' voices could ꞏꞏꞏrꞏ be clearly heard.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VOICE

The importance of voice has been explored in literature on empowerment where voice is contrasted with silence (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986) and the actions of teachers are seen to have moral underpinnings (Hansen, 1993a; Leavitt, 1991, 1994; Noblit, 1993). The energy for voice is found in experiencing and living and being[2]. Voice serves as a metaphor which can be applied to the expression of knowledge, understandings and feelings (which are part of **being** and **experiencing**). It is central to the embodied and existential qualities of being a teacher and also to narratives of lifeworlds (Van Manen, 1995).

The sounds of voice can be external and internal. Inner voice (the thoughts that go on in one's head) reflects introspection and the consciousness of meaning making. Outer voice may be represented in speech, dance, and other forms of expression (Clandinin & Connelly,

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[2] Being in this instance, is seen to involve the whole self in living the life of a professional as opposed to doing (i.e., actions) and knowing (i.e., having the professional knowledge and understanding). Acting like a teacher does not have the same personal ownership as being a teacher.

1994; Eisner, 1993). Whether internal or external, voice can be portrayed as the sounds (or the medium) of sense making.

The choice of methodology took into account the personal meanings drawn from experience and the events within the professional and lived experiences of the cooperating teachers in the study. Therefore, a narrative inquiry mode was seen to offer an opportunity to gain insights into the cooperating teachers' thinking. Biography and voice, as context and mode of expression, provided a vehicle for the representation of lived experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 1986).

LIVED EXPERIENCE AND THE PERSONAL ELEMENTS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE.

The harmonious working relationships which are expected of early childhood staff (which have been discussed in Chapter One) relate to the collaborative nature of being members of a staff team and to the caring relationship which they are expected to have with young children. Relationships and a personal caring for what occurs come from the inside (Hollingsworth, 1994; Noddings, 1986). However, they are also interpersonal. If caring acts are part of early childhood teaching then there is an expectation that practice teaching in early childhood would incorporate such acts (Fleet & Clyde, 1993). Both teaching and caring involve action and it is through teacher's actions that the tacitness of teachers' knowledge is conveyed (Elbaz, 1990; Butt & Raymond, 1987; Polanyi, 1967).

Data collection techniques, therefore, needed to take account of the personal and interpersonal, dynamic and tacit dimensions of teaching. Observations of cooperating teachers and their interactions with student teachers, and the cooperating teachers' reports of experience have the potential to act as instruments through which caring relations can be identified. They can also provide some insight into what goes on in the minds of cooperating teachers. However, observation alone is insufficient. It is the meaning behind the action that is most illuminating. Research on teacher thinking suggests that the complexity of the work of cooperating teachers involved in teaching student teachers moves far beyond routine practice (Coles & Knowles, 1993a; Preston & Kennedy, 1995; Van

Manen, 1995). Cooperating teachers' expectations of student teachers may be more adequately revealed through their accounts of practices and reflections on these.

In working with student teachers, it may be said that cooperating teachers act as brokers within both a management and an interpretative role. They manage the environment within which they work as teachers and interpret the many dimensions of that environment for the student teacher. In managing and interpreting, the cooperating teachers have expectations of themselves and of the student teachers. These anticipations and expectations are found within the images teachers hold of professional practice (Clandinin, 1985; Connelly & Clandinin, 1985; Elbaz, 1991).

IMAGES OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The term 'pedagogic knowledge' has been used by Marland (1993) to encapsulate the personal, moral and ethical dimensions of what goes on inside teachers' heads as they engage in classroom experiences and undertake reflections on those experiences. Various attempts have been made to document 'the complexity, vagueness and mercurial nature of pedagogical knowledge' (Marland, 1993, p.54) and these have included the use of storying, metaphor and explorations of the nature of teacher's images (Beattie, 1995a, 1995b, 1991; Clandinin, 1986). There is recognition, within these approaches, of the centrality of knowing about teaching from the perspective of the teachers themselves and how this can (and should) inform teacher education. Studies addressing teachers' images as a central construct for understanding teachers' personal practical knowledge have demonstrated the extent to which teachers act as autonomous agents within the teaching process (Beattie, 1995b, 1991; Clandinin & Connelly, 1991a; Elbaz, 1990; 1991).

What teachers do and the ways in which they do it are expressions of the images they hold (Clandinin, 1986). An image is something within our experience. It is embodied in us as persons and expressed and enacted in our practices and actions (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991a; Connelly & Clandinin, 1985). It is 'constructed not given; contextual not absolute; mutable not fixed' (Belenky et al., 1986, p.10). Images of self as teacher and of teachers and teaching form elements of a teacher's personal practical knowledge; that is, teachers'

images mind their teaching practices (Connelly & Clandinin, 1985; Elbaz, 1991).

Research on personal practical knowledge and teachers' images suggests that knowledge and imagery are located in 'the teacher's past experience, in the teacher's present mind and body and in the teacher's future plans and actions' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991a, p.130). Images, which inform practice, (like knowledge), are multidimensional (as is the nature of experience). Like experience they have their connections with concrete incidents, however, knowing and imagery are more than cognitive acts. There are personal/affective dimensions of experience which lie within the individual and within their personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1985). From a holistic perspective, the personal elements of seeing, thinking, and feeling, which form the language of practice, are inherent in teachers' images (Van Manen, 1990).

It is cooperating teachers' personal practical knowledge with which this study is concerned. One way of tapping this knowledge is through the images cooperating teachers hold of being a cooperating teacher. Ways needed to be found, in this study, to enable the cooperating teachers to express not only what they think about but also how they feel. The cooperating teachers needed to be able to reveal their expectations of student teachers and the understandings they hold which form the basis of such expectations. They also needed opportunities to revisit and reconsider their perceptions of the student teachers.

Knowing, like imagery, is fluid. It is non-linear, holistic, imbued with personal meaning, and largely tacit (Carter, 1993; Elbaz, 1991). Being non-linear and complex suggests a kaleidoscopic array of interwoven patterns. Yet images are more than patterns for they resemble associations which are intertwined and connected. A thematic approach to data interpretation and the development of themed stories is one way of addressing the need to take account of both the fluidity and interrelatedness of constructs which form the images held by cooperating teachers.

In conclusion, there were a number of considerations that needed to be addressed in determining the choice of approaches to be taken in this study. First, there was the challenge to ensure that the tacitness of the researcher's own knowledge and the contribution that this made in the exploration of the cooperating teachers' experiences did not inhibit the voices

of the cooperating teachers being heard. Second, the choice of data collection techniques and the subsequent interpretation of 'field texts' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994) needed to ensure that the meaning drawn from the interpretation of the cooperating teachers' lived experiences adequately represented both their lived experience and their personal practical knowledge. Third, the techniques used to tap what went on in the cooperating teacher's minds needed to be those which would readily facilitate the expression of thoughts, ideas and emotions. Fourth, there needed to be opportunities to explore the many dimensions of the practices in which the cooperating teachers engaged with student teachers. These considerations, therefore, influenced the decisions that were made to adopt the approaches that were undertaken in working with the cooperating teachers in this study.

METHODOLOGICAL DECISIONS

For the purposes of discussion in this section, methodological decisions have been clustered around two main focus areas, the context in which the study was undertaken and the techniques used to collect research data.

LOCATING THE RESEARCH STUDY WITHIN A CONTEXT

There were four major factors that required negotiation when establishing the context for the study: the types of settings and their location, the time frame for the research, the pattern of university placement of student teachers, and access to the settings/environments where cooperating teachers were working with student teachers.

The types of settings

Community-based preschools rather than other childcare settings (such as long day care or preschools within school settings) were chosen as the context for the study. The nature of the environment in community-based preschools and the responsibilities of the cooperating teachers within them were seen to be distinct from other early childhood environments. Community-based preschools operate as small businesses where staff are relatively autonomous and engage in a wide spectrum of responsibilities associated with the

preschool's overall functioning. The range of responsibilities and the degree of autonomy held by early childhood teachers in preschools therefore determined the selection of community-based rather than school-based preschools.

In being relatively autonomous, preschool teachers make professional judgements as part of their responsibilities. Those responsibilities relate not only to children but also to parents, to a management committee and to government organisations which set policy and regulations. Within such environments, student teachers have opportunities to participate in a wide range of activities. From a holistic perspective, there were therefore opportunities for cooperating teachers not only to make judgements of student teachers within a full range of activities, but also to have a range of their own personal/professional resources and responsibilities drawn upon and challenged when making these judgements. Curiously, the opportunities provided by such contexts for student teachers reflects the emphasis now being placed on such experiences within recent Draft National Guidelines on Initial Teacher Education, proposed and discussed by the Australian Teaching Council, Australian Council of Deans of Education, Australian Teacher Education Association, Board of Teacher Registration, Queensland & Teachers Registration Board of South Australia (1995). What is being advocated is that student teachers should have opportunities to engage in a wide spectrum of activities in order to gain an understanding of the organisation and administration of the preschool and its relationship with parents and the wider community.

Preschool settings offered greater predictability in terms of a number of factors: the availability of staff to meet with the researcher; the nature and pattern of experiences in which student teachers would be engaged; and the hours of attendance of staff and children. Regularity of attendance and the schedule of the day's activities were important as it was then known which parts of the day to expect the student teacher and cooperating teacher to be present either in the playroom or outdoors and, therefore, where observations were likely to occur. It also enabled lunchtime to be scheduled as the part of the day when interviews could be undertaken. Whilst preschool teachers have a continuous work day, lunchtime was a period when they were more likely to be available for discussion.

Identifying participants and time frames

Early Childhood Practicum Coordinators from the six universities in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory which offered early childhood teacher education programmes were contacted. Assistance was sought from them in identifying both the dates for block practicum periods and the preschools which had accepted placement of second or third year student teachers. These block periods of three to four weeks occurred between May and November.

The intention was to undertake data collection during one calendar year. It was a time of change in teacher education. This study sought information which would reflect situations where cooperating teachers were not being challenged by the demands of having to deal with major structural and organisational changes in undergraduate teacher education programmes. Consideration was also given to cooperating teachers' expectations of student teachers and what they perceived the university to expect of them. Changes in programmes potentially meant changes in university expectations of both student teachers and cooperating teachers.

Most preschools take only one student (or at the most, two) at any one time. Universities often compete for placements as they do not have preschools assigned specifically to them. It is the individual teacher within the preschool who decides whether to have a student teacher and from which university. In some instances, cooperating teachers accept student teachers from different universities and in others, they choose to take student teachers from one university only and for one block period in the year. It was therefore necessary for me both to check the availability of cooperating teachers and to choose locations and cooperating teachers within the constraints of practicum dates and geographical locations.

The Practicum Coordinators of each of the four universities within the Sydney and Newcastle metropolitan areas were contacted and asked to identify preschools where they considered there were supportive cooperating teachers. From this pool, a short list of preschools which were accessible because of practicum dates and geographical location was drawn up. I also considered travelling time. This was important to enable me to be at any of the preschools by the time the children arrived (and the student was on duty) and remain there until after lunchtime when cooperating teachers would potentially be available for

discussion. On each visit I planned to be at the preschool for approximately five hours.

Given the constraints of time and geographic location, the maximum number of experienced cooperating teachers that could be interviewed on a twice-weekly basis within the time frame established for data collection was five. I targeted those cooperating teachers who had previously accepted student teachers, and who had graduated within approximately the last ten years. They were therefore expected to be experienced teachers who would not have been caught up within recent changes to university teacher education programmes. They were teachers who I knew or who were recommended to me by a Practicum Coordinator because they had a reputation for working effectively with student teachers. The five cooperating teachers that I selected (Kate, Julie, Elaine, Matthew and Irene[3]) had been assigned a mix of student teachers from second and third year of the early childhood teacher education programmes within the four universities. Appendix 2.1 shows the block practicum periods for four universities (some of whom had only one block practicum in a year) and how the visiting programme was arranged in order to maintain twice-weekly visits to cooperating teachers.

In identifying cooperating teachers to participate in the study, consideration was thus given to maximising differences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) regarding sources and mix of student teachers and geographic locations. The mix of student teachers from differing universities and second and third years of the programmes enabled contrasting situations to be presented to the experienced cooperating teachers. This approach was considered to more readily tap the body of personal practical knowledge held by individual cooperating teachers rather than reflect factors aligned to one particular university's teacher education programme. The mix of geographic locations meant that potentially each preschool would draw on different communities and therefore there would be differing expectations of preschool staff. It was, therefore, expected that different preschool environments may make different demands on student teachers themselves. While an intention of the study was not to highlight such differences it was considered that a mix would add to the richness of the data.

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[3] These are the real names of the cooperating teachers.

The targeted cooperating teachers were contacted by telephone and invited to participate in the study through an information sheet describing the study and expectations of the cooperating teachers (Appendix 2.2). In selecting those cooperating teachers who had previously had student teachers and who had several years of teaching experience it was anticipated that they would have moved beyond 'survival' to a more mature stage of teaching (Ben-Peretz & Rumney, 1991; Fuller & Brown, 1975; Katz, 1972). It was therefore expected that they would be more confident in themselves as practitioners and more willing than beginning teachers to share with me their insights into their own practices. As experienced teachers, it was anticipated that the judgements they made and the actions they took would reflect many internal standards they had developed as a result of their experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994; Dewey, 1938). In addition, the stage of these cooperating teachers on the continuum of adult development was more likely to be one of 'individualisation' and 'stability-advancement' where they would have positive images of themselves as teachers and be insightful and reflective of their teaching (Caruso & Fawcett, 1986).

Nature of the student teachers
The characteristics of individual student teachers was not a factor taken into consideration when selecting the cooperating teachers other than identifying that they were either a second or third year student teacher and that they were from one of the universities used in the study. It was subsequently found that some students were mature age students, others were experienced in child care and were upgrading their qualifications; yet others had moved directly from school to tertiary education.

There were several reasons for identifying second and third year rather than first year student teacher placements. It was known that second or third year students within the early childhood teacher education programmes would undertake at least one block practicum of up to four weeks in a preschool whereas first year student teachers in some universities were not placed in preschools. First year students most often were placed for only short periods of time which provided little opportunity either for the cooperating teacher to get to know them or for the researcher to visit on a number of occasions when they were present at the preschool. Not all universities placed first year students in preschools and if they did, it was often for the purposes of observation rather than supervised practical

experience.

Having identified the placement of second and third year student teachers, university block practicum dates, placement of student teachers within geographic areas, the nature of the preschool day and the researcher's desire to have time to engage in observation and discussion, consideration was then given to how best to schedule the visits to the preschools. Contact time with the cooperating teachers was essential as they were the key data source.

Identifying contact time with the cooperating teachers
It was planned that the visits would be undertaken during morning programmes at preschools as this provided an opportunity for student teachers to be involved in a range of activities. They were more likely to be engaged in group and individual work with children as well as in routines and periods where children engaged in a free choice of play activities. Since activities which occurred during this time period provided a sampling of the diverse nature of the preschool curriculum it could be assumed that the time of the visits could also provide a representative sample of student behaviour. During the morning programme, cooperating teachers had many differing opportunities to observe student teacher behaviour during times when they would be occupied with children in indoor and outdoor play, planned group experiences, transition times and routines such as eating and resting. Other responsibilities such as those associated with centre management which took the cooperating teachers away from the children (and the student teachers), were most often undertaken by the cooperating teachers at lunchtime or during the afternoon. This was the time targeted for discussion.

Where a student was present for four weeks, a twice-a-week schedule enabled eight visits to be planned for the block period. Some additional visits were also made during field days prior to the practicum. It was not possible (nor considered desirable) for the researcher to be present at the preschool on a daily basis. It most cases visits occurred from two to five days apart. This scheduling permitted opportunities for developments to occur and for new issues to arise and be dealt with between visits, thus providing additional experiences from which the teacher could draw in the focused discussions.

Although a regular pattern of visits could not always be established at the commencement of data collection, the time for revisiting was always negotiated prior to the subsequent visit. Although availability of cooperating teachers was always a consideration when planning visits, such plans could not anticipate other demands that may be placed on staff on the day of the visit, or staff illnesses . Visits were not made on days when children and cooperating teachers were on excursions, when there were visitors at the preschool, or on Parents' Days and other special events. Given these constraints it was not feasible to visit preschools on more frequent occasions than those on which visits were undertaken.

The cooperating teachers

Kate, Julie and Elaine each had one student teacher for one block practicum during the year. In contrast Irene and Matthew accepted thirteen and twelve students respectively, for blocks of practicum which occurred over a seven month period. For Irene and Matthew, there was often little break between having one student and the next, whereas Kate, Julie and Elaine were able to focus on just one student. This factor became an important issue when data analysis was being undertaken.

Kate and Elaine were Preschool Directors and so had substantial additional administrative responsibilities, for which they had some allocated time free from the children. Julie was a teacher in a preschool where there were two other teachers in addition to other staff. Irene was the Director and Matthew the teacher at the same preschool. Irene and Matthew rotated student teachers between them on a fortnightly basis. All cooperating teachers accepted the responsibility of student teachers in addition to their normal work loads. Finding time within their own busy daily schedules to discuss matters with the student teachers was therefore an issue for all the cooperating teachers. It involved using their personal time outside working hours and asking other staff to share some of their day-to-day work load. It was important for me, in negotiating access to the participating cooperating teachers, to be particularly sensitive to the time constraints within which they worked.

Gaining access

Access was gained through an initial phone call and a follow up visit to each preschool. Where the preschool was managed by a Board of Management, the teacher advised her

immediate supervisor of her desire to be involved. Where the preschool belonged to a larger organisation, I telephoned the relevant staff member within that organisation, seeking cooperation and support for the cooperating teacher's involvement. This was subsequently followed by a letter of appreciation for the cooperating teacher's involvement in the study. The ease with which access was gained reflected both my professional standing within the early childhood field and the acceptability of the approach taken to the investigation.

Since neither the student teachers or the children were directly involved as data sources it was not necessary to seek their support for the study. Student teachers were, however, advised of the research by their cooperating teacher in order that they could feel more comfortable with my presence.

The establishment of rapport with cooperating teachers was important in that honesty in open communication is more likely to occur where there is trust (Kagan, 1992; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Kate, Julie, Irene and Matthew were known to me as I had previously placed student teachers at the preschools where they were employed. I had also undertaken supervisory visits there during previous practicum periods. Although I did not know the fifth cooperating teacher, Elaine, she knew of my previous involvement in the practicum.

A summary of visits made to the cooperating teachers during the block practicum periods is provided in Table 2.1. As indicated previously, the number of visits made reflects the length of the block practicum periods, constraints of time and geographic location and the overlap in block practicum between different universities. Where there was a four week block practicum and only one student (with no overlap) the number of visits represents opportunities to visit when the student teacher was undertaking Field Day visits prior to the block practicum. There was a proportionately higher number of visits per student teacher to those preschools where the cooperating teacher had only one student teacher during the period in which the research was undertaken. This was possible where there was less overlap in the dates of the block practicum periods.

The four universities from which student teachers were drawn are identified in Table 2.1. There were six student teachers from Macquarie University, twelve from University of Western Sydney - Macarthur, nine from University of Western Sydney - Nepean and one

from the University of Newcastle.

Table 2.1: Summary of visits to cooperating teachers and student profile.

Teacher	No. of students	Year		Placement University	Total No. of visits
		Second	Third		
Kate	1	1		Macquarie	10
Julie	1		1	Macquarie	10
Elaine	1		1	Newcastle	11
Irene	5	1	4	Nepean	11
	3	3		Macquarie	8
	5	5		Macarthur	9
Matthew	4		4	Nepean	9
	2	2		Macquarie	6
	6	6		Macarthur	12
TOTALS	28	18	10	4	86

The table shows that Irene and Matthew had a mix of second and third year student teachers across three universities. Kate had a second year student teacher and Julie a third year from the same university. Elaine had a student teacher from a different university to that of the other cooperating teachers.

The regular visiting programme concluded on the completion of a block practicum or a series of practica. There was an opportunity, however, for follow-up discussions with the cooperating teachers to gain their responses to my ongoing interpretative accounts of their experiences found in the themed stories, story reconstructions and journal articles (these are discussed later in this chapter).This process of revisiting reflected a desire to convey an openness to the cooperating teachers and thus engage in a collaborative approach to the interpretation of data and a shared understanding (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Hollingsworth, 1994).

While the intent of the study was to find out what went on inside the cooperating teachers' heads, the understanding of what they experienced was only possible through the cooperating teachers' interpretations of experience. It was therefore important that I employ those strategies which would facilitate the cooperating teachers' expressions of lived experience. The next section identifies the data collection techniques which were employed in order to provide the thoroughness, cohesion and comprehensiveness required of the study.

DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

The processes by which meanings are interpreted and understood, (that is, the way we make sense of our world), has been described as 'Verstehen' (Schwandt, 1994, pp.120-121). It reflects a constructivist view of building understanding. Collaboration in jointly constructing or finding meaning in the actions of the cooperating teachers was a necessary part of the study. The selection of data collection techniques which acknowledged the ways in which understanding may be constructed was important. It provided a link in the credibility chain between the research questions and the meaning assigned to accounts of experience.

The word 'technique' has been chosen to represent procedures that were adopted in data gathering. The techniques used for data collection were determined on the basis of their appropriateness to the research questions as well as the availability of the cooperating teachers and the nature of their work. Such techniques included observation and focused multiple interviews. Stories were used as an alternative to 'descriptive summaries' (Cole, 1989). A research journal was kept to document my reflective personal thoughts about my experiences, visual records including photographs were used and artefacts were collected. Following a brief introduction, this section of the chapter identifies each of the techniques and provides the rationale for their use.

Triangulation was initially considered as the approach to be taken in addressing the study's credibility or what has been described as 'believability' (Leavitt, 1994, p.102) or verisimilitude (Leavitt, 1994; Miller & Crabtree, 1994). Multiple data sources and multiple techniques were considered. The multiple sources included cooperating teacher/student

teacher dyads, student teachers from differing universities and differing years of course work within the university. Multiple techniques for collecting field data and participant verification of interpretative accounts were also considered to provide the study with its credibility and overcome what some see as potential bias that may be attributed to single-method, single-observer studies (Camp & Heath-Camp, 1993; Denzin, 1989; Lancy, 1993; Patton, 1990).

It was subsequently appreciated that, rather than triangulation per se, what was important was the 'crystallisation' of ideas (Richardson, 1994; Tesch, 1990; Yonemura, 1982). In contrast to triangulation, which may be conceived of as focusing on a point of clarification, crystallisation allows for growth and change in understanding and recognises that there may not be one right perspective or interpretation. Crystallisation, therefore, more aptly reflected the ways in which storying and the use of 'thick description' of lived experience worked as tools for the development of understanding (Geertz cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1990). The fluidity of interpretative accounts provided within stories and the opportunities to draw different inferences from them, were important parts of this process (Jalongo, 1992). Attention to thick descriptions enabled deeper levels of meaning to surface as I became more and more immersed in the field text data.

Prolonged engagement by both the researcher and the respondents in interpretative studies makes it more likely that credible findings will be produced (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Engagement over time provides a context in which immersion is supported. Immersion can be described as 'the stage of steeping oneself in all that is; of contacting the texture, tone, mood, range and content of experience' (Patton, 1990, p.409). This involved reading, rereading and reflection on the texts. Time spent in all of these activities provided the context for personal immersion. The cooperating teachers themselves also needed time in which to become progressively focused as they moved from a concern with describing events and processes to development and testing of explanations (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

Data collection techniques needed not only to identify the cooperating teachers' actions and practices but also to tap the images they held which guided their practices. Therefore, there was a need to find an appropriate medium through which these images could be captured

and portrayed in the research texts in a logical and organised form.

Systematic inquiry into the cooperating teachers' accounts of experiences was undertaken through the researcher's invitations to the cooperating teachers to respond to themed stories, through follow-up questioning, and through ongoing opportunities for the cooperating teachers to identify issues across student teachers or concerning one student teacher over time.

Cooperating teachers were not required to keep records. Although one cooperating teacher suggested the use of a small tape recorder and note-taking while teaching, these techniques were not favoured by other cooperating teachers. They considered that it would not only interrupt their work but would provide inappropriate modelling for student teachers. As these suggestions seemed to be impractical I decided to use two key techniques to gain insights into the cooperating teachers' thoughts: observation and interview. Observations were undertaken informally and were designed to identify behaviours that occurred within the normal functioning of the day, whereas the interview occurred at a prearranged time and provided an opportunity for recall, reflection and exploration of issues.

Observations

Observation, as a strategy, is set in the context of here and now. In keeping with constructivist/interpretivist approaches to human inquiry, observation forms an important part of the watching, listening, questioning, recording and examining cycle of interpretative inquiry (Schwandt, 1994). Direct observation provides descriptive data and researcher perspectives on actions.

Observation served two major purposes as a data source. First, it provided an opportunity for me, as researcher, to become aware of the context in which cooperating teachers and students worked. Second, the concrete examples drawn from the observations acted as situated or contextual prompts, to be used to facilitate teacher recall. While it may not be possible to see pedagogy, it is possible to focus on acts indicative of pedagogy (Van Manen, 1990). By using observed events as a focus for discussion it was possible to gain further insights into the practices of being a cooperating teacher. These practices have been referred to as **cooperating teaching** in this thesis.

Two forms of recording occurred, a Floor Plan of the playroom (Appendix 2.3a) and an Observation Sheet (Appendix 2.4). The Floor Plan of the playroom was developed as a 'plan of activity' (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 120) to identify a student teacher's movements within the playroom and the period of time spent by the student teacher at any one activity (see Appendix 2.3b).

The Observation Sheet was used to record the researcher's interpretation of observed student teacher behaviour and questions/concerns regarding that behaviour that could be raised in discussion with the cooperating teacher. It was also used to record observed cooperating teacher actions and these could be followed up with the cooperating teacher during discussion. Notes on the observation sheets served as a lead-in to more detailed analysis of teacher experiences as their actions and the events they observed were recalled and discussed (Handal & Lauvas, 1987; Smyth, 1991a; Van Manen, 1977).

The observation sheets provided both the context and a frame of reference to be returned to during conversations with the cooperating teachers if the otherwise free ranging conversations moved beyond issues I considered to be relevant to the research questions. They were helpful in refocusing discussion because time for the focused conversational interviews with the cooperating teachers was limited. It was also sometimes necessary to refocus discussion on actions I had observed in order to maintain attention to issues relevant to the research questions.

Observation on its own is insufficient, for it largely provides evidence of surface behaviours. As observer, I was aware that not all that went on in a preschool playroom was able to be observed. Factors which influenced the interactions that were observed and recorded on the observation sheets were more readily recalled through discussion where the examples were placed within the context of the day's events. These discussions had a purpose. They addressed issues which had arisen from observations and provided opportunities to further explore previous information. To this extent, the discussions may be considered to represent what I have called **focused conversational interviews**. Certainly, as the study proceeded, there were opportunities to pursue and revisit a particular line of thought over a period of time.

Focused conversational interviews

In contrast with observations, focused conversational interviews enabled insights to be gained into the thinking behind the actions. They permit interviewees or informants to move back and forth in time as they work through their ideas (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The word 'interview' has connotations (within more formal research designs) of structure in the questioning of one by another with questions based on a set of issues identified by the interviewer (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Denzin, 1989; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Patton, 1990). The intent in this study was not to anticipate or pursue a particular line of questioning or to interrogate, but rather to draw out from the cooperating teachers their ideas and concerns. Thus, interviews in this study can be considered to be conversations with a purpose. A conversational approach was considered to offer greater equality amongst participants than interview and reflected the more collaborative approach that was undertaken throughout the study.

The conversations required both the cooperating teachers and myself to engage in a variety of interpersonal communicative activities which included listening and probing (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). They were a form of discussion which engaged the cooperating teachers in examination of and reflection upon their practices at times set apart for this. (See Appendix 2.6 for a record of the taped conversations with each of the cooperating teachers.)

The use of non-directive questioning enabled the exploration of issues which surfaced during discussion. It was sometimes necessary to refocus and narrow the questioning during the discussion, in order to explore in greater depth something that had surfaced on a previous occasion. After listening to a previous taped interview, follow-up questions were often written on 'cue' cards which served as reminders of areas needing further clarification (Appendix 2.5). These were then used as guiding questions to gain greater understanding. Flexibility and the maintenance of a balance between conducting a free ranging interview and keeping on track became more important issues than a concern for the degree of structure found in differing question typologies (Denzin, 1989; Patton, 1990).

The development of a close relationship between the cooperating teachers and myself as

researcher, and the collaboration that occurred in understanding the meaning of responses to observed student behaviours were characteristics of such conversations (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Hollingsworth, 1994; Yinger, 1990; Yonemura, 1982). During the conversations, cooperating teachers frequently reported 'critical incidents' (Tripp, 1993) in which student teacher behaviour became the focus of the conversation. Such behaviour served as a reference point for reflection and exploration of issues.

The cooperating teachers' language during the conversations provided an access to their lived experiences as they recalled and reflected upon those experiences. Audiotape recording was used to capture this language. Contrary to Lincoln & Guba's (1985) recommendation that handwritten notes be used during interviews in preference to tape recording, the ongoing, open and relaxed nature of inquiry lent itself to tape-recording. This approach was considered to be conducive to reflective inquiry where I was often as much a participant within the conversations as the cooperating teachers themselves. Tape recording therefore enabled me to participate effectively in discussion without the demands of having to record notes.

While tape recording provides a more comprehensive and concrete record of interview than field notes, it does not include the non-verbal elements of communication (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). What I was interested in capturing was the voice of the cooperating teachers' thinking. We therefore needed to be able to find words in which to capture that voice. However, it was also appreciated that even tape recording may not be an accurate record of all that was said, and what was said may not fully represent what is believed. Therefore, interviews themselves are accounts of a person's perspective at the time of the interview and not necessarily all aspects of the person's perspective may be reported. One cannot assume that interview responses represent a stable point of view of the respondents (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Maxwell, 1992). Opportunities for cooperating teachers to revisit their ideas were provided both through the ongoing nature of conversations and through responses to themed stories developed from interview transcripts. (See sample letter in Appendix 2.7; also introductions to themed stories Appendix 3.3.1a and Appendix 3.3.5a, all of which invite responses.) The use of themed stories is discussed in a later section in this chapter.

Tape recording of focused conversations was negotiated with the cooperating teachers beforehand. Some of the cooperating teachers were initially concerned about what they might say 'on record'. However, with recording as part of the research routine they quickly overcame their apprehension. It became a regular practice within the interview situation. It became so routine that, on occasions, cooperating teachers would draw attention to the need to ensure that the recorder was turned on again after it had been turned off because of an interruption such as a telephone call.

The term 'interview' has been used here in a generic sense to include both the conversations that were engaged in during times which were set aside for discussion and more incidental comments made by the cooperating teachers (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Fontana & Frey, 1994).[4] At this point the interview could be considered as part of the process of developing understanding between the researcher and the cooperating teacher as joint participants in the study. This sense of co-researching is indicative of feminist-based interviewing which requires openness, engagement, and engrossment within a trusting relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Selectivity and interpretation were part of the process of cooperating teachers' reporting on events and thoughts which occupied their minds. Both occurred as meaning was derived from what had been reported. An assumption cannot therefore be made that data accumulation and data interpretation were discrete identities. The meaning underlying issues and concerns may well be revisited as new issues surfaced.

In summary, time (and timing), the structure of the interview process, its focus (or orientation) and the potential that the outcomes had for in-depth analysis were all considerations addressed by the researcher. Underlying these considerations was the need to view the interview as a conversation which was oriented by the researcher's desire to discover what went on in the minds of cooperating teachers. This meant that the cooperating teachers also engaged in inquiry and discovery of their own tacit knowledge,

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[4]   It is interesting to note here that the term 'interview' is derived from the Latin root *inter* (between or during) + *videre.* (to see). On the other hand 'discussion' comes from the Latin *dis* (apart) + *quatere* (to shake). Both terms could apply to the processes involved in the focused interviews as both the researcher and the cooperating teachers sought to see and to understand as they pulled apart concepts in search of meaning.

beliefs and values as they gave narrative accounts or told stories of their experiences. The telling of stories was seen to be a way both of expression of meaning and of providing incidents, around which stories had developed, to explore in further discussion.

The use of story

Story is defined by Scholes (1982) as a 'telling or recounting of a string of events' (p.59). However, the perspective taken in the development of stories in this research was that of patterning or association rather than a linear string. For these purposes, story can therefore be defined as an association of events or ideas around a theme, a statement of significance or an incident. The tellers of tales in this study are the cooperating teachers and myself, as researcher. The use of a story form provided opportunities for the cooperating teachers' contextual accounts of student teachers to be used as data sources, while researcher storying provided another level of interpretation.

Stories may be seen as 'a link' between thought and action - 'the stuff of teaching' (Day, Pope & Denicolo, 1990, p. 32). They may be considered to be narratives of experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991d). A distinction can be made between story and narrative. Story tells of the experience by the one who experienced it. On the other hand, narrative may be an account (or interpretation) by someone else of that experience as it has been reported to them. Narrative method requires participant-observation and shared understanding and in that sharing, stories may emerge. Thought, action and emotion associated with everyday experiences form the contexts in which stories unfold.

There are a number of basic elements of story which are worthy of note in relation to this study (Carter, 1993; Scholes, 1982). These are shown in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2: Relationship between research focus and storying

Elements of story	Research focus
• A situation indicative of some predicament, conflict or struggle.	• Cooperating teachers constantly making decisions concerning their work environment.
• An animate protagonist who engages in the situation for a purpose.	• Cooperating teachers responsible for student teachers.
• A sequence with implied causality (a plot) referring to events outside self, already occurred.	• Concerns over time as students proceed through the practicum.
• An observer or witness who tells or recounts.	• The cooperating teachers themselves who report on/ interpret their perspectives.

It can be seen from the table that the major elements of story, theme, tension, characters and plot, which all form part of the context for the telling of experience, can be linked with the research focus. Theme can be defined as:

> a statement of meaning that (1) runs through all or most of the pertinent data, or (2) one in the minority that carries heavy emotional or factual impact... It can be thought of as the researcher' inferred statement that highlights... (their)... understanding of a person, persons, or culture (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner & McCormack Steinmetz, 1991, p.150).

This definition accommodates the notion of central thread which links the data. It provides for the highlighting of something that stands out and permeates the thoughts of cooperating teachers and so underpins what they have to say.

It was anticipated that stories, developed around the themes, would begin to emerge during ongoing data collection. This would provide the central idea which had developed from words/phrases (and associated ideas) used by each cooperating teacher over a number of occasions. The theme would be found in the transcripts of conversations with the cooperating teachers and would orient their explanations/interpretations of events or behaviours. By using themes, as with the plot of a story, some order or structure can be provided in the organisation of the interpretative accounts of the cooperating teachers'

experiences (Kellehear, 1993; Van Manen, 1990).

Tension within stories is provided through predicament, conflict or struggle. It is Bruner's view that a well-formed narrative can be represented by a pentad consisting of an Actor, an Action, a Goal, a Scene and an Instrument, plus Trouble. Trouble arises where there is an imbalance between any of the five elements of the pentad (Bruner, 1990).

It is through language that the narrative speaks. Words and phrases used by the cooperating teachers form part of the themed stories which stayed as close to the cooperating teachers' texts as possible. Within the process of extracting meaning from field texts it was important to address an 'emic' (insider) rather than an 'etic' (outsider) view (Kellehear, 1993).

As an alternative to descriptive summaries, themed stories were seen to be more alive and therefore more inclined to reflect an affinity with the lived experiences which formed the content of these stories. With the addition of my own interpretation, which was sometimes resourced by relevant literature, a greater depth of understanding was possible. Then, by offering opportunities for the cooperating teachers to respond to these interpretations, greater clarity could be achieved.

At the level of researcher interpretation, the ways in which themed stories were written was an important consideration. Stories needed to have qualities which encouraged and enabled the cooperating teachers to elaborate on them, to clarify their understandings and tell about other incidents which would support or refute their assumptions. These elaborations in turn gave rise to further stories.

While themed stories written by the researcher from the accounts given by each cooperating teacher are one way of storying, the cooperating teachers' telling about incidents was also a form of storying. By recalling and reflecting on past experiences the cooperating teachers were engaged in the cyclic nature of storying and restorying. They told further stories as they reflected on past experiences and used these to add to interpretative accounts of incidents in their current situation.

Storying, however, has other aspects. It is not only of the past. Reference can be made to

the future in the images teachers hold of their own goals and their expectations of student teachers. Past, present and future provide context, temporality and causality within the storyline conveyed by the plot. These three central tenets within the construction of a story, also address three dimensions of meaning - significance, value and intention (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Significance is conveyed through the past, value through the present and intention through the future.

The written form of themed stories enables a sharing across cooperating teachers and the opportunity to engage in 'polyvocal discourse' (Tobin & Davidson, 1990, p.271) whereby multiple perspectives could be appreciated. Finding commonalities and uniqueness in individual themes enables the researcher to crystallise the key concepts within the data (Tesch, 1990).

The research journal

Field notes form an essential tool for researchers concerned with observation and the use of incidents for stimulated recall (Kelchtermans, 1993). While the term field notes, may be used generically to incorporate all data collected in the course of the research (such as transcripts, visual records, artefacts, and the research journal), it is used here in a narrower sense. It refers to the written accounts of 'what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study' (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Earlier experiences with journal keeping had already demonstrated to me the value in moving beyond description of events to finding ways of recording researcher perspectives on and reactions to events, ideas and actions. The research journal therefore provided evidence of 'levels of knowing' (Coe, 1991). These levels were not seen as being discrete and hierarchical but spiralling loops of action, reflection and reaction as I came to know and understand the complexities of the research. (See examples in Appendices 2.8 and 2.9.) In addition to written records, audio and visual records also all formed part of the data base for analysis.

Visual records

While written texts may be considered to be visual records, the particular reference here is

to photographs and mind maps. Visual records were considered to add another dimension to the quality of data collection. The major type of visual record used in collecting information of a contextual nature was photographs.

As a form of static display photographs can provide contextual cues and allow for intense inspection, contemplation and exploration of meaning (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Chatman, 1981; Walker, 1993). Discussions which followed the presentation of photographs to the cooperating teachers had the potential to elicit language of both a depictive and descriptive quality. The use of photographs provided opportunities for reflection but, more importantly, they had the potential to facilitate the clarification of concepts which may otherwise have been elusive during the initial phases of storytelling.

Photographs can therefore serve in providing another tool in facilitating cooperating teachers' interpretations of meaning of student teacher behaviours (Denzin, 1989; Kellehear, 1993). However, it was also appreciated that the 'eye' of the camera may place a particular perspective on the image portrayed. An outcome of this consideration was a decision to purposefully photograph student teacher/child interactions. Student teacher/child interactions were a focus of the cooperating teachers' concern and therefore the purpose in using photographs in this way was to provide opportunities for further illumination on the nature of those interactions.

Other visual devices to be considered were diagrams and mind maps (Svantesson, 1989) or concept maps (Elbaz, Hoz, Tomer, Chayot, Mahler & Yeheskel, 1986). These were particularly useful in developing the framework for themed stories. A wide and varied selection of tools needed to be used to explore meaning and to convey what had been experienced. Mind maps provided a way of structuring ideas in a logical order without having to initially provide a linear sequence within that order (Svantesson, 1989). They could readily be used to depict an association of ideas and give a visual overview of the whole. (See Appendix 3.4 for a mindmap developed to display the concepts which began to emerge from the study.)

It was necessary to look beyond personal experience to evidence which might guide or constrain the actions of the cooperating teachers. Some of this evidence may be found in

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what has loosely been described as artefacts.

Artefacts

Artefacts formed the last important source of data. Artefacts were documents which were relevant to the activities of cooperating teachers involved in the practicum. They included university practicum documents such as practicum guidelines and student assessment documents as well as each preschool's curriculum objectives, centre policies and staff responsibilities. (See Appendix 2.11 for listing of university practicum documents.) Practicum documents provided information concerning each university's expectations of student teacher and cooperating teacher. Preschool documents contained objectives for the children and expectations of staff (and of student teachers). The documents were developed by staff at the preschools in which the students were undertaking their practicum and were available to the students. These were included as sources of data to provide additional insights into the expectations and identification of practices of the cooperating teachers and the contexts in which they were working.

TRUSTWORTHINESS AND AUTHENTICITY

All of the techniques used in data accumulation and interpretation were designed to convey as realistically as possible the lived experiences of the cooperating teachers. It is important to ensure that the results of the research produce findings that are plausible, understandable, and worthy of attention (Ely et al., 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polkinghorne, 1995). Within a qualitative research paradigm it is rigour, rather than the technical nature of validity, that is of concern when addressing the authority of the text (Lincoln & Denzin, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1990). From a constructivist's viewpoint, the rigour of a study is best represented by trustworthiness and authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1990; Olesen, 1994; Patton, 1990).

Qualitative studies gain their credibility through trustworthiness and authenticity. Credible is derived from the Latin *credibilis* - believable. The World Book Dictionary defines credible as believable, reliable, trustworthy (Barnhart, 1974). What is particularly relevant to studies such as this one is that 'trustworthiness has been satisfied when source

respondents agree to honour the reconstructions' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.329). Authenticity refers to the extent to which the understandings of the 'respondents' have been adequately represented. It is largely an issue of quality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) and of truth value (Emihovich, 1995).

Trustworthiness and authenticity reside in the richness of the texts from which meaning is interpreted. They rely on thick descriptions 'in which the voices, feelings, ideas and meanings of interacting individuals are heard' (Denzin, 1989, p.83). Listening carefully to the language of the cooperating teachers while also trying to understand what that language meant was an important part of the process. Thick descriptions were gained not only from this process but through the processes of interpretation and reflection as storying and restorying occurred. Every attempt was made to address this study's trustworthiness and authenticity through the techniques which were used in the accumulation and interpretation of data. These included prolonged engagement with the cooperating teachers; persistent observation and reflection as the identification and investigation of key concepts were pursued; and searching for a crystallisation of these concepts through the sharing of stories across the cooperating teachers and consideration of their responses to those stories. The corroboration by the cooperating teachers and their responses to the themed stories along with their willingness to be identified in the thesis (and thus accept responsibility for what is attributed to them), is testimony to the study's authenticity.

OVERVIEW OF DATA ACCUMULATION TECHNIQUES

In summary, the data within field texts was created by both the cooperating teachers and the researcher. Within the process of data accumulation it is recognised that there has been selectivity in what the cooperating teachers have chosen to tell and how it has been interpreted by the researcher. Thus the field texts are shaped by many factors. These include the personal dispositions and the relationships between researcher and cooperating teachers and the constraints provided by contextual factors which were beyond the control of either the researcher of the cooperating teachers. The following Table 2.3 provides a summary of the techniques employed in gathering field data, the form of documentation that was used and the rationale for the forms of documentation that were chosen.

Table 2.3: Summary of techniques and rationales for their use in data collection.

Technique	Form of documentation	Rationale
Observation of teacher/ student-teacher actions	Running record - descriptive rather than interpretative anecdote Plan of physical layout of playroom Plan of student activity	Provides ● concreteness ● common point of reference for researcher and respondent ● description of context ● detailed interpretative record
Focused conversational interviews	Audio record oriented by ● cooperating teachers' initial reactions to actions they observed of the student teacher ● researcher questions arising during observation conducted by researcher ● questions arising from 'stories' ● general observed/experienced events of the day Transcriptions	Focus ● provides direction yet flexibility within discussion ● enables issues to be explored Process ● enables depth of understanding to be developed over time ● provides opportunity for cooperating teachers to reflect on their practices and to make explicit their thoughts, beliefs and theories about role - an insider rather than researcher view Dialogue ● provides opportunities for reframing experiences as researcher explores ideas with the cooperating teachers Full transcript can provide ● detail for analysis of cooperating teachers' language for clues of emerging themes ● opportunity for further perusal across cooperating teachers and by one cooperating teacher across students
Themed stories	Researcher's narrative developed through interpretation of themes emerging from audio record of interviews	Analysis and interpretation of key aspects from cumulative data prepared for verification by teacher Themes and their interpretation validated Opportunity to work collaboratively in an effort to develop an understanding of the meaning of experiences and ensure that cooperating teachers' views are adequately reflected in researcher's written expression
Research journal	Cumulative record of researcher's thoughts, ideas and reflective comments following experience	Opportunity for reflection and documentation of insights, perceptions and reminders Provides a record of decision making

Visual record	Photographs	A static visual record for further analysis to supplement observation - provides visual details of physical environment and records nonverbal interactions
		Contrasting photographs of nonverbal actions to serve as prompts for further exploration of the perspectives of each cooperating teacher
	Diagrams/mind maps	
		The process of developing mind maps enables the brainstorming of ideas to be represented
		Provides an organisational display in which concepts/ideas can be developed and linked in a structured and logical way
Artefacts	Written instruction for cooperating teachers ● practicum expectations, assessment documents and other guidelines from universities ● centre documents including policies and staff responsibilities	Provides insights into university expectations of cooperating teachers and student teachers Provides information regarding context

The table identifies the multiple data gathering approaches which have contributed to the strength of the research design. It is these that contribute to the depth and quality of field text data which was available for interpretation. The process of data accumulation and interpretation were designed to address the study's authenticity and trustworthiness.

The next chapter details the processes involved in moving from field text through the interpretation process to deeper understandings of the research data. Resonance and applicability within the inquiry process itself are taken up in that discussion.

CHAPTER 3

FROM FIELD TEXTS TO RESEARCH TEXT: MINING FOR MEANING

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the process of data management and show how it reflects a multidimensional approach to data accumulation, interpretation and presentation. This chapter links the previous chapter (which focused on methodological decisions) with the data analysis chapters by addressing the organisational aspects of field text consolidation and interpretation. Thoughtful and creative management of the data was required in order that the interpretations of meaning took into account both the context of the cooperating teachers' practices and the research questions underpinning this study. This chapter addresses the way in which the cooperating teachers were involved in meaningful interpretation of the data, the trialing of contrasting approaches to the writing up of interpretations in story reconstructions and the ways in which a data display assisted in this process of data interpretation.

Data refers to all of the material collected from the field of study. It includes audiotapes and transcripts of these, themed stories, photographs, field notes and artefacts. These were considered to be the 'field texts' from which the 'research text' was developed (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). The word 'data' has been used in this thesis to refer to the assembled resource of research material as well as specific aspects of that resource. A search of the data to reveal the essence of the lived experiences of the cooperating teachers involved mining for the meaning that lay below the surface of the field text data.

Data analysis is the process by which the accumulated material is organised into manageable units in order to prepare a coherent report (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Lancy, 1993; Lofland & Lofland, 1984). Thematic analysis was chosen as an alternative to coding categories (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Van Manen, 1990). The practice in qualitative research of extending the meaning of the word 'analysis' has been adopted here to cover treatment of the data whereby it is configured into a coherent whole (Polkinghorne, 1995).

It was considered that management of the data and the creation of order in the representational and writing up phases of the study could most readily be undertaken through using a thematic approach. The adoption of such an approach in the analysis of the cooperating teachers' texts enabled the complexities of cooperating teaching to be revealed through narrative accounts of experience. By addressing these complexities in this way, the outcomes have the potential of having a greater and more direct relevance or benefit not only to cooperating teachers themselves, but also to student teachers and to university decision makers responsible for student practicum (Cole & Knowles, 1993a). The way in which the data were organised was therefore important for both the ease of working with the data and its interpretation for others.

ORGANISING AND PRESENTING THE DATA

In the process of organising the cooperating teachers' interpretative accounts of their observations and experience, (and recorded within the transcripts of interviews), the data were initially segmented and clustered around 'sensitising concepts' (Blumer, 1954, p.7; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Such concepts addressed the thoughts and concerns which occupied the minds of the cooperating teachers within the practicum context. For example, it was a concern about the student teacher not showing initiative in participating in the routine tasks of setting up activities that later became a themed story written by me from the taped conversations that I had with the cooperating teachers. Not only were there a number of examples of this type of behaviour, but it also seemed to be something around which the cooperating teacher raised a number of concerns. Brief conceptual labels were then assigned to the clusters of data. Having labelled the data, it was then possible to identify key themes which reflected issues of importance to the cooperating teachers. These were the themes that were explored through the themed stories.

In thematic analysis, the processes of segmenting and clustering the data employ what Bruner describes as 'paradigmatic reasoning' (Bruner, 1985). This he contrasts with 'narrative reasoning' which is employed when narrative analysis is undertaken. The development of a 'final story' or narrative reconstruction which draws together data into a systematic whole is undertaken through narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995).

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The processes involved in extracting meaning and in presenting authentic and believable findings are as important as the methods used to access data. It is through these processes that deeper understandings may be gained. In this study, the concern that the cooperating teachers' voices should be adequately represented was a concern for both the integrity and quality of the study itself. Thus, the credibility of the study is supported by the substance of the findings (Janesick, 1994). To have substance, not only is adequate data required but there needs to be evidence of a fit between the patterns and relationships within the data and its interpretation: that is, between the ideas, concerns and experiences of the cooperating teachers and the interpretative accounts of these. It is resonance that supports the credibility of the study.

CONCERN FOR RESONANCE AND APPLICABILITY

Resonance refers to the degree of fit between what is reported in the study and the context within which the study is located (Janesick, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). That is, in mining for meaning there needed to be some acknowledgement of congruence between the study's characteristics, the values and beliefs held by the cooperating teachers who informed the study, and professional expectations, ideals and ethics found within a broader context in early childhood education. Resonance on its own is insufficient. If research is to inform practice, the applicability of the study within the context is essential.

Applicability refers to the extent to which inferences can be drawn by others and the degree to which those inferences have relevance within the others' contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1990). One of the qualities of storying is that it lends itself to interpretation by others. That is, more than one interpretation is possible. However, the cooperating teachers' experiences, if interpreted as they experienced them, provide insights which may readily be shared with others. The struggle to find ways to reflect the 'verisimilitude' (Denzin, 1989; Leavitt, 1994; Lincoln & Denzin, 1994) or the reality of experience was always present. It is that reality which may encourage others to reflect on their own experiences.

Working with the phenomena of experience, I was seeking the understandings of those experiences which were indicative of affective and emotional domains as well as the

cognitive. The intention was to address the embodied nature of experience. Analysis, therefore, needed to be interpretative rather than descriptive and to allow for expression rather than explanation. Expression is found in deriving meaning from the experience itself through the use of a creative medium. Some examples are the language of words (which lead to stories), actions (which lead to mime, gesture and dance), colour and shape (found in photographs, painting and sculpture) and the language of silence and stillness (found in meditation) (Reason & Hawkins, 1988). While storying was an important part of the study, other forms of expression included the cooperating teachers' metaphors of experience. Stories and metaphor are evocative forms of expression which engage the listener or reader in a sharing of meaning and add to the resonance and applicability of the study (Beattie, 1995a; Elbaz, 1990; Richardson, 1994).

Metaphor was one way in which the images that the cooperating teachers held of student teachers, of themselves as cooperating teachers and of their day-to-day experiences could be revealed. While the cooperating teachers' use of metaphor facilitated their own expression of meaning, metaphor also provided a focus for the development of a common understanding between the cooperating teachers. Although a particular metaphor may be only one way of imaging practice, the use of metaphor can link ideas and thus provide a way of transforming and expressing the nature of that experience:

> Metaphor, like the spine, bears weight, permits movement, is buried beneath the surface, and links parts together into a fundamental coherent whole. (Richardson, 1994, p.519)

Since accounts of experience are never identical to lived experience itself, care needed to be taken in considering the medium to be used in order to capture the experiences of the cooperating teachers and to reflect those experiences as closely as possible. Different interpretations, different ways of viewing field texts and new insights were always possible as the field texts were frequently revisited to gain further insights into the understandings of the cooperating teachers. Analysis could therefore be considered to be ongoing, integrative, reflective and extensively resourced.

The next section in this chapter identifies how the ways of working with both the cooperating teachers and the field text data resulted in interpretations which were perceived to be insightful of the cooperating teachers' work. Contrasting examples are now drawn

from Matthew's and Julie's experiences to illustrate how a collaborative approach was taken within the exploratory and ongoing processes of data analysis.

GAINING MEANINGFUL INTERPRETATIONS

As the study proceeded, I was aware of the occurrence of 'reciprocal shaping' (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p.280) through storying and restorying the interpretations of field text data. The cooperating teachers were involved in a search for meaning as they reflected on and responded to their own and each other's stories. The shaping and clarification of ideas were also quite evident in the use and discussion of photographs which depicted student teacher behaviours. The cooperating teachers' comments about these behaviours were recorded within the interview transcripts.

Themed stories, developed as summaries of essential themes appearing in transcripts, were written by me during the data collection process, however, decisions concerning final analysis of field texts remained elusive. In order to determine how best to deal with all of the data from each of the cooperating teachers, I decided to use the data from only two cooperating teachers to trial two perspectives. The two cooperating teachers chosen were those who would provide a contrast because one had a succession of student teachers (each for only about two weeks) over a seven month period and the other, only one student teacher for one month. After reading and rereading the transcripts of my conversations with all of the cooperating teachers, what I found to be evident were quite contrasting differences in the ways in which the lived experiences of these two teachers (Matthew and Julie) could be told.

IDENTIFYING MATTHEW'S LIVED EXPERIENCE

Taking a reductionist approach to the management of data, the data from two of the cooperating teacher's transcripts (Matthew's and Irene's) were initially scanned for general concepts and placed on computer using a word processing package - Q & A File (Symantec, 1991). The resultant data bank gave ready access to all of Matthew's and

Irene's transcripts. Segments of data were assigned a concept label code and subcode. These labels and codes could be altered individually or through a mass update (see example in Appendix 3.1). This system provided tremendous flexibility when reviewing the appropriateness of the coding system and in looking at relational codes. From this data bank a reconstruction of Matthew's experiences was written up in an explanatory mode which addressed each of the several key concepts illuminated in the coded material. Matthew was then invited to comment on this interpretation. His criticism was that while it represented 'the ideal' it did not represent 'reality' to him.

By abstracting texts from their context and assigning labels to them and then dealing with the information within each category, I had given little attention to the affective aspects of this role and made little provision for the passage of time in his experiences. Matthew's criticism confirmed my feeling of disjunction between the way in which I had presented this data and the experiences he had shared with me. I was trying to deal with all of the data in a way which was in conflict with the temporality and sequentiality of experience itself. An alternative was to provide a narrative account in which emergent themes could be explored.

The data from Julie's transcripts lent itself more readily to an alternative form of reconstruction. Julie's ongoing experiences were with one student teacher, and the ways in which that student teacher presented herself and the events and actions that occurred during the four week practicum period contributed to the narrative reconstruction which is found in Chapter Four.

IDENTIFYING JULIE'S LIVED EXPERIENCE

The reconstruction of Julie's data in narrative form enabled the tensions of the changing relationship between Julie and the student teacher (for whom she was responsible) to be revealed. In essence, although the reconstruction was a 'creative synthesis' (Patton, 1990, p.410) of all the relevant data taken from the transcripts, the narrative form readily accommodated the temporality and sequentiality required for the expression of her experiential accounts. It revealed the ebb and flow of the tensions she experienced during

the period in which she was responsible for the student teacher. The narrative reconstruction provided a perspective on the total experience and showed patterns and relationships between her observations, thoughts, concerns and actions.

All of Julie's transcript data was addressed in narrative form. Within this narrative, there were threads or themes, and there were tensions, which were readily identifiable and ran through the whole reconstruction. The narrative account provided opportunities to turn back and revisit earlier ideas, to move off and explore related issues and to share anticipations. It was the narrative of her lived experience. Julie's response to the representation of her experience in story form was enthusiastic. She felt that it reflected the nature of the experiences she had felt and reported.

There was a sharp contrast between Julie's response to the presentation of her data and that of Matthew. While thematic analysis may also be considered to be reductionist (in that it is a simplification of an aspect of 'lived experience' that another person is trying to understand), it can more readily take account of feelings and of time. Themes were able to penetrate the anecdotes of experience enabling the core or point of the 'knowing of experience' (Van Manen, 1990, p.87) to be exposed. Julie's story was shared with another cooperating teacher who was not part of the study. This 'significant other' commented on the extent to which that story represented situations that she too, had experienced with student teachers. (See Appendix 3.2 for extract from a letter written by the 'significant other' following her reading of Julie's narrative.)

The contrasting approaches of category coding and narrative reconstruction began as a trialing of the extent to which the two ways of data interpretation and presentation could meet aspects of the study's credibility. What they highlighted were differing paradigms of inquiry.

DEVELOPING AN UNDERSTANDING OF CONTRASTING APPROACHES

The contrast between the reconstruction of Julie's story and the coded transcripts of Matthew's data highlights two differing circumstances. The circumstances were that Julie

had one student teacher over a period of four weeks whereas Matthew had only a short break from twelve student teachers over a longer period of seven months.

Of the two approaches, one was more oriented to a functional/reductionist paradigm while the other was an interpretative/explanatory approach in which narrative was used as the medium through which experience was represented. What emerged from contrasting these approaches was a move from an almost rule-based process of analysis, to what Van Manen calls a 'free act of seeing meaning' (Van Manen, 1990). Within this context, themed stories and Julie's narrative reconstruction were the means through which the structures of experience could be assembled and reflected upon.

An initial concern with the need to deal with all of the data by the use of labels or predetermined codes as a form of 'segmentation' (Tesch, 1990) was thus overridden. There was now a sense that what was revealed through the thematic and narrative approach more powerfully represented the experiences of these cooperating teachers. Where categorisation and labelling of interview transcripts occurred, the power in the research had been assigned to the researcher role. The alternative narrative approach appeared to be empowering for the cooperating teacher.

There was a realisation that interpretative processes needed to move from being deductive to inductive (Janesick, 1994). This realisation was an outcome of my willingness to undertake credibility checks with the cooperating teachers and to reconsider the multidimensional nature of experience and personal experience methods (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994).

The interweaving patterns within experiential stories more readily reflected the multidimensional nature of experience. Themes and patterns found within and across field texts and the sharing of some of the outcomes of those searches with the cooperating teachers made it possible to consider more constructive ways in which meaning could be more adequately mined from that data. A multidimensional approach was therefore adopted both in viewing the data 'landscape' and in mining and extracting meaning from the field texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Clandinin, 1993 *personal communication*; Hollingsworth, 1994). The concept of mining is used as a metaphor to refer to the notion

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of digging below the surface to extract meaning. That digging, however, can be multidimensional if one continues applying the concept of mining to explore the various dimensions.

FACILITATING A MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH

The multidimensional approach encompassed six broad stages. As the stages of data accumulation and interpretation proceeded, new issues emerged, were identified and clarified. It was always possible to review the mode of inquiry as the cooperating teachers raised matters of concern to them.

Each of the six stages reflected either a vertical or a horizontal approach to inquiry. The process of viewing the data from differing perspectives also encompassed both temporal (viewing data at particular points in time) and developmental (considering changes over time) dimensions of experience. It included the sharing of written texts of the themed stories and story reconstructions as well as discussion and interpretation of photographs and a review of artefacts.

The vertical, horizontal, temporal and developmental dimensions of inquiry intersected with each other. There were no clear boundaries between the dimensions because of the interactive nature of developing understandings brought to interpretation of the data. While a vertical approach may reflect the 'internal cohesion and consistency' of the data (Kelchtermans, 1993, p.445) the cooperating teachers were often challenged to find alternate ways of working with student teachers and some gained further insights or new understandings as they explored their own ways of working. By considering data from a dimensional perspective, a greater sense of fittingness and 'ecological validity' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 201) was achieved.

Such an approach enabled a display of data management processes to be developed. The display enhanced the clarity with which those processes could be communicated to others. (This is elaborated upon in the next section in this chapter.) The following interpretation of each of these dimensions illustrates how this multidimensional approach enabled themes

to be extracted from the data, and enabled the images held by the cooperating teachers of their practice to be tapped.

THE VERTICAL DIMENSION

A vertical view of the data focused on the lived experience of individual cooperating teachers. It provided a basis for the development of individual cooperating teachers' themed stories and for after-data-collection narrative reconstruction of a cooperating teacher's experience.

This view provided an opportunity to developmentally track the experiences of a cooperating teacher with one or more student teachers. This approach revealed aspects of the ongoing nature of each cooperating teacher's work and the processes by which the cooperating teachers came to know and understand the student teachers for whom they were responsible. By addressing the data in this way it was possible to identify cooperating teachers' initial conceptions of student teachers and the images they held of what student teachers should be like.

During initial discussions with the cooperating teachers each had reported on their experiences in having a student teacher, and viewing the data vertically captured these images. Over time, however, it was possible to begin to understand how the cooperating teachers viewed themselves as cooperating teachers and how they viewed their relationship with the university. Also over time, the reality of day-to-day experiences began to highlight the tensions between the cooperating teachers' expectations of the student teachers (and of the university) and the reality of practice.

VIEWING DATA HORIZONTALLY

A horizontal view looked at the data across the cooperating teachers. This view encompassed searching for common themes and gaining responses to shared stories. By using this approach, it was possible to search for some universality in understanding. In

viewing data horizontally, it was possible to make across-case comparison of issues and concerns and how the cooperating teachers dealt with these. It provided opportunities to identify differences in the perspectives held by individual cooperating teachers (Huberman & Miles, 1994; Kelchtermans, 1993). A horizontal al view of data interpretation involved the cooperating teachers themselves in commenting on the themed stories of the other cooperating teachers or on photographs of student teacher/child interactions.

Whether the data was viewed vertically or horizontally, cooperating teachers themselves were still involved in responding to themed stories, commenting on photographs and reacting to story reconstructions. The multidimensional approach made it possible to identify issues which had further implications for those involved in the practicum whether student teachers, university supervisors or cooperating teachers. These implications are discussed in Chapter Nine. The two phases of data interpretation (during the practicum and following the practicum period) and the stages within them, will now be discussed.

Phase 1 - during student teacher practicum

This initial phase occurred during periods of time when student teachers were present in the preschool. The ongoing process of inquiry and the development of themed stories during this phase sought to provide some insights into the focus of the cooperating teachers' experiences with student teachers. This phase had two stages within it.

a) Stage 1

Analysis was initially undertaken vertically for it involved searching for themes in the transcripts from conversations with each individual cooperating teacher. The purpose was to identify key concepts which could be pulled together, interpreted and expressed through themed stories. As this process occurred during the practicum period, themed stories, which dealt with an issue that was of particular concern to a cooperating teacher at the time, were written. The issue that was highlighted was one that the cooperating teacher had emphasised or considered to be important because of the potential it had to influence his/her actions. Cooperating teachers had an ongoing opportunity to read, discuss and respond to the themed stories written from their own data.

b) Stage 2

The next stage involved sharing the themed stories across the cooperating teachers for their verification, elaboration and response. This horizontal view sought to ascertain whether there were understandings, issues and/or concerns which the cooperating teachers held in common. There was also an interest in whether the experiences of one cooperating teacher triggered further elaborations or questioning by another or whether each cooperating teacher not only had particularly unique experiences but focused on different issues. The cooperating teachers were invited to write their comments in the margins of the themed stories and we also discussed their reactions to each of the stories. (Appendix 3.3 contains themed stories and the cooperating teachers' written responses to them.) These discussions were tape recorded as part of the normal routine of the focused conversational interviews.

Stages one and two reflected a work-in-progress phase. As it occurred during student teacher practicum we were also dealing with the ongoing and unexpected delights, concerns and tensions of the cooperating teachers' responsibilities for the student teachers. It provided opportunities for me to become sensitive to issues of importance to the cooperating teachers and for them to be involved in initial interpretations. This phase not only provided opportunities for the cooperating teachers to provide me with early feedback on my work but it also oriented me to their thinking.

It was an important phase in that it established a mutuality of understanding between myself and each of the cooperating teachers. The establishment of positive relationships was important in fostering the responsiveness and reflectivity exhibited by the cooperating teachers. I appreciated that where there is open communication and trust there is a greater likelihood that the very personal aspects of what was experienced would be divulged (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

While I initially thought that this first phase would provide all the data, it was not until it was possible to reflect on the totality of a cooperating teacher's experience with one student teacher or several student teachers over time, that a view of the nature of cooperating teaching began to be clarified.

Phase 2 - following student teacher practicum.

The following four stages occurred within this phase. Each stage represents a different way of viewing the data and of gaining further insight into its interpretation.

c) Stage 3

Having completed two stages in the six stage process of data analysis, stage three analysis was undertaken from a vertical perspective. In this stage all the data from one cooperating teacher was used in the development of a narrative reconstruction. 'Narrative fragments' (Connelly & Clandinin, 1986) which reported and elaborated upon on particular incidents were abstracted from the longer transcripts and used as building blocks for this reconstruction.

An extensive narrative account or final story, reflecting the ebb and flow of that cooperating teacher's experiences, was developed. It was designed to convey the living and experiencing which are part of being a cooperating teacher. The approach that was taken reflected Polkinghorne's (1995) perspective on narrative analysis. In this way, by drawing the data together into a systematic whole, attention could be given to the fittingness between the story and the data from which it is derived. Stage three therefore addressed the consistency of a cooperating teacher's views of one student teacher over time and also highlighted the degree to which the cooperating teachers held similar views across student teachers.

Stage four analysis took a horizontal view and looked at common concerns and patterns of experience across the teachers. During this stage 'conceptions of practice' (Freeman, 1993, p.488) reflecting issues which were identified by each of the cooperating teachers began to be clarified. When stories were shared between the cooperating teachers they were identifying some very similar understandings. This stage was concerned with searching for ways in which to assemble data for its presentation within this thesis. It had already been determined that, rather than providing a case study approach, the issues of concern within the research questions would be more adequately addressed through the identification of major themes across the data. Hence, the horizontal view that was undertaken.

Following the narrative reconstruction of two of the cooperating teacher's experiences stage five involved each of these cooperating teachers in responding to the narrative

reconstructions of their ongoing experience. Again, this was a vertical view of each cooperating teacher's experiences and their responses to that view. This occurred at the beginning of the research write-up period. Each of the two cooperating teachers' (Julie and Matthew) responses to their narrative reconstructions resulted in them identifying contrasting metaphors of cooperating teaching.

f) Stage six

Stage six analysis occurred when Julie's metaphor of cooperating teaching was shared with Kate. Kate's assistance was sought in discussing with Julie and me, Julie's metaphor of a 'stream'. (This will be elaborated upon in the data analysis chapters. It was several months since Kate had been involved with her student teacher and therefore in this study I had to rely on her goodwill when inviting her to be part of this discussion.)

Kate and Julie were friends. They had worked together in the same preschool centre so it was expected that the discussion would be open and that there would be a willingness to search for common understanding in collaboration with myself. The outcome of this stage was to be a clarification of the usefulness of metaphor as a tool for the expression of experience.

To assist in the clarification of the stages of data interpretation Figure 3.1 has been developed. It depicts the two general phases of data collection and the six stages within them. Both the vertical and horizontal approaches to data interpretation are identified in the figure by vertical lines and horizontal bars. The vertical lines represent analysis of one teacher's work. The horizontal bars represent stages during which a search was undertaken across the texts of several of the cooperating teachers. Like the processes involved in the development of grounded theory, the figure should be read from the bottom up.

Figure 3.1: Identification of the six stages within a multidimensional approach to data interpretation.
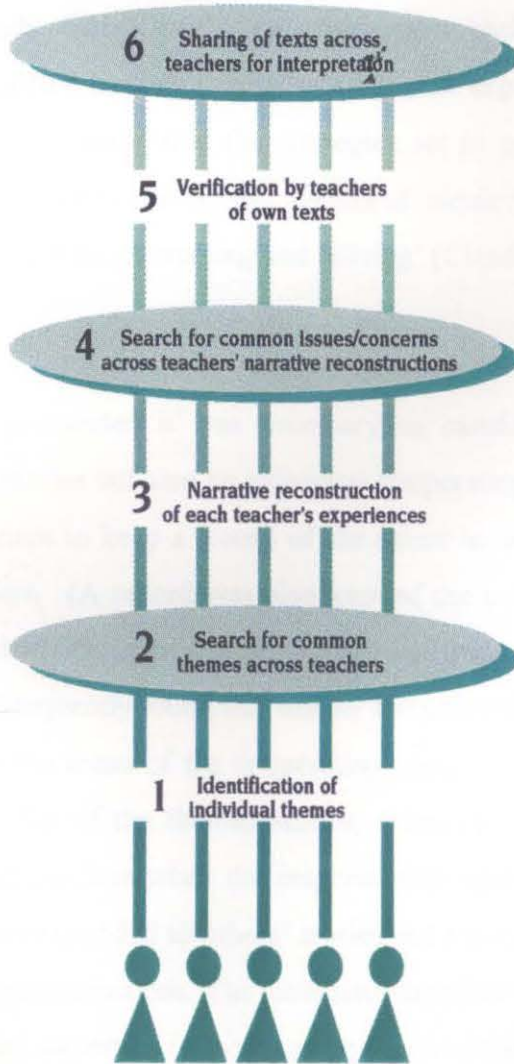
While the six stage process of data accumulation and interpretation depicted in the figure may be considered to be developmental, sequential and even linear, in reality, there were many occasions when data was revisited.

THE ONGOING NATURE OF DATA ACCUMULATION AND INTER-PRETATION

As the six stages of analysis proceeded, theory elaboration moved through different levels from description of events, to explanation in the themed stories and narrative reconstruction, to expression in storying and the imagery of metaphor. Considerable variation in the timing of approaches to data analysis occurred across the cooperating teachers during the study. There was always movement backwards and forward as cooperating teachers reported on new events, recalled past experiences and anticipated further actions. It was anticipated that the strategies set in place would address the 'temporally continuous and socially interactive... (levels of inquiry)... as (each cooperating teacher)... engages in living, telling, retelling and reliving' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991b, p.265).

As data interpretation proceeded it was necessary to carefully track not only the development of themed stories but also an individual cooperating teacher's responses to them. It was also important to keep a record of the extent to which those stories were shared across the teachers. (A record was also kept of the university from which the student teacher came and whether that student teacher was undertaking a second or third year practicum. It was subsequently found that neither the university nor the year of study made little difference to the focus of the cooperating teachers' comments.) Table 3.1 provides details of the titles of the themed stories, when they were presented to the cooperating teachers and the date when the response was received. It also shows the cooperating teachers who responded to others' stories and the dates of presentation and response to the narrative reconstructions. The table also identifies where each cooperating teacher's themed story and responses to these can be found within Appendix 3.3.

Table 3.1: Titles of themed stories, dates of their presentations and the responses to them with references to those listed in the appendix

Title	Ref. code	Date presented	Teacher	Response dates	Other responses	Appendix
Practical Sense	TS1	2/7/92	Irene	20/7/92	Matthew 31/7/92 Kate 6/8/92	3.3.1a 3.3.1b
Response to response - Practical sense	RSA	22/7/92	Irene	31/7/92	None sought	3.3.2
Getting Inside	TS3	9/7/92	Matthew	31/7/92	Irene 31/7/92 Kate 6/8/92	3.3.3a 3.3.3b
Patterns of Experience	TS4	14/8/92	Elaine	26/8/92 (Tape 26)	Irene 25/8/92 Kate 4/9/92	3.3.4
Preschool speak: the language of style	TS2	2/7/92	Kate	31/7/92	Irene 25/8/92	3.3.5a 3.3.5b
The Language of Style	RSB	23/8/92	Kate	4/9/92	None sought	3.3.6
On being with children	RSD	1/9/92	Irene	18/9/92	None sought	3.3.7
Being in tune	TS5	9/9/92	Matthew	24/9/92 4/11/92	Kate 10/3/93	3.3.8a 3.3.8b 3.3.8c
Reading the children	RSE	17/11/92	Irene	26/11/92	None sought	3.3.9
Being Aware	TS6	2/12/92	Julie	11/12/92	Irene 18/12/92 Kate 10/3/93	3.3.10
The artistry of cooperating teaching	NR1	8/8/93	Julie	11/12/93 (Tape 52)	None sought	Chapter 4
The artistry of coaching	NR2	16/9/93	Matthew	21/1/94 (Tape 48)	None sought	File on disk 8
Inside/outside: a window of exposition	TS7	3/2/94	Matthew	None sought	None sought	File on disk 16
Practical Sense - a conversation	RSF	22/8/94	Irene/ Kate/ Matthew	None sought	None sought	Tapes 55 & 56
Having a respect for being human	TS8	20/7/95	Wendy/ Jane/ Jennifer	None sought	None sought	3.3.11

Note: I) RSC is the transcript of discussion of Elaine's story with her 26/8/92.
ii) TS8 is a story written after collection of study data and following a conversation with three 'expert' teachers who responded to questions concerning the usefulness of sharing teachers' stories.

The reference codes appearing in the table will be used when referring to the themed stories and narrative reconstruction within the data analysis chapters. A full explanation of the code is provided in Table 3.2 along with other codes adopted for referencing field text data.

Table 3.2: Referencing codes for field texts

TS   Themed story
(Each themed story is numbered but it also has a title)
[i.e., TS1: (Date)]

A   Audiotape
(Each tape is numbered and marked as either side A or B)
c. = counter number or p. = page number/ 1. = line number
(Some tapes were transcribed but detail of counter number was not recorded
therefore reference is made to page and line number.)
[i.e., 46A: (date): c. 143 or 46A: (date): p.5, 1.10]

RTS   Response to themed story (response written on the page)
[i.e., RTS1: (date): p.3]

RS   My restorying or extension of a previous themed story to which an invited response
was again made by the cooperating teacher (These have been identified
alphabetically and by date.)
[i.e., RSA: (date): p.5]

J   Dated entries in research journal (My notes filled two journals which are numbered
accordingly.)
[i.e., J1: (date): p. 4]

NR   Narrative Reconstruction (There are two - Julie's and Matthew's)
[i.e., NR1: (date): p.6]

O   Observation sheet. (Records taken during visits to observe in preschools which are
on separate sheets not contained within the research journal. These are dated but
not numbered in sequence because that would have little meaning for in any one
week I might have observed in three preschools and in one or two of these, on two
occasions.)
[i.e., O: (date): p.3]

Photographs are referred to as Photograph A and Photograph B and are labelled
accordingly within the text. Where several photographs were shared with the
cooperating teachers they were identified by number.

Flexibility in the approach to initial data interpretation was important. Sometimes the relevance of comments made by individual cooperating teachers was not initially valued in the interpretations that were made. Therefore there needed to be opportunities for restorying in order to capture the fluidity and tacitness of the cooperating teachers' lived experiences.

It also became evident that often more than one interpretation was possible. On rereading transcriptions of interviews, new insights and alternative explanations were revealed. Ongoing conversations with the cooperating teachers were important for the study's credibility as they facilitated the degree of understanding that was achieved as the cooperating teachers revisited their own and each other's texts. Such understandings were sometimes resourced by my reference to the literature during the preparation of themed stories for I was the one who initially managed the data.

Conceptions of being a cooperating teacher (which were revealed through the cooperating teachers' reports of experience), began to be clarified during stage four of the interpretative process. These conceptions, which were grounded in the themed stories and the cooperating teachers' responses to these, began to reveal the tensions within the experiences of the cooperating teachers. A 'data display' (Huberman & Miles, 1994, p.429) was developed to assist in the process of clarifying the relationships between data.

DEVELOPING A DATA DISPLAY

The development of the display began with the use of mind mapping to record a brainstorming of concepts that were emerging from the field text data (see Appendix 3.4). The basis of the data display was formed by plotting or mapping out key areas in which field text data was clustered. Further clustering to provide an ecological perspective of the interrelationships among the data then led to the development of the display.

Field text data was segmented into images of self as cooperating teacher, cooperating teachers' images of student teachers (including perceptions of style), and the cooperating teachers' perceptions of their relationships with the university. The data display represented

in Figure 3.2 provides a condensed form of the data organisation or what is described by Huberman & Miles (1994) as a data set designed to facilitate analysis. It is presented here as an expose of the topic areas for data interpretation and a focus for each of the following data interpretation chapters. It displays the way in which data was segmented into three key images held within each cooperating teacher's personal/professional self. These images have cognitive, affective and moral dimensions and are contained within and influence the ways in which the cooperating teachers undertake cooperating teaching. In turn, cooperating teaching occurs within a broader context of both preschool and university/teacher education requirements. The intersections can be viewed as both the overlapping aspects of cooperating teachers' images and the tensions between them.

Figure 3.2: Display of the multidimensional nature of cooperating teachers' lived experience.
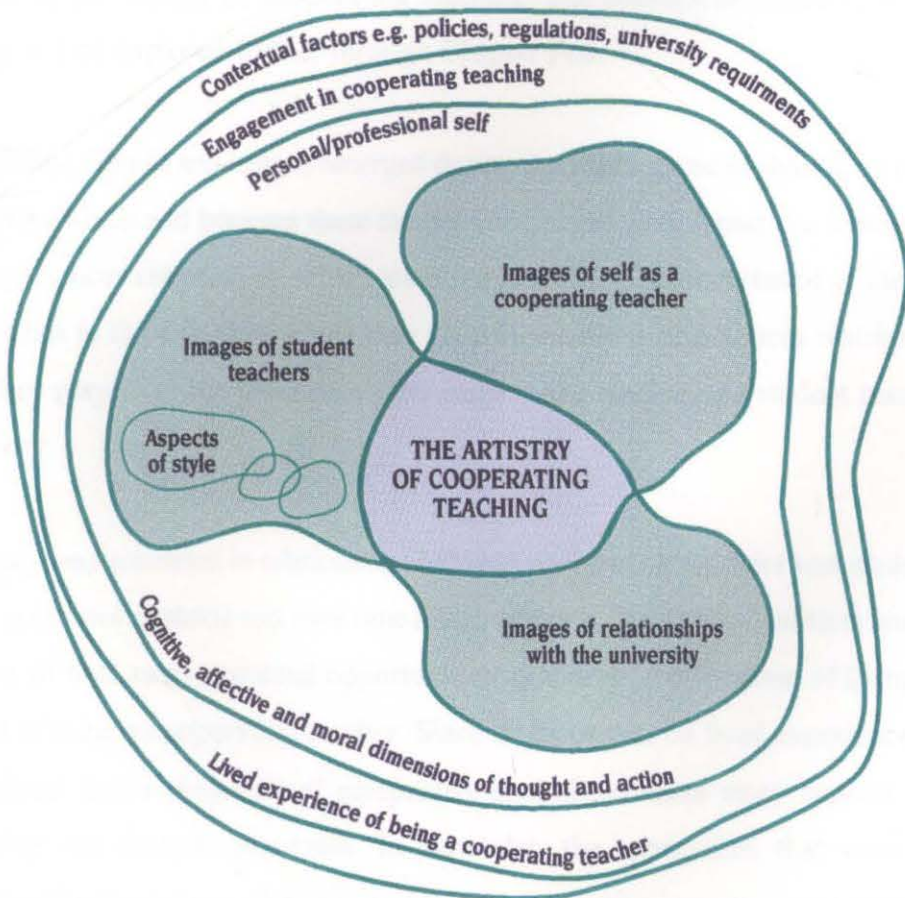
The display provides a way of plotting or displaying in a two dimensional form the concept of lived experience which is nested, intertwined and multidimensional, and influenced by context. Links and associations between clusters of data during the process of data interpretation enabled the key images held by the cooperating teachers to be identified. The cooperating teachers' images were not discrete sets of data but overlapped with each other and with their own personal practical knowledge as a professional.

As noted earlier, tensions surfaced where there was some discomfort experienced by the cooperating teachers between the images they held (e.g., of themselves as cooperating teachers, of student teachers and of the university) and what they found in everyday experience. These tensions can be viewed as knots where competing demands on the cooperating teacher are intertwined. The knots became the intersections in the development of a data display framework. The cooperating teachers' images (and the tensions which developed when the images were challenged by the ongoing experiences of everyday occurrences) required the cooperating teachers to engage in what is described in a later chapter as the artistry of cooperating teaching. The concept of cooperating teaching as artistry will be explored further through Chapter Four.

In summary, themes and images emerged during the reading and analytical rereading of the field texts. Within and between these themes and images were found the concerns, tensions and experiences reported by the cooperating teachers. The importance of the themes and images lies in the extent to which they form conceptions of practices which relate to the three key players in the practicum - the cooperating teacher, the student teacher and the university.

The study was grounded in relationships between cooperating teachers and student teachers within preschool contexts and over time (Hollingsworth, 1994). Both vertical and horizontal analysis of field texts provided opportunities to address the dynamic of living within the context of being a cooperating teacher. Since its focus was on lived experience, it was not unexpected that a biographical perspective should permeate many aspects of the data gathering and analysis processes. In particular, the approaches that were used were indicative of personal experience methods and of narrative inquiry in particular. This view also acknowledges the temporal dimension in teachers' work where a snapshot of a

teacher's acting and thinking constitutes only one moment in the life of being a cooperating teacher. For each cooperating teacher, events or incidents often facilitated the exploration of their understandings of practice. The importance of these understandings was also revealed through their images and metaphors of experience, thus reflecting the fittingness, resonance and applicability pertaining to the study's credibility.

The data display model was used as an organising framework representing approaches to the interpretation of field text data. The following four chapters present interpretations of the data which have been gleaned through conversations between myself and the cooperating teachers. The interpretations have also been resourced by reference to relevant literature. However, the perspectives that are presented here have been drawn from cues found within the data which became the themed stories and narrative reconstructions. These were subsequently verified by the cooperating teachers.

The next chapter begins with the narrative reconstruction of Julie's experience. It has been chosen as a representation of the lived experience of one cooperating teacher where the tensions and challenges of her work are readily revealed. Elaboration then occurs as conceptions of practice (as they relate to images of student teachers, of self as cooperating teacher and of relationships with the university) are tracked across the teachers. In this way it is possible to consider, more carefully, the circumstances surrounding each of these three key images held by the cooperating teachers within their conceptions of cooperating teaching.

CHAPTER 4

THE ARTISTRY OF COOPERATING TEACHING:
A CONVERSATION WITH JULIE'S TEXT

In the previous chapter, an explanation was provided of how a data display was developed. The display was an outcome of the process of data accumulation and ongoing interpretation. Data display now provides the framework and serves as a tool for the organisation of the following four data analysis chapters.

The structure of the data display reflects how data was clustered into four key images: of cooperating teaching as artistry; of student teachers; of the study teachers themselves as cooperating teachers; and of their relationships with the university. The data analysis chapters have been organised according to these four images.

The process of conveying the cooperating teachers' images and experiences is as important as the data itself. Following the explanation provided in the methodology chapters (Chapters Two & Three), the use of storying and narrative accounts has been a key to developing an understanding of the cooperating teachers' lived experiences.

The temporality of narrative fits comfortably with the continuity of lived experience. However, there are various ways in which narrative has been addressed in this study. One way is through Julie's narrative reconstruction which reflects her story of the tensions associated with her daily involvement with a student teacher. The narrative reconstruction is presented in this, the first of four data analysis chapters.

Themed stories, on the other hand, enable key concepts emerging from the transcripts of conversations with individual cooperating teachers to be developed or elaborated upon. It is the themed stories of particular aspects of student teachers' 'style' which form the theme of the next data analysis chapter (Chapter Five). The authenticity of Julie's narrative reconstruction and the themed stories has been verified by the cooperating teachers themselves as they read and responded to them. Over the period of time in which the research was conducted they also had opportunities to revisit and review their perceptions

of the practicum and their experiences within it.

Chapter Six moves the focus from the nature of cooperating teaching and a concern about student teachers, to cooperating teachers' images of themselves in their role as a cooperating teacher. This chapter uses the cooperating teachers' metaphors of experience to expose their understandings of being a cooperating teacher. It then uses contrasting metaphors to reveal, in a more holistic way, the cooperating teachers' perceptions of the nature of the practicum.

After focusing on the cooperating teachers themselves, the last of the data analysis chapters (Chapter Seven) moves to address their relationships with the university. In presenting this chapter the voice of each of the cooperating teachers is introduced through that of Elaine. The intention here is to explore another way of presenting a narrative account.

The mixed genres that are found in the presentation of the data analysis chapters have been influenced by the nature of the data itself and by consideration of the most effective way in which to reveal the essence of the cooperating teachers' lived experience. They also reflect different ways of constructing narrative: as emplotment over time or by exploring a theme; through the conversation of storying and restorying; by the graphic use of metaphor; and through the integration of the descriptive language of the cooperating teachers' themselves.

As a way of coming to understand the tacitness of the cooperating teachers' knowledge and the nature of teaching I found it necessary to refer frequently to the literature. There are, therefore, brief occasions within the data analysis chapters when such references are made.

The key image of cooperating teaching as artistry will be addressed in this chapter as the reader is taken from an understanding of one cooperating teacher's lived experience to the multiple voices of all the cooperating teachers as they speak of their involvement in the practicum through the subsequent chapters. It is the voice of Julie that speaks first in the next section of this chapter for it was she who clearly identified the ongoing nature of cooperating teaching. Within the narrative reconstruction of her experiences are revealed the images she holds. These images provide a catalyst for further exploration of the images held by the other four teachers.

One of the key issues that emerged in the study was what I came to understand as the artistry of early childhood cooperating teachers' with student teachers. This concept has been best expressed by Schon:

> Artist refers to practitioners unusually adept... handling of situations of uncertainty, uniqueness, and conflict... It depends... on... freedom to learn by doing in a setting relatively low in risk, with access to coaches who initiate students into the "traditions of the calling" and help them, by "the right kind of telling", to see on their own behalf and in their own way what they need most to see. (Schon, 1987, pp. 16-17)

The concept of artistry has a number of elements that make it a useful metaphor in expressing what it is that cooperating teachers do. First, it addresses the fluid nature of teaching and of the cooperating teachers' work with student teachers as they observe and respond to student teacher behaviours. Second, it suggests that cooperating teachers engage in other than routine practices as they participate in the process of cooperating teaching. Third, it accommodates a sense that while there are standards or qualities that need to be attained the manner and skill or the workmanship of the artist is as important as the outcome. Artistry in this context, therefore, refers to the ways in which the cooperating teachers acted with wisdom, integrity and understanding as they participated in the uncertainties of the living and experiencing that is cooperating teaching.

The nature of artistry is exemplified in Julie's experiences. This chapter now presents what is referred to in this thesis as a narrative reconstruction of Julie's lived experience as an early childhood cooperating teacher. Like a biographical story, the narrative reconstruction is contextualised, constructivist and dynamic. It is woven around phases, events and incidents which were of sufficient importance to Julie for them to be recalled and focused upon during her experiences as a cooperating teacher. Both artistry and its depiction through Julie's story reconstruction convey the rhythm of cooperating teaching and of lived experience. They can take account of the connections that are made between prior experience and future direction, some of which is conjured up in images of practice. Julie's story reconstruction provides some insight into the unpredictability of cooperating teaching and the nature of the work in which cooperating teachers engage.

While the degree of artistry in which cooperating teachers engage may vary from one to another cooperating teacher/student teacher context, it exists as the cooperating teacher

negotiates with the student teacher how university requirements may be met. It exists also, as the cooperating teacher reflects on her relationship with the student teacher as well as when monitoring the student teacher's relationships with other staff and with the children. Artistry exists in the cooperating teacher's relationships with the university supervisor and in the ways in which the cooperating teacher manages that relationship. The patterns of such artistry are depicted in the following story which begins with the student teacher's pre-practicum field day visits and the settling in period, continues through the practicum to its last few days, and concludes with Julie's reflections on the practicum at the completion of the practicum period.

SETTLING IN[5]

Mandy[6], the third year student teacher who had been allocated to Julie, visited the preschool with her friend Leanne, who was to undertake practicum with one of the other teachers. Julie had some general expectations that, during visits to the preschool, Mandy would get to know the children, observe how the centre functions on a daily basis, and become acquainted with the staff (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.1, 1.6). She felt that this offered an opportunity for student teachers to orient themselves to the centre, to become sensitised to the dynamics of the context in which they would be expected to participate.

Because Mandy and Leanne were close friends Julie made some assumptions about the two student teachers. Julie had observed them engaging in friendly discussions of a social nature. At a professional level, things now seemed to be different. When discussing the university requirements to undertake an in-depth study of one child, Mandy indicated some uncertainty regarding what she actually had to do. Leanne had interpreted the requirement differently

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[5] In order to represent Julie's voice as authentically as possible throughout the chapter, direct quotes from her text will appear in italics. Where her text is included in upper case headings then that text will also be identified by parentheses.

[6] The student teachers' names appearing in the study are pseudonyms. Since it was what the cooperating teachers thought about student teachers rather than the student teachers' perspectives that were the focus of the study, the student teachers were not invited to present their point of view. Therefore, while representing them as individuals, it was not considered appropriate to identify them by name.

from Mandy. Julie asked Leanne to explain her interpretation to them. Leanne's response was that Mandy would need to find out herself (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.2, l.21).

What were Julie's assumptions about friends? *Friends share, friends are open with each other* (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.2, l.26). It is as if friends who are confident in their own knowledge are not possessive of that knowledge. What Julie found was different, as if *Hey, I'm doing this work. I'm doing it right. You're stepping on my toes* (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.3, l.12).

I observed Julie's anxiousness brought about by the unexpected response. Julie was becoming concerned about her responsibility of being a cooperating teacher and how she might deal with Mandy's apparent lack of follow-up. The challenges were just beginning for Julie. Already she was somewhat surprised by the fact that Mandy had not quickly sought clarification of the expectations. After all, Mandy had ready access to university staff (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.4, l.3). Julie also had doubts about the degree of empathy between the two student teachers. She had questions in her mind as to whether there may even have been tensions in their relationship (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.20, l.16).

Julie was unsure of how to deal with her concerns. *She did not know what to say* (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.4, l.19). Mandy's attitude was not what Julie had perceived to be either typical of friends or typical of a third year student teacher coming to a final block practicum. Julie interpreted the non-action as *casual* behaviour (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.5, l.1) and as indicating a lack of understanding of the extent and nature of the work to be undertaken during practice teaching. She was concerned that the lack of understanding of practicum requirements may seriously jeopardise successful completion of the practicum by Mandy. If Mandy did not do something about this then Julie thought that she would have to *get on the phone to the university to ease my mind* (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.6, l.5). Julie did not see the same degree of concern being shown by Mandy.

I sensed Julie's personal responsibility and desire to perform her role as cooperating teacher on behalf of the university as effectively and efficiently as possible. Could it be that Julie would perceive herself a failure if Mandy were not to be successful in the practicum? There was an uneasiness here - a tension. Underlying this was a concern of a more professional

and personal/practical nature.

These personal/practical concerns reflected something of the expectations which Julie had of a third year student teacher undertaking a final practicum. The expectations were conceptualised in Julie's images of student teachers. She thought that student teachers would come to the practicum with an initial concern to get to know the children so as to communicate effectively with them (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.1, l.8). They would come with curriculum knowledge, ideas and resources (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.11, l.19), be willing and able to share ideas (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: pp.2-3), and have a sense of responsibility to themselves as developing professionals and to others with whom they worked (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.7, l.12, p.15, l.11). Julie also expected that student teachers at this level of their professional development would have an observational awareness of the environment in which they are working (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.21, l.17; 36B: 22/10/92: p.5, l.4; 39B: 2/11/92 p.8. l.35).

Julie felt very positive about the practicum and was enthusiastic about doing what she could to support Mandy in achieving a satisfactory outcome. Mandy had already missed some of the regular field days leading into the practicum block because of illness. Julie enthusiastically negotiated with Mandy alternate days. The scheduled weekly visits to the preschool could now be completed in a shorter period of time with Mandy meeting university requirements for those visits. Julie saw this as being a positive step towards fitting in to the preschool:

> *I think it's great... You will have an opportunity to get to know the children who attend on the other days... and they will also get to know you before the block practicum begins.* (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.1, l.6)

Knowing the children was important for Julie. As identified in the Chapter One, early childhood education curriculum comes from knowledge of the children. Therefore, it can be claimed that it is important to gain a developmental understanding of individual children as early as possible. Julie saw that *getting to know the children* (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.1, l.6) was important in assisting the student in establishing a basis for her work during the practicum.

At this point Julie concerned herself with meeting the technical aspects of practicum requirements in terms of the lists of tasks to be undertaken. Julie also had in mind however, an expectation concerning Mandy's relationships with the children. It was important for Mandy to be engaged in purposeful activities with the children - not only in order that university requirements be met but that they were met within the context of what was legitimate for these children in this centre based on an understanding of each child's individual development. Julie felt the need to carefully monitor:

> *Mandy's awareness of what's going on around her. She's a third year student teacher. She has the responsibility of the whole room rather than just a small group. She is not yet being responsible for what's practical for the whole room.* (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.21, l.17)

What Julie was now looking for in Mandy were aspects of professional behaviour which reflected her images of what an early childhood teacher should be like and how one should act within the preschool environment. Julie thought about the ways in which Mandy engaged in interactions with children and what seemed to her to be a lack of *purposefulness* in what she did (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.7, l.20). There was initially no initiative in asking about and responding to things that needed to be done (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.23, l.2; 36A: 16/10/92: p.2, l.17). Such *stand back behaviour* was of concern to Julie (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.2, l.16). Although not appreciated by me at the time, I subsequently came to understand that Julie's concern was similar to Irene's in that there appeared to be a lack of purposefulness in Mandy's behaviour.

ENGAGEMENT IN *'PURPOSEFUL'* ACTIVITIES

For Irene, to act *purposefully* was to do something that is worthwhile and of benefit to the children (Irene, 16B: 31/7/92: c.165). Irene, like Julie, expressed concern for the children's learning and sometimes found it necessary to *take over at the end of the (student teacher's) planned experience and extend on it as (she) felt the children would (otherwise) miss out* (Irene, 16B: 31/7/92: c.170). It appeared to Irene that rather than focusing on her understandings of individual children, the student teacher was *just picking objectives and activities out of the air* (Irene, 16B: 31/7/92: c.118)

To be engaged in purposeful activities requires that one knows something about the child, the child's interests, abilities, experiences and that one can place these within an understanding of developmental knowledge[7]. While Julie had this expectation of professional staff she was also aware that a new person (student teacher or staff member) can have an impact on individual children within the group. Some people are more sensitive than others to personal relationships (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.15, l.14). Julie had to draw Mandy's attention to how children who are left out might feel if Mandy focused only on one child for the purposes of her in-depth study. *Why so much attention on one person... (Julie asked)... Focusing on one child is something you always try to avoid* (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.12, l.2). If Mandy is insensitive to this as an issue then, Julie rationalised, she would need to give Mandy strategies for dealing with this.

Julie became concerned when Mandy chose Chloe[8] for her focus child study. Chloe would be easy for Mandy to work with but she was a child who frequently sought attention from adults. Chloe's mother was aware of her attention seeking behaviour and she and Julie were working towards developing and enhancing Chloe's self-esteem and self-reliance. Julie suggested to Mandy that rather than focus on one child within a 1:1 situation, individual planning should occur within the context of a small group (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.16, l.4).

Julie had a responsibility to all the children and therefore she found herself compensating for the student teacher by *making up what the other children are not getting* (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.13, l.2). The student teacher's presence was not to be detrimental to the children. Julie explained to Mandy how not only student teachers, but all adults working with these children, need to share a common understanding of children' needs, and a determination of goals for them. This expectation was one way in which to reduce the potential of the negative impact that a student teacher could have on the dynamics of the room. Julie talked about her concern for individual children and how she set about encouraging children to be independently engaged in self-selected activity (Julie: 32A: 22/9/92: p.8, l.14).

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[7] Although Irene did not appear to be aware of it, her understandings reflect Dewey's (1938) interpretation of purpose.

[8] A pseudonym

As Mandy continued with her field days Julie began to see signs that Mandy was taking into account her concerns about working with an individual child. When I asked Julie whether she was developing a clearer picture of the student teacher's capabilities she was unsure. *It changes every day* (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.17, l.5). Julie was, however, conscious of the need to see the student teacher in sustained practice before she felt she would have a clearer perspective on Mandy's abilities (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.25, l.12). There was something about Mandy's manner that still concerned her.

'A SENSE OF...'

What was it that Julie was beginning to sense about the student teacher's presence? Julie spoke of her feeling that the student teacher was like a shadow - not only following, but hovering, watching and waiting (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.23, l.20). How apt was this metaphor of shadow, Julie wondered. This sense that she had of something shadowing her was more difficult to understand. Its interpretation was elusive. Mandy's non-responsive, *onlooker* behaviour was inappropriate for a third year student teacher - *no adult can stand back and just purely observe* (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.26, l.16).

Shadowing was now becoming more explicit in Julie's mind - it was evidenced in *stand back behaviour*. Julie interpreted this behaviour as *lack of initiative* (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.2, l.16). Julie had expected that a third year student teacher, who had had experience during previous practice teaching placements, would be able to transfer some of that experience and knowledge of routines to the context of this centre. Mandy was not demonstrating initiative nor was she pulling her weight within the team. Staff were busy organising the day and Mandy had to be told what to do in order to help. *It was like she's just starting out* commented Julie (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.2, l.31; 39A: 29/10/92: p.2, l.19).

Julie's way of dealing with this concern was to tell the student teacher what tasks needed to be undertaken (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.22, l.20). This she found to be burdensome (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.2, l.36). From a welcoming, willingness-to-share mode Julie now began applying more directive strategies (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.2, l.19; p.5, l.16; 36B: 22/10/92: p.1, l.18). But in what way was this direction required?

Julie was becoming concerned about Mandy's inability to monitor the activities of all the children in the room, and to slot into the continuation of an activity if the staff member engaged in that activity were to be called away. For Julie, this was what happened in preschools where staff were attuned to the needs of children (Julie, TS6: 2/12/92). Her own professional knowledge and skills and her developing understanding of the children had equipped her and the other staff to function in a harmonious relationship with children. She did not consciously plan what she would do next for it was part of her now. There was a tacitness to the wisdom and intuition Julie displayed as she lived within the preschool environment. Julie sought evidence of Mandy's ability to act intuitively and with commonsense, and to act responsibly in seeing through those tasks that she accepted. As an adult working with other adults who were responsible for children in the preschool Mandy did not show evidence of an overall sense of responsibility nor did she seem to be perceptive of how others viewed her (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.2, 1.14). Julie was uneasy - *Mandy just stood looking for me. She waits for direction all the time* (Julie 36A: 16/10/92: p.3, 1.32).

WORKING WITH THE TENSIONS OF COOPERATING TEACHING

In searching to understand the ways in which Julie worked with the student teacher, reference to the literature provided one explanation. The practices in which Julie engaged were not routine; rather, they were indicative of 'intuitive wisdom' (Capra, 1982, p.35) and of 'artistry' (Schon, 1987, pp.13-14, 17). Julie's actions, as an outcome of her concerns, reflected a number of characteristics indicative of what may be described as intuitive knowledge. While Julie was not always confident about what to do she did make judgements about how to deal in a spontaneous way with unique and what she perceived to be difficult situations. Julie made judgements about her work with the student teacher on the basis of her own understandings of what was appropriate professional behaviour. Knowledge and good judgement based on experience are recognised as characteristics of wisdom (Barnhart, 1974, p.2383).

Julie felt that she had a responsibility towards the student teacher as well as to the children. She drew on her own knowledge of teaching and learning as she considered what steps she

should take to foster the student teacher's professional growth. She determined that, to address the student teacher's initiative she first needed to ensure that Mandy knew what tasks had to be undertaken. She needed to encourage Mandy to review her work with the children. Julie used examples drawn from her observations of situations in which Mandy was involved, as contexts around which she could engage in open-ended questioning. She wanted to encourage Mandy's reflection on her work. Julie considered questions such as - *How do you find your interactions with the children? How did you find group time this week?* (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.1, 1.7). To Julie's relief Mandy responded more openly suggesting that *this was not quite right* and *this was a little bit tricky* (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92 p.1, 1.21). Mandy was beginning to show some initiative (Julie, 41B: 13/11/92: p.19, 1.3).

Julie spoke about her previous experiences with a student teacher, and her own practice teaching as a student teacher. She reflected on the different settings and the different teachers and how this resulted in some practicums being more enjoyable than others (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: pp.13-17). She recalled one particular practicum, where the cooperating teacher became ill. The relief teacher who came in gave Julie greater responsibility for the class. Julie felt good about that and was pleased when the regular teacher, on her return, complimented Julie on the ways in which she had developed (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.13, 1.7).

Julie perceived that Mandy could gain in confidence if given responsibility (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.3, 1.21,29). But this could not occur in isolation. Julie wished to foster a cooperative working relationship with Mandy - she wanted to be *nice* (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.2, 1.24) but found it necessary to also be quite *firm* (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.1, 1.12, 1.28). If practicum requirements indicated that certain tasks had to be undertaken then this had to be done. Julie gave Mandy some leeway with regard to the time in which an introductory poster should be presented but when it was not forthcoming she insisted that it be prepared and placed on the Notice Board without delay. Having to insist on this worried Julie. Why did she feel that it was *crucial* to be insistent like this? It was because the poster was a university requirement (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.2, 1.4). But it was not just the practicum tasks that were of a concern to Julie, there was something about Mandy's presence that concerned her.

'BEING THERE...'

Julie began to analyse what it was that was concerning her about this student teacher:

> *She seems to be able to cue in on how to talk with the children and how to maintain a conversation. She seems to be able to promote their interest...she was assisting them and talking about what they were doing...the children were coming up and she was talking with them, she knew their names, she was good in that way. But, it's just the other part of understanding the responsibility of the teacher, instead of just <u>being there</u>. (*Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.4, l.18)

What was this notion of *being there*? I wondered whether I could assist in the clarification of not only what Julie was seeing in student teacher behaviour but what her image was of an early childhood teacher. I probed to understand what Julie perceived that early childhood teachers do - *What about transition time when groups of children moved from one type of activity to another within the day's programme?* Julie had not identified that the management of children at routine times was a problem. So, I probed further - *What is it that you feel the need to do?* Julie's response was to use a strategy of directing - to Mandy - where to find materials, where to be and the activities for which she was responsible (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.2, l.18). This was addressing the technical aspects of the day's work - the *doing*. I wondered about the less obvious (and what I considered to be the more subtle) aspects of 'being there'.

Julie was feeling that if Mandy was not being sufficiently perceptive to identify and readily adopt the routine practices of the preschool then Julie needed to give her direction (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.2, l.30). When asked about the subtleties of working with Mandy, Julie replied,

> *Well, I couldn't be subtle about the welcoming note at the door. Now, how could I be subtle about that when it was a task that she just had not completed?* (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.5, l.39)

While the directions were specific, Julie couched her directives in the form of a personal request - *I'd really like you to...* and provided a reason for such a request (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.6, l.23). (It was my observation that the style of language that Julie used was similar to the way in which she would make a request of children.)

The *directing* role was a contrast to Julie's perspective of the pleasantries of *being nice*. Julie had used this latter term on several occasions as it related to both social and sensual contexts within the centre. Socially, *to be nice* was contrasted with *being firm*. It was a comfortable, amiable, gracious kind of *nice* that Julie used in terms of relationships. By being directive and making requests that Mandy undertake particular tasks Julie now *felt a bit cruel* (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.1, 1.27) but she had real concerns about Mandy's work. Julie now began to feel that there were underlying tensions developing here in her relationship with Mandy (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.9, 1.7).

Julie recognised that, on the surface, the way in which Mandy presented her written work indicated that she was well organised. The work was clearly set out and neatly presented. However, what concerned her was the lack of attention to detail and the depth of understanding portrayed within it (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.7, 1.23).

I probed now to gain further understanding of the things that were underlying Julie's concerns. Drawing on her experience as a student teacher, Julie wanted Mandy to be adequately prepared by the commencement of her block practicum. There were tasks that the university required to be completed and these would provide Mandy with background information about the children and the centre functioning. Julie wanted her to meet these requirements now, feeling that failure to do so not only restricted her ability to successfully plan for and work with the children during the practicum but would also reflect negatively on Julie as cooperating teacher (Julie, J1: 22/9/92: p.11). Julie felt responsible for ensuring that requirements were met. Julie thought about the student teacher's lack of initiative here. She wondered whether Mandy was avoiding completing some of the preliminary work *because she did not know exactly what to do* but when she asked Mandy whether she was having difficulty here, Mandy replied, *No, it's fine.* (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.25, 1.14)

Julie felt a sense of uneasiness. She was wanting *to be nice* but found that she also needed to be directive in order to ensure that Mandy met the university requirements. The comfortableness of being nice was not evident in the brief response made by Mandy to Julie's questions. From Julie's perspective, these questions were designed to elicit conversation, not control it. Mandy seemed unwilling to contribute her own ideas (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.11, 1.18). These ways of responding did not reflect Julie's earlier

expectations of student teachers. There were new and unexpected challenges here for Julie.

'SURPRISES' FOR JULIE

There were some additional surprises for Julie when Mandy's behaviour was not what Julie had expected. As a university requirement Mandy had to plan for children in all curriculum areas. Mandy indicated that she did not know what all the curriculum areas were. This alarmed Julie - *a third year student teacher not knowing the curriculum areas ... a student teacher undertaking a final practicum before graduation who had not learnt this at the university*! (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.11, 1.28). Julie thought that if Mandy did not know then she should also have clarified what was required in relation to planning formats to be used during the practicum, before the practicum began. But she had not (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.4, 1.7, 16).

Julie shared her own planning format with Mandy. In fact, Julie had taken time during the last vacation period to prepare her planning in greater detail for the term, with objectives for each curriculum area. What she really wanted was not only to have clearly documented her planning for her own purposes but to make this material available to the student teacher. In sharing it with Mandy, Julie had hoped that Mandy would be able to draw from it and adapt it according to her own way of working (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.11, 1.17).

Another surprise for Julie came when Mandy expected that there would be something almost like a structured syllabus to be addressed within the preschool setting which would then drive the determination of objectives which would in turn be aimed at the preparation of children for school (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.11, 1.33). Julie explained how important it was for young children to develop confidence and self-esteem and how it was a more socially oriented and child-responsive curriculum that provided the framework for addressing children's learning than a set syllabus; after all, *the curriculum comes from observations of individual children* (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.11. 1.33; p.12, 1.5).

Julie explained that there was not an intention that children be *prepared* and ready for the primary school syllabus (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.11, 1.34). Provision was made within the

daily programme to foster each child's development and in particular, their confidence and self-esteem; and while there were curriculum goals, there was no syllabus (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.12, 1.5). However, there was some confusion here between understandings of syllabus and curriculum. While there was no prescribed syllabus, Julie had her own goals for the children in mind. One of the aspects which would foster children's acceptance in school was for them to *adopt the behaviours appropriate for schooling... (this involved them in being able to)... to sit down, listen, answer questions appropriately and pay attention* (Julie, 46A: 23/11/92: p.21, c.15).

Julie became aware that Mandy felt much more comfortable with the older children and she wondered whether this was to do with her conceptions of being a teacher and of teaching. Mandy spoke about her last practicum experience, which was in a school setting, and how much she had enjoyed that (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.12, 1.27). Mandy's perspective that school was more structured with prescribed content to be addressed, was in contrast to the greater degree of informality and provision for personal development within the preschool.

There were two contrasting perspectives being presented here - one referring to content knowledge and the other to attitudes and personal skill and the nature of being a teacher. The way in which Julie understood Mandy's questions was that they reflected a view which focused on content knowledge which could then be **imparted** in a more directive way. Julie thought that if the student teacher held such a perspective, then this may be partly the reason behind the approach she was taking with the children. Julie felt the need to find more effective ways in which to work with Mandy. Julie thought about herself and her supervisory responsibilities. The block practicum had not yet begun but Julie was already concerned about her cooperating teacher role.

'WORKING WITH' AND 'WORKING ON...'

Julie's perception of Mandy was still changing as she became better acquainted with her. Julie considered that:

> *it would surely be easier when Mandy came for a block period... (and yet), was*

it really the <u>working with</u> or rather, the way she could <u>develop a relationship</u>
with her that was important. (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.16, l.31)

Julie, aware that a new adult can have an impact on the dynamics of the room, wanted to form a positive relationship with the student teacher. However, it was not just having someone there, she felt the need to keep looking out for what Mandy was doing (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.17, l.17).

Was Julie acting in a supervisory capacity? Yes, if one needed to know what the person was doing in order to provide feedback. Julie was already aware that there were some things she would need to monitor. This supervisory responsibility was particularly felt when Julie observed Mandy and another staff member (Julie's Assistant) sitting on the edge of the sandpit with their backs to six boys who were brandishing plastic spades and rakes at each other. Julie interrupted the conversation between Mandy and the Assistant with, *Hey girls, just look around. You'd better turn around and look at what's going on behind you* (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p. 18, l.11).

Julie had tried to be *diplomatic* but there was a need for the adults to be aware of what was happening around them. Julie disliked disrupting the social conversation between Mandy and the Assistant *because I always feel like an old maid...the matron in the room* (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.18, l.24). She felt that she was acting with authority (hence, power) and this impacted on her relationship with Mandy. In contrast with this, Mandy and the Assistant appeared to Julie to be able to relate to each other quite freely (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.19, l.1).

I began to think about room dynamics and wondered whether it concerned Julie that Mandy was developing a rapport with the other staff member but not herself. Julie had already identified that best of friends are *willing to share* interests. Mandy was not relating *so easily* with Julie (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.19, l.10). Yet Julie considered it to be important since there were things that Mandy was required to do in collaboration with her but Mandy *did not seem to be aware of it, nor did she seem to be particularly worried* (Julie: 39A; 29/10/92: p.17, l.27). Julie sensed that *there was something major here* (Julie: 32A: 22/9/92: p.5, l.13) that she needed to address but the tensions in her relationship with

Mandy still kept changing (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.17, l.5).

Julie had found Mandy's constant checking with her about what was required to be rather tiresome. She therefore expanded her own planning format to provide more detail for Mandy so that she could take the initiative and set up activities accordingly (Julie, 36B: 22/10/92: p.1, l.14). Julie thought:

> *Why did Mandy always have to ask where to find things in order to set up activities? Didn't she know from her previous experiences that you would normally find paint and easels in the craft cupboard? After having spent several days in the centre over a number of weeks why should she be so unsure of how to carry things out?* (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.3, l.32)

Julie felt that it was almost easier for her to do things herself than to deal with the constant requests concerning where to find things (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.4, l.3). Julie had far greater expectations of a third year student teacher who was now commencing her final four week block practicum (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.14, l.26)..

The more detailed planning format seemed to Julie to result in greater participation by Mandy in setting up activities for the day, but was it wishful thinking (Julie, 36B: 22/10/92: p.1, l.13)? Time would tell. The block practicum had begun so maybe the regular daily contact that this provided would be supportive for Mandy.

Over the next few days, Julie sought her Assistant's perceptions of Mandy as a student teacher. She and the Assistant discussed Mandy's general presence in the room, and her initiative. It was not only that Mandy was not able to show initiative in taking responsibility for the routine things, but she was not able to make decisions for herself - *She always needed direction, or (was it) approval...to make sure that she's doing the right thing* (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.3, l.6). There were already a number of areas that Julie had identified which Mandy would need to work on during the practicum.

Julie had discussions with Mandy about her work. Following these, Julie felt more positive. Mandy seemed to be becoming more relaxed and she expressed a relief that:

... Mandy... (now appeared to be)... really good with the kids, (asking) really appropriate questions, (she) knew how to talk to the children and her choice of activities was appropriate. Some behaviour management things were a bit..., you know, children were a bit loud and noisy but it really wasn't too bad. (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.1, l.8)

While Mandy's work with children was positive, Julie still had a concern about Mandy's lack of initiative - *she has no get up and go, no energy* reported Julie (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.1, l.19). This concern led Julie to speak with Leanne who reported that Mandy had been sick and was tired. Was this the reason for her apparent apathy?

Julie began to ask herself whether she was panicking about the student teacher - *just being too worried* (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p. 4, l.12). But then, her Assistant had also made a comment which suggested that maybe there was need for concern. *She's funny, isn't she, said the Assistant, something is not quite right* (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.4, l.16). Using each other as support, Julie and her Assistant began to wish a speedy end to the situation which had now been created in their work environment. The presence of a student teacher was having an impact on the atmosphere of the centre. They were at a stage where they admitted to each other a desire that each week (and the practicum as a whole) would go quickly (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.4, l.27). But there were still three weeks to go.

Always in the back of her mind Julie knew there was a possibility that because Mandy had been ill she may not be able to perform at her best. To what extent should this be taken into consideration within the requirements for satisfactory completion of the practicum as laid down by the university? How much flexibility does she have in determining the extent to which these criteria have to be met? (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.14, l.24). These were some of the issues that confronted Julie.

'SOMETHING NOT QUITE RIGHT'

Julie began to wonder whether she was *panicking about the situation* but *something was not quite right* (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.4, l.10). It was only the end of the first week of the practicum but already Julie had concerns about the extent to which the student teacher was dependent on her, the failure of the student teacher to take responsibility and her lack of

perceptiveness regarding the day-to-day functioning of the preschool. Julie felt she needed to continue to be quite specific in her directions to Mandy - *set up two craft activities inside, one on the table and the other at the easels... Try to think of something a little different for the easels... not just easel painting* (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.10, l.5). But that was yesterday.

To-day, when Mandy came in, she had decided on two activities both of which required tables! Julie was frustrated - It *seemed like she had forgotten what we had talked about yesterday* (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.10, l.24). Julie explained to Mandy that there were not sufficient tables to use two craft activities and reminded Julie that yesterday she had suggested using the easels for one of the activities.

While changing one of the craft activities, Mandy reverted back to earlier behaviour of asking where materials could be found. What frustrated Julie most however was that after changing the craft activity and setting it up, Mandy then went off to the manipulative area to work with children there (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.11, l.16). This may not have been a problem except the craft paper Mandy had chosen was too thin and tore easily, making it difficult for the children to handle. Julie drew Mandy's attention to the problem and requested that she keep an eye on what was going on - a strategy which was quite directive (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.11, l.33).

The student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship here appeared to be cyclic in phases of cooperating teacher responsibility/student teacher responsibility. There was a degree of artistry in how Julie responded to the changing patterns of the student teacher's behaviour. When Julie gave the student teacher some responsibility, things did not work out as she expected and the student teacher appeared not to accept that responsibility. Julie then became directive. Mandy responded to directions by fulfilling the request. However, by being directive, Julie was taking away opportunity from Mandy to display initiative.

Julie felt the frustration of the situation - *I feel like tearing my hair out* (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.3, l.33). Then, it struck Julie, there was an element of self doubt on her part:

> *I feel very guilty... Here I am talking about this person, expecting her to do so*

much when she's sick. But then, when I ask Mandy how she's feeling she replies 'I'm fine...everything is all right'. Am I being stupid, thinking that this girl should know where the paints are by now?... If I had to evaluate her today, I couldn't say that she would pass now... (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.13, 1.3)

Julie was particularly concerned because this was Mandy's final practicum (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.14, 1.26). There were areas that Mandy *needed to work on* and the outcome of this practicum would determine whether she was *working next year or back at the university* (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.14, 1.33). Julie considered the teaching position that would become available at the preschool for next year. She needed to be able to say whether this student teacher could now be employed as a teacher (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.7, 1.8). Julie was also aware that you grow so much as a teacher and that a four week practicum was not a very long period of time in which change could occur (Julie: 41B: 31/11/92: p.17, 1.1).

The concern that Julie had about Mandy meeting the expectations of this, her last practicum before employment, and the implications that a negative outcome had for her ability to seek employment, weighed heavily on Julie' mind. Julie decided that the best strategy was to focus on Mandy's planning and its implementation (Julie: 39A: 29/10/92: p.18, 1.20). She sat down and talked this through with Mandy - *OK. You've planned this, now let's think about what you'll need. This,* said Julie, was to *ensure that Mandy knows beforehand what's actually required and where she could expect to find it* (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.18, 1.24).

Julie continued to meet with Mandy each day during the quiet time after lunch to discuss aspects of Mandy's work. She was able to give Mandy positive feedback on the appropriateness of her objectives for the children and on her planning. That feedback however, seemed to be only a one-way process. Julie identified that what was missing in this process was the feeling of *working together* (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.17, 1.28). There seemed to be a timidity or reservedness (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.18, 1.2; p.19, 1.8) on the part of Mandy which inhibited her ability to convey her concerns to other adults and Julie in particular. This timidity was not evident, however, in Mandy's one-to-one relationships with the children.

The uncertainty or timidity of Mandy was expressed in another way in Mandy' expression of concern about my presence in the room; a nervousness about having someone else present (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.19, l.17). Julie said that she empathised with the student teacher but she also made the point to Mandy that there were often other adults in the room - parents, management committee members, other staff, specialist resource teachers and even supervisors. Mandy was still not displaying the initiative that Julie had expected to see. Had the strategies used by Julie resulted in any changes in Mandy' behaviour?

In exasperation, Julie again directed Mandy to move from the completion of setting up outside, to the upstairs area where she would greet the parents and children as they arrived (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.20, l.22). Five minutes later, however, when Julie came upstairs herself she found Mandy not standing up greeting the parents and children as they entered the room but sitting on the mat working with children who were using some manipulative materials (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.20, l.26). This was of concern to Julie.

Moving from a position of being directive, Julie tried again to draw from Mandy her perception of how she was managing to fulfil practicum requirements - *I asked her what she thought about group time* (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.1, l.14). Instead of the *just fine* response that Julie had previously received, Mandy's response suggested there was an uncertainty as to how successful some of the activities had been. This was the opportunity that Julie welcomed - an opportunity to take a concern that Mandy herself had identified and work it through with her:

> *I asked her first what she thought of her group time. I think this was a good*
> *strategy because instead of hitting her with 'well, I'm concerned about...' it*
> *gave her a chance to say how she felt. Then I interrupted with 'Yes, that's how*
> *I felt as well'. Then I said that I was concerned, so I said 'It was your activity.*
> *It's up to you to be responsible for it. Just remember that you have to write an*
> *evaluation for that activity, and it's very difficult to write an evaluation... if*
> *you position yourself in a way that you can't see... you just have to position*
> *yourself where you can see the whole room'.* (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.1, l.7)

Julie had taken up my suggestions that she needed to indicate to the student teacher her concerns. She was uneasy, however, about making critical comments - *I was nervous and she (Mandy) was nervous. But then, I kept on thinking to myself, well, if you want to make*

it a successful prac. it had to be said (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.2, l.10).

The outcome of the discussion between Julie and Mandy was an agreement that together they would determine, the afternoon before, the activities Mandy needed to prepare for the subsequent day. They would jointly consider their appropriateness and where the materials could be found (39B: 2/11/92: p.2, l.29). Mandy would prepare her activities and ensure that she knew where everything was. Julie felt very positive about this approach, it seemed to be a turning point.

THE TURNING POINT

Mandy came in the next day with everything prepared. She seemed to be well organised. Julie now began to feel that Mandy was becoming more confident. Julie's Assistant even commented that when Mandy walked into the room she had an air of confidence about her - a purposefulness, a sense of direction - as Julie explained, *she (Mandy) knew what she had to do, so she went ahead and did it* (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.5, l.7).

It occurred to Julie that maybe Mandy had been feeling lost over the past weeks when she was just coming one day per week and that this was evidenced in her timidity and nervousness (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.3, l.5). Now, with the block practicum underway, there was a stronger sense of purpose. Mandy was able to involve herself in the day's functioning. Julie was relieved - *we had a really positive day* (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.4, l.6). Julie was able to give Mandy *lots of positive feedback* and Mandy's response was *I feel a lot better... I know what I'm doing... It's so much easier when I had a direction as to what to do rather than just be the floater* (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.4, l.29).

Julie understood how difficult it is to appear to others that you are busy when you do not really know the purpose behind the busyness (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.5, l.24). In fact, purposeless busyness results in a *sort of hovering without involvement* about which Julie had earlier been concerned.(Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.5, l.1). Following discussions with Mandy, the next day she seemed to be *up and doing more... she had a greater sense of direction* (Julie: 39B: 2/11/92: p.5, l.14). Julie now began to feel more at ease and more

confident in Mandy's ability to take greater responsibility. Julie's Assistant had sensed a change too, and communicated this to Julie. It was a relief for all staff - *everybody was getting worried* (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.7, 1.27).

Julie's initial perception of Mandy as shy and lacking in initiative had now mellowed to a perspective of hesitancy. But had the change been of sufficient magnitude to ensure that Mandy could be given a satisfactory grade for her practicum? Maybe, the success of the past few days had been an outcome of the preparatory discussions which Julie had held with Mandy. *Is hesitancy the right word?* thought Julie (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.9, 1.28). Mandy is still relying on direction rather than directing herself - *she does not ask what to do. She stands and watches and waits to be told* (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.10, 1.24).

There was still evidence of Mandy's lack of initiative. But was it hesitancy or even an uncertainty about what was required? There was an indecisiveness here. For example, Mandy had managed the problem with the planning format by first preparing two formats. She then sought Julie's opinion as to which one was the most appropriate. Julie wanted Mandy to make the decision but she did not mind offering advice for at least Mandy was beginning to contribute her ideas (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.11, 1.1).

Mandy was now beginning to plan and execute appropriate activities with children and Julie felt it appropriate to provide feedback in an informal way throughout the day. Recall of activities and the children's responses was always easier if attention was given to them as soon as possible after the event. She saw this as being valuable because of its immediacy when *everything is fresh in your mind*(Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.5, 1.32).

The things to which Julie referred in providing feedback may be considered to be subtleties or small nuances such as tone of voice or expression, but they were important in the making of successful experiences for children. No one of these may be important on its own but when linked together in an analysis of an experience, they contribute significantly to the meaningfulness of that experience. *The experience cannot be abstracted from its context - it is in the context* (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.6, 1.1)

By the middle of the second week of the practicum, the developing relationship between

Julie and Mandy had led to Julie's growing sense of coming to know and understand Mandy. Julie found that Mandy was becoming more open and willing to tell a little about how she felt her teaching was progressing (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: pp.11-12). The openness, Julie found, meant that she changed the strategies she was using when providing feedback. She continued to invite Mandy to make informal comments about her work - *so that Mandy will be open to me rather than confront her and make her clam up... I have to be very aware of that* (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.8, l.12). Julie thought that maybe these signs of improvement in communication between herself and Mandy would lead to more positive outcomes than had been experienced earlier on (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.12, l.10, 23). However, that was not to be.

A HURDLE ENCOUNTERED...

Julie is concerned about Mandy's health. Mandy looks tired. It is almost midway through her four week block practicum. *She looks unhappy. She looks sick - she just took out a chair and sat, unaware of what was going on around her* (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92 p.6, l.26). She thought that giving Mandy as much feedback as possible would be a way of being supportive but maybe she was putting too much pressure on Mandy. If Mandy was unwell and could not complete the practicum then that was not the end of the world.

Thursday morning and twelve days to go. Mandy's mother arrived at the centre to say that Mandy was ill. She had been up most of the night and could *not be at the preschool to-day* (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.7, l.9). Julie spoke with Mandy's mother, commenting on the positive aspects of Mandy's work. She indicated that Mandy's written work had been quite good although she was behind in her recording by one day because she had not been well. Underneath this, Julie was feeling quite responsible for Mandy's successful completion of the practicum. Julie had always tried to be positive with Mandy so as not to upset her and now there was a personal concern about her wellbeing (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.12, l.32; 41A: 5/11/92: p.6, l.26).

I could see how Julie was still wrestling with the responsibility she felt she had for Mandy as a person versus Mandy as a student teacher - or is this the same? Thinking about a

previous situation in which there were criticisms made of university supervisors taking on a counselling role I asked Julie whether she thought a university counsellor might be able to help if it were recommended to Mandy that she see one. Julie responded:

> *A counsellor might be able to suggest the right direction to go... or the right alternative or the right help but while the student teacher is on prac. I can talk to her about how we can work together to get through and meet the requirements... in this environment.* (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.9, 1.28)

Julie drew attention to the fact that knowing the context is relevant to **being a teacher** as opposed to **being like** a teacher and just meeting a set of criteria which can be checked off. Teaching is having the sense of *overall being* (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92 p.9, 1.33). Julie described what she was searching for in the personal qualities of student teachers, was an *aura*, indicative of adults who can relate effectively with young children (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.10, 1.9).

Julie had sensed this notion of *being* before, as she thought about Mandy. When providing feedback she had struggled to identify Mandy's strengths and to build on her weaknesses. She could see that Mandy had potential but it was a challenge to know how best to work with her.

For Julie, having the potential meant that further experience could lead to improvement. But, what were the specific criteria that could be identified in this potential that was being exhibited? What was this thing she called aura? Julie searched the university assessment document to identify particular criteria which would reflect this sense of *aura* (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.10, 1.9). There was not anything in particular that stood out... it was something one *sensed*. This being the case, Julie's view was that, rather than have a counsellor from outside provide direction, it was certainly more appropriate, under these circumstances, for her and Mandy to work things out together.

Julie thought about her next move. It would be necessary for Mandy to:

> *become aware of what she's doing and how she's doing it (rather than) ... doing things automatically ... know, (within herself) that what she's doing is the beginning of being a teacher.* (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.10, 1.30)

Julie then considered:

> *... so my responsibility is to give her the opportunity to be able to feel this - to give her responsibility of the group of children so that she can experience what it is like.* (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.11, l.12)

Julie had drawn on her own experience as a student teacher in deciding what strategies she would use. For now, she and Mandy talked about their current responsibilities as students; Julie, a qualified teacher, had re-enrolled at the university to complete the fourth year of her BEd. (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.13, l.31). Having something in common seemed to facilitate a positive relationship between Julie and Mandy (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.14, l.5). The linking that Julie had earlier referred to earlier, was being made as she and Mandy informally discussed experiences. Julie felt this to be important because:

> *It is difficult for the cooperating teacher to have to tell somebody that you're concerned, very concerned... when you know that this person is sick... and yet they are trying so hard... really fighting to finish (the practicum).* (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92 p.14, c.11)

Julie wondered what she should do now. Aware that Mandy was ill and at home, Julie telephoned Mandy *just to have a chat* (Julie, 41B: 13/11/92: p.1, l.16). She was able to suggest that if Mandy remained at home for the next two days and over the weekend then she would be able to make up those days in the two free days she had at the end of the practicum. Julie was later pleased that she had done this because it was part of the relationship that she was developing with Mandy (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.8, l.9).

Monday of the second last week of the practicum and Julie was pleased to see that Mandy looked much better. Her book was up to date and well organised (Julie, 41B: 13/11/92: p.2, l.21). Mandy's university supervisor made a brief visit and suggested that Mandy include more objectives in her planning. The supervisor arranged to return for a full progressive assessment visit.

Julie could now see that each day Mandy was trying out something new. There was more initiative at group time where Mandy was now *taking control, organising and being more relaxed with the children* (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.3, l.27). Julie thought about the degree to

which she could/should leave the full responsibility of group management to Mandy. Julie really knew these children, she had established a relationship with them throughout the year and they were aware of her expectations (Julie, 41B: 13/11/9: p.8, l.10). By sitting with the children at group time she could be supportive of Mandy and enable her to continue to experience positive group times with the children. This experiencing was part of the being of a teacher. *That is my job* said Julie, *why should it be horrible for her because a lot of that comes with experience and knowing the children* (Julie, 41B: 13/11/92: p.5, l.9).

Julie and Mandy were sometimes able to share the joys and concerns of teaching. The messiness of Mandy's cooking activities with the children did not unduly concern Julie but it was a focus for informal discussion. There was a feeling of ease as Julie and Mandy laughed about some of the difficulties associated with managing cooking activities with young children (Julie, 41B: 13/11/92: p.12, l.23). Julie recalled that these times of informal feedback seemed to reflect what normally happened in a centre where staff team members share outcomes of the day's events with each other on many occasions during the day (Julie, 41B: 13/11/92: p.18, l.21).

The procedure for giving feedback was an issue for Julie. In trying to establish a working relationship where there was a more relaxed opportunity for sharing, Julie was relying more on informal arrangements. Where there was informality, Julie could focus on recent events in the context in which they were occurring or had just occurred rather than setting aside particular time for a *feedback session*. Feedback provided immediately after events is warranted because *we may walk up to one another and talk incidentally about a particular child and then go off* (Julie, 41B: 13/11/92: p.18, l.25).

Today however, Julie felt the need for a more structured feedback session. There were only five days of the block practicum left. It was time to readdress the university criteria. This past week had been very positive for both Julie and Mandy. They felt more relaxed with each other in their informal encounters. However, when thinking again about her role as cooperating teacher Julie realised that she had not been adequately addressing the university requirements of conducting formal feedback sessions. She said that she almost felt guilty that this had not been occurring (Julie, 41B: 13/11/92: p.15, l. 21):

What is she (Mandy) going to think of me as a cooperating teacher when I'm not being the person I should be, playing the role... but then, when I think about it now, when I do play that role... it doesn't work. She (Mandy) closes up... the comfortable relaxed relationship is gone and it's so hard to check off a list whether they are 100% being done because a lot of them have to develop so much... You just grow as a teacher. (Julie, 41B: 13/11/92: p.15, l.27)

In summary then, it could be said that growing as a teacher was what the practicum was about and, as the cooperating teacher, Julie felt that she had accepted a student teacher for the practicum and, by implication, had accepted the responsibility for facilitating the student teacher's growth within the practicum. Julie reflected again on her role (Julie, 41B: 13/11/92: p.15, l.20). She wanted Mandy to learn and be aware of her own learning; to be able to adjust her way of having to meet new situations. It seemed that Julie was faced with difficulties of both a personal and professional nature. She held images of what a student teacher should be like and of herself as cooperating teacher. These images, however, were not necessarily being upheld in practice. Julie had expected that the student teacher would come with knowledge, skills, and experience as well as an attitude towards the enhancement of her own learning. She had not anticipated that there could be medical problems nor that the student teacher would lack the sensitivity that Julie anticipated of those who were committed to the care and education of young children.

These concerns had weighed heavily on Julie's mind yet she did not feel the need to initiate contact with Mandy's university supervisor. She did, however, look forward to the university supervisor's visit in anticipation of support. Julie was somewhat disappointed when that visit had to be rescheduled but finally the university supervisor negotiated with Julie to come on the Monday of the last week of the practicum.

NEARING THE END

Monday - four days to go and the university supervisor visits the centre. One of the functions of the supervisory visit is to have a round-table conference between the student teacher, cooperating teacher and university supervisor. While the practicum was almost over, discussion focused on the progressive assessment of the student teacher. It was a university expectation that the progressive assessment be undertaken in conjunction with

the university supervisor.

THE UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR STRIKES A DISCORD

Julie had spent some time in preparation for to-day's round table conference going through the assessment document and discussing it with Mandy. However, when it came to the conference itself, Julie found herself in a very different situation to the one she had anticipated. Instead of participating in open discussion, Mandy reverted to her earlier behaviour of either not making any contributory comments or just providing brief one word answers (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.3, l.25).

To Julie's surprise, there was also limited contribution from the university supervisor. The supervisor had spent time during the morning, observing Julie working in the playroom. She had also looked at Mandy's planning book. This had resulted in the university supervisor commenting that things seemed *to be going quite well* (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.22, l.23). Julie made some evaluative statements regarding Mandy's work and the extent to which she was adequately meeting the criteria on the assessment checklist. Julie was expecting both the university supervisor and Mandy to also make comments and contribute to a three-way discussion of the student teacher's performance in relation to each of the assessment criteria. Julie felt that it was almost as if she was on trial, trying to portray her perception of Mandy's work in an analytical way (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.5, l.6). Julie said that she considered some of the criteria in the assessment document were inappropriate for this setting and therefore any student teacher would have difficulty in meeting them (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.3, l.21).

Julie perceived the supervisory visit to be a disaster. It was not the open discussion that Julie had anticipated. She was hoping for support and advice from the university supervisor but that was not forthcoming (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.4, l.10; p.18, l.16; p.22, l.20; 46A: 23/11/92: p.16, l.16). She had hoped the student teacher would contribute to the discussion but she did not. It was important that the university supervisor take this particular preschool context into consideration when making her comments, but that did not happen.

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Julie felt angry when the supervisor suggested that Mandy change the planning format which she had been using with some success. Julie explained that it worked for Mandy in this centre and besides, there were only four days to go, it seemed there would not be a lot of benefit in changing it at this late stage (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.18, 1.22). It seemed to Julie that the supervisor's focus was on Mandy and the university requirements set out in the practicum documents. There was little acknowledgment, however, of the application of those requirements within this centre. She just wanted the conference to end. *Oh quick* she thought, *let's read this as quickly as possible. Get it over and done with and get out of here* (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.3, 1.13). Gone were the opportunities to be engaged in meaningful discussion where perspectives could be shared. The university supervisor *was concentrating purely on the student teacher whereas I was concentrating on the student teacher's interactions with my group of children* (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.23, 1.3).

COMING TO A CLOSE

The criteria in the university practicum documents now began driving the working relationship between Julie and Mandy. Julie felt the need to ensure that requirements were met (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.7, 1.31). There was no evidence at all that Mandy had developed in relation to some assessment criteria. The more Julie focused on these the greater stress it placed on her relationship with Mandy. It was evident through Julie's comments about the changing nature of Mandy's responses that the more directive Julie became the less initiative Mandy showed (Julie, 46A: 23/11/92: p.18, 1.5; p.19, 1.6) The less Mandy displayed initiative the more directive Julie felt she needed to be. The more directive she became the less opportunity there was for Mandy to display initiative. It was becoming evident that the cyclical nature of this process was not constructive. Responses made by Mandy were back to the one/two word comments of *I don't know* or *Yes. Okay*. Julie was exasperated:

> *I get the impression... she doesn't care, and then ... at other times I think she does but she doesn't know how to do it.... So that's why I give her advice.*
> *(*Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.8, 1.22)

The practicum block period had almost come to an end. Julie had concerns about some

aspects of Mandy's work and whether she was meeting the required expectations:

She should pass ... but I don't know whether it's initiative, or personality... You know, I think she seemed to be working well last week because she was contributing things and we were able to use her ideas... but that is not happening now. (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.9, 1.27)

Julie recalled that openness and the sharing of ideas was an important element of teamwork. When a member of the team ignores (whether consciously or not) other members of the team then this is met with negative reaction by the team (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.10, 1.25). Julie was concerned because Mandy did not seem to realise that what she was doing (or not doing) was having a significant impact on the staff's views of her capabilities (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.10, 1.13). A progressive assessment had now been completed and there were only two days left in the practicum. Mandy had not adequately met all the assessment criteria for the practicum. Furthermore, Julie was concerned that Mandy did not appear to identify with the importance of, and necessity to meet, the criteria.

The area of total responsibility was of particular concern to Julie. Mandy still has not demonstrated that she can accept responsibility for monitoring the whole room. Julie felt the need to constantly check and step into situations that Mandy should be monitoring. *Mandy has such a narrow focus,* said Julie (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.12, 1.13). Responsibility was also necessary as far as management/administrative tasks were concerned. Julie gave Mandy administrative responsibility for marking the roll on a daily basis. This had not been completed for the last three days of the week, so Julie took it home and checked it off. While this may seem to be a minor issue it was an important area of responsibility and accountability. It was also a requirement of the preschool licensing authority.

Not only was Julie concerned about the student teacher's lack of accountability in administrative and routine matters but also about her accountability to children. Julie gave a detailed account, quoted below, of a recent group experience in which there were unexplored opportunities for Mandy to extend the children. Also, there was not evidence that Mandy was aware of the distractions caused by some of the children during the planned group experience. Lack of responsibility towards all children in the group, and not seeing learning opportunities, were both of particular concern to Julie. She explained:

For example, yesterday, in a language... it was a good activity. She talked about shapes, with a book, and they went outside to find shapes. And then came back and then she discussed it as a group. And the two boys I went with... one, he's a little bit, um, well he'll daydream a lot,... a motor planning problem. Well the children had to pair together, and he was left. and he was just standing there, because he doesn't have a lot of get up and go. He will wait until somebody grabs him - he won't initiate it. So I went up and I said, 'Andrew, have you got a partner?' and he said, 'No.' 'Great, you can be my partner'. And we made a big fuss. Anyway, at that stage somebody's mother arrived so they had to go. So he then had a partner...

So we went outside and we found shapes, and we found different sorts of shapes. Anyway, we came back into the room, sat down, and I moved to the side, and the children were sitting there, and she was asking them about these shapes. I was next to these particular children who I'd worked with... labelled all these sorts of shapes; they were sitting at the back playing with the blocks; and they were there, and I was just sitting on the edge going... and she was sitting there talking about squares and circles and triangles. And I know that these boys and I had found a hexagon, and nobody else had found a hexagon. And I was dying to say, 'We found a hexagon.' But I couldn't until near the end when she asked them, 'did anybody else find a different sort of shape?' And they were still playing with the blocks, and she hadn't... used no way of incorporating them into the group time. No management strategy. So I was looking at them, and I signalled a few times, and they turned around but they soon lost interest...

At the end, I said, 'Excuse me Mandy, but I think Andrew found a different sort of shape. Do you remember the one we found?' (It's a little nut on a bolt). He said, 'Yes, it's a hexagon.' And that was it. She didn't add to it. So I had to intervene again, 'So, next time we go outside, maybe Andrew you could show the others where we found the hexagon.' That sort of extension work as well, and making that one person who wasn't concentrating, feel good for a minute. He was really involved. (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.14, l.18)

The questions now challenged Julie:

I'm thinking... am I going to be horrible and say all this to this person? Am I? Is she going to improve? Is she going to develop? I remember what I was like when I first started. I was nervous, I was conscious of other adults in the room. I had poor management techniques. I could remember horrible experiences. But, I seemed to develop... In some areas there's just no sign that she's even started to develop. (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.15, l.22)

Two days left:

Here is a student teacher who will be interviewed next week for a teaching position... At this point in time there is no way I'd say 'Yes' to her... Should I (fail her) or just let her go to anyone?(Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.14, 1.25)

The things that really bothered Julie at this point in time were *being aware of the total environment* (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.16, 1.23; 46A: 23/11/92: p.9, c.20) and *accepting some responsibility as a team member* (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.17, 1.2). Julie was concerned that if a student teacher was not demonstrating total responsibility then there was the potential that accidents could occur and a child could get hurt (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.20, 1.21). Julie felt that she had tried but there was not the evidence of development by Mandy that had been hoped for. Julie had experimented with different approaches - given advice, provided ideas and suggested strategies. She had assigned responsibility and been supportive in terms of group management but *it stopped there* (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.21, 1.18). Julie considered that the advice given had not been used. She had looked to the university supervisor to support her in discussing those concerns with Mandy, but this support was not forthcoming (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.19, 1.25).

Julie resolved to discuss her major concerns with Mandy. In the discussion, Julie used specific examples of individual children and asked Mandy for her comments. Mandy indicated that, for example, she was aware of the restlessness of some children at group time but did not know what to say. Julie was frustrated - surely at this point in time Mandy would have some idea about what to do. Julie reacted:

> *I'd had enough and I said, 'Look, they obviously can't do it. They're not getting anything out of the lesson and they're distracting the others, and if they're not distracting you, they're distracting children. So you have to get them to stop. They know it's wrong. They are not two year olds. They are all going on five, so all you have to do is ask them to stop. If that doesn't work'... then I had to outline... 'you move them, you separate them.' (Julie, 46A: 23/11/92: p.5, 1.8)*

> *Through the whole conversation, it was very similar to the progress assessment where it was no reply, or only a one word reply. So I had to specifically direct her to alternative things to do the whole time. (Julie, 46A: 23/11/92: p.6, 1.1)*

Will there be change? Julie felt that she had to *practically train (Mandy) in the basics* (Julie, 46A: 23/11/92: p.10, 1.18), *just to get her through the practicum*. What were these

basics and what was this training that the cooperating teacher felt the need to do? Julie considered the basics to be *the foundations of what you need to do to make the day a success.* For Julie, the basics included an overall awareness of the total environment and what children are doing within it. She considered that awareness formed the basis of decision making regarding change and the role of the teacher. Within the basics there was also a concern for organisational skills, initiative, knowing where to find materials and being responsible for them and using cues from children and staff for one's own actions (Julie, 46A: 23/11/92: p.12, 1.5). These were of concern to Julie but without the support of the university supervisor she finally recommended a passing grade for Mandy. Having thought about the basics which underpinned her images of student teachers, Julie reflected on the practicum.

REFLECTIONS...

I had an opportunity to meet with Julie following the completion of the practicum period. This is how she expressed her concerns:

> *We did the final assessment on Friday afternoon. I wanted to have it earlier, but we couldn't because the staff needed to address the new staffing for next year. So I did go through the assessment document... I tried, with my comments, to indicate areas where development had been made. It was really quite difficult. She had passed her prac. at this stage but I wasn't totally convinced.* (Julie, 46A: 23/11/92: p.14, 1.5)

The responsibilities of a cooperating teacher operating in isolation and apart from the university which established the assessment criteria weighed heavily on Julie's mind. She had responsibilities to the children in the centre. She also felt that relationships with others underpinned the perspective on teamwork which is paramount in early childhood settings. Being and feeling, the sensory elements of relationships, flowed into her perspective of teaching. Throughout the practicum Julie had struggled with the relationship between herself and the student teacher, changing her strategies and even her position at group time in order to facilitate the student teacher's professional development.

Julie now questioned the value of this practicum experience for the student teacher but,

more importantly, for herself:

> *I really don't know whether I would take another student teacher on at this
> time of the year again... We have developed the student teacher, we haven't
> developed the children at all. (Julie, 46A: 23/11/92: p.23, l.17)*

And what of the children?

> *In my group time today, I was just pulling my hair out because they weren't
> listening to me and I had those sort of behaviours that I saw (when Mandy was
> taking group experiences). At the end of the year I was seeing that sort of
> behaviour that I had seen early in the year. I had worked on this all year and
> now they have reverted back to what they were like before... I have only three
> weeks left before the end of the year in order to be satisfied that they would be
> able to go on to school and have the sort of behaviour that is appropriate for
> schooling - to be able to sit down and listen and to be able to answer questions
> appropriately, and be able to attend... I had five or six children today that
> really did not listen at all. I've lost four weeks. I really have to begin again...
> All the pre-reading, pre-writing things that we had started have all been lost.
> (Julie, 46A: 23/11/92: pp.21-23)*

For Julie there was a real concern about her role in facilitating the development of young
children. The children were her prime responsibility and the student teacher, who had
chosen to enter this profession, needed to demonstrate that she was supportive of this basic
premise on which early childhood education is established. Julie felt the tensions of her own
responsibility for the children and her engagement in the facilitation of the student teacher's
development. Finally, it was a *relief* to her when the practicum was over (Julie, 46A:
23/11/92: p.1, l.9).

CONCLUDING COMMENT

As with the other cooperating teachers in the study, there were particular characteristics
which Julie sought to be displayed by student teachers in their relationships with children.
Characteristics such as initiative, self-confidence and being aware of what is going on
around you she considered to be basic. These characteristics, along with curriculum
knowledge, formed the foundations of what third year student teachers needed to have in
order to meet the standards that Julie expected of beginning early childhood teachers (Julie,

46A: 23/11/92: pp. 8-13).

The next chapter discusses the importance of the basic personal/professional characteristics which Julie considered to be indicative of teacher quality. These characteristics, held within the cooperating teachers' images of student teachers are discussed within a broad conception of what the cooperating teachers identified as qualities indicative of style. The concern for aspects of style was the second key issue that emerged from the study.

CHAPTER 5

IMAGES OF STUDENT TEACHERS:
DIMENSIONS OF STYLE

A living knowledge of parenting or teaching is not just head stuff requiring intellectual work. It requires body work. True pedagogy requires an attentive attunement of one's whole being to the child's experience of the world. (Van Manen, 1986, p. x)

In the previous chapter, Julie's story reconstruction showed how she engaged in the ebb and flow of cooperating teaching. In working with the student teacher, Julie applied the wisdom and intuition she drew from her professional knowledge and her life's experiences. Julie's story reconstruction revealed the tensions that arose as the images she held of student teachers were challenged by the reality and unpredictability of practice.

The focus of this chapter shifts from the nature of cooperating teaching to the cooperating teachers' perceptions of characteristics of 'style' which they sought in student teachers. It reveals how cooperating teachers' conceptions of style pervaded their images of student teachers and the cooperating teachers' work with them.

As a form of narrative inquiry, the chapter explores the cooperating teachers' emerging understanding of aspects of style and how it is manifested. It then draws on three aspects of style to display the complexity of the cooperating teachers' conceptions of style. These aspects are - attunement, awareness and confidence. Consideration is then given to the extent to which style underpins their expectations of student teachers and the nature of teaching in early childhood.

A search was made of the relevant literature to assist in gaining some insight into the nature of style. The literature helped in explaining the cooperating teacher's interpretation of style and why style was important to them. As a resource, the literature provided further insights into what can be considered as the tacitness of the cooperating teachers' practical knowledge and their 'pedagogical repertoire' (Millies, 1992, p.28) of knowledge, skills, images, routines and experiences. The literature also enabled these understandings to be located within an early childhood context. Such a context acknowledges the nature of young children's learning (addressed in the literature review, Chapter One).

THE NATURE OF STYLE

In exploring the nature of style, the discussion focuses first on the emergence of style as a concept and then on how style is manifested. The three aspects of style which the cooperating teachers sought in student teachers were 'attunedness', 'awareness' and 'confidence'. In presenting the cooperating teachers' understandings of how these attributes are manifested, the chapter draws largely on themed stories and on the interpretation of photographs. These provide the interpretative data from which the chapter has been developed.

THE EMERGENCE OF CONCEPTIONS OF STYLE

The concept of 'style' surfaced in many ways during the study. Kate initially used the word in suggesting that she *liked the students to develop their personal style* (Kate: Initial discussion, 21/4/92: p.2, l.1). Yet she needed to identify what it was that she valued in student teacher behaviour (Kate, 5A: 11/6/92: c.75). She thought about style as she considered how she might facilitate the development of a more competent student teacher; she was also aware of the concerns of another cooperating teacher in the preschool whose student teacher did not display style (Kate, RTS2: 31/7/92).

While the cooperating teachers made reference to style during the many conversations held with them, it was initially used as a generic term. They closely aligned style to an affective state in which *the feeling, essence* or sense of *aura* (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.10, l.9; Kate, 5A: 11/6/92: p.4, l.34-35) conveyed the presence of style. That is, they identified style within relationships. Julie and Kate suggested that the interpretation of the *intangible* (Kate, 5A: 11/6/92: p.4, l.13) dimensions of style need to be always considered within the context of a philosophy of early childhood education where an important indicator of quality care is the nature of adult/child interactions.

The importance of style meant that it surfaced within the themed stories which were grounded in the cooperating teachers' everyday experience. The titles of those stories provide a clue to the importance which the cooperating teachers gave to aspects of style.

In particular, Kate, Irene and Matthew noted the similarities in the themes of the stories as they shared them with each other (Kate, RTS3: 6/8/92: p.1; RTS5: 10/3/93: p.1; Irene, RTS3: 31/7/92: p.1; RRSA: 31/7/92: p.4; Matthew, RTS5: 24/9/92: pp.1&2). Irene commented (Irene, 25A: 25/8/92: p.6, 1.27) how she identified with the cooperating teachers' themed stories 'Getting Inside' (Matthew, TS3: 9/7/92) and 'Preschool Speak' (Kate, TS2: 2/7/92). Kate also commented how:

> *personal style or disposition ... comes through in the way (the student teacher) interacts with the children, and the rest of the staff (with) warmth and respectfulness... such evidence reveals internal features such as mood swings and personality* (Kate, 5A: 11/6/92: p.3, 1.22).

Matthew commented on style in relation to *attunement* (Matthew, TS5: 9/9/92; RTS5: 4/11/92). Julie perceived that style was found within personal *awareness* (Julie, TS6: 2/12/92) and Irene saw style as being demonstrated through *confidence in self* and a person's knowledge of how others responded to them (Irene, RRSD: 18/9/92: p.3). For Elaine, however, style was evident in those student teachers' actions which reflected *experience* (Elaine, TS4: 14/8/92).

From a more holistic perspective, we can say that style reflected the characteristics of living, experiencing and being an early childhood teacher. Cooperating teachers therefore expected that developing student teachers would begin to display some of these characteristics. While student teachers may display style through their actions, those actions, however, reflect internal states and resources (Kate, RSB: 4/9/92: p.3). Such states have the potential to give meaning and direction to what early childhood teachers and student teachers do, and how they are in their relationships with children and adults.

The cooperating teachers' comments about student teachers' style initially focused on observed behaviours and, in particular, student teacher relationships with young children. They also commented on student teachers' sensitivity towards the regular functioning of the preschool. Matthew and Kate spoke about a student's *presence* as being *in tune* with the organisational climate of the preschool. It was important that they become part of a harmonious professional/working relationship within that environment (Matthew, TS5: 9/9/92: p.2; Kate, 5A: 11/6/92: p.10, 1.9; 19A: 6/8/92: p.5, 1.5). The student teacher who

is *highly motivated*, shows *initiative*, has good observational skills and readily *becomes part of the work climate*, displays qualities indicative of style. Such a student teacher is less demanding on the cooperating teacher (Kate, TS2: 2/7/92: p.4; RTS2: 31/7/92: p.4 & p.5).

Cooperating teachers made judgements about student teachers based on their interpretations of professional style. They were also required to make judgements about student teacher competence using criteria established by the universities. Tensions arose where cooperating teachers had concerns about a particular student teacher and these concerns, based on their own professional expectations, were not represented within the university assessment criteria. The concerns were often those related to aspects of style.

While the cooperating teachers commented on the ways in which style may be manifested within relationships, what was more difficult for them was identifying those substantive characteristics which depicted the dimensions of style. The next section in the chapter explores some of these.

DIMENSIONS OF STYLE

Style has both external and internal dimensions which reflect physical characteristics and emotional tone (Kate, 19A: 6/8/92: p.4). The external dimensions include both verbal and non-verbal behaviour and are more readily identifiable because they are observable (Kate, 5A: 11/6/92: p.3, 1.38). However, external behaviours can be considered to be surface behaviours indicative of internal states such as identified through Kate's reference to mood swings and personality. For example, while language is a personal characteristic through which style may be depicted, tone of voice can reflect feelings.

The other readily observable aspect of style is body language. Gesture, stance, posture in relation to another were all identified as characteristics indicative of style (Kate: TS2: 2/7/92: p.4; Kate: RTS3: 6/8/92: p.4; RTS5: 10/3/93: p.2; Matthew, TS5: 9/9/92: p.2). Young children take cues from facial expressions and body language, therefore these external dimensions of style have the potential to convey messages of power and authority to young children. Surface behaviours of student teachers within the context of the

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practicum may communicate the tensions, insecurity and uncertainty that these student teachers feel about themselves and their attitudes towards children. (Kate, RTS3: 6/8/92: p.4).

There are two areas to be considered within the relational aspects of the external dimensions of style. These are personal relationships and the personal space which addresses physical closeness or distancing between two people (Kate, RSB: 23/8/92: p.5). The visible dimensions of style were the qualities that Irene and Kate identified as they sorted through photographs of student teacher/child interactions. Two photographs are included here because of their usefulness in enabling Irene and Kate to further explore their conceptions of style - Photograph A and Photograph B.

By contrasting the ways in which the relationships between the children and the adults were depicted in the photographs, Irene and Kate identified that the student teacher's behaviours exhibited a greater reciprocity and responsiveness in Photograph B than they did in Photograph A (Irene, 25A: 25/8/92: p. 1, l.28; p.6, l.2; Kate, RSB: 23/8/92: p.5). They considered that both adult and child responsiveness in Photograph B was determined by the position and stance of the children.

They also noticed that there is a greater evidence of behaviour indicative of style where the adult's body leans forward thus conveying a shared interest with the children whose stance reflects a coming together within a common space and common interest (Irene, 25A: 25/8/92: p.2, l.24). It is here that the posture of the children and the adult seems to be acting in harmony, each toward the other. The common focusing suggests an *awareness* (Julie, TS6: 2/12/92) and *empathetic attunement* (Kate, RRSB: 4/9/92: p.1) as well as *responsiveness* (Irene, 25A: 25/8/92: p.6, l.6) and *engagement* (Irene: 25A: 25/8/92: p.2, l.24).

Photograph A: Non-responsiveness in adult/child interaction

Photograph B: Responsiveness in adult/child interaction

While the photographs depict external dimensions of style, what can be read into Photograph B is a sense of shared interest and respect for each other. In contrast to external characteristics, the internal dimensions of style are more difficult to define because they most often represent bodily states or a somatic knowing (Heshusius, 1994). Kate, Irene, Matthew and Julie considered that internal dimensions of style such as personality and attitude were often exposed through student teacher's interactions with children. For ease of identification, these internal dimensions of style will be discussed in relation to personal/self, personal/other and personal/professional.

Personal/self refers to the internal states found within personality, disposition and self-image (Kate, 5A: 11/6/92: p.3, p.5). Three of these, attunement (Matthew, TS5: 9/9/92), awareness (Julie, TS6: 2/12/92) and confidence (Irene, 38B: 30/10/92) will be elaborated upon later in this chapter. Other aspects of the personal/self that the cooperating teachers valued were motivation and maturity, initiative, warmth and self-trust. It can be seen that these are not discrete identities for as Kate explained, maturity and self-trust are part of professional confidence (Kate: RTS6: 10/3/93: p.8). Having a positive self-image, high-self esteem, and an ability to *take responsibility for your life* were all considered to be part of a personal disposition reflecting positive self-trust which conveys confidence (Irene, 42B: 10/11/92: c.160; Kate: 5A: 11/6/92: p.3, p.5; RTS2: 31/7/92).

As part of personal/self, the conceptions of style held by Kate, Julie, Matthew and Irene incorporated existential aspects of professional life as indicated through the use of terms such as essence, presence and being. There are sensitivities here to the nature of relationships reflected in a 'caring for the other' (Noddings, 1984, p.23) where there is an empathy which disposes one to act in a receptive manner rather than by projecting oneself into the other (Noddings, 1984, pp.30-31). The receptive aspect of empathy, which involves attunement, reflection, decentring and introspection, is valued in the carer's responsiveness to very young children for it provides an important part of the context within which the young child's intellectual, moral and affective development occurs (Arnold, 1993; De Vries & Kohlberg, 1990). These were the personal attributes which the cooperating teachers were seeking in the student teachers as they searched for style.

Given these attributes, it can be argued that style requires a giving-of-oneself in

relationships with young children. This aspect of style, which has a strong sense of self, is very evident in Irene's response to a themed story:

> *Lots of people can learn about development but not all can relate to children. Not everyone is able to let themselves go with a child. Those that can, must have some experiences that make them less fearful of doing that - experiences that give them confidence in their knowledge of how people respond to them and how to make people respond in a positive way.* (Irene, RRSD: 18/9/92: p.3)

Letting go, freeing up (Matthew, RTS3: 31/7/92: p.4), *giving a little* (Irene, RRSE: 26/11/92: p.2) and *loosening up* (Matthew, 3A: 9/6/92: c.164; Elaine, 18A: 5/8/92: p.6, l.37) convey a more relaxed, responsive and *comfortable* (Irene, 9B: 22/6/92: c.578; Kate: 5A: 11/6/92: p.10, l.3) approach in which reciprocity occurs between both the carer and cared-for. While the cared-for plays a vital role in the caring relation, the ability of the carer to 'receive' (Noddings, 1984, p.30) the other is important and has been demonstrated in Photograph B. In contrast, Photograph A does not display this engrossment or the opening-up-of-oneself or the capacity to 'feel with the other' which is evident in the receptivity of caring relations (Noddings, 1984, pp.30 & 61; Bowman, 1989, p.446).

Noddings suggests that 'being receptive is at the heart of living and this requires heightened awareness' (Noddings, 1984, p.35). This awareness Irene identified in her interpretation of a particular student teacher's posture within Photograph B. Irene commented that, *all of her wants to take something in... (and)... you need to be able to get inside* (Irene, RSA: 31/7/92: p.4). Such an awareness requires the adult to be 'personally present to themselves, others and the situation within their lives' (Hollingsworth, 1994, p.71). Personal/self is, therefore, integrated with personal/other.

Personal/other aspects of style are those which more directly concern the qualities associated with the interactive nature of relationships. Both personal/self and personal/other characteristics are reflected in having a *feeling for children* as opposed to *having experiences with* children (Kate, 25A: 25/8/92: p.3) They include insightfulness, or *the ability to be perceptive of others' feelings and have an understanding of those* (Kate, RTS3: 6/8/92: p.2) and *awareness* (Julie, TS6: 2/12/92).

The personal dispositions indicative of style are not necessarily unique to the early childhood education profession. However, Kate considered that those who decide to enter the early childhood profession may choose the profession because they already have particular personal qualities (Kate, RTS3: 6/8/92: p.1). While these dispositions can be considered as personality or personal/self characteristics, they can also be viewed as personal/professional qualities which are valued because of the nature of the particular work to be undertaken.

In drawing the distinction between the personal/self and personal/professional characteristics it is not suggested that such characteristics can be placed into discrete groupings. Rather, they overlap, for personal/self characteristics acquired through life's experiences may also be valued as personal/professional characteristics particularly in relation to dispositions and feelings. For example, the personal/professional characteristics required of an early childhood professional include sensitivity to the establishment and maintenance of relationships with very young children. They also include being sensitive to the parents and staff, and other adults within the social and political contexts in which they work (Bredekamp, 1987; Katz, 1991). This sensitivity or awareness was very much valued by Julie (Julie, TS6: 2/12/92).

If style is reflected in tone, manner and the ways in which one appears to others, then the personal characteristics of style are given a context and exposed through the interpersonal dimensions of teaching. The cooperating teachers identified a number of ways through which style is revealed.

MANIFESTATIONS OF STYLE

As has already been indicated, the most important area in which aspects of style are revealed is through interactions. However, it is the nature of these interactions that provides the key to the qualities which the cooperating teachers sought in student teachers. Kate, in responding to a diagrammatic summary I developed of conceptions of style (Appendix 5.1) noted how she looked for responsiveness to and respectfulness of children, a trust in children, and empathy (Kate, RSB: 23/8/92).

The cooperating teachers looked for understanding and insightfulness in relation to both the student teacher's knowledge of self and of the children. Sensitivity to the context in which they worked was also considered to be important and this included recognition of the nature of staff relationships and teamwork as well as to the preschool curriculum (Julie, NR1: 8/8/93; Kate, RTS2: 31/7/92: p.3). Such a sensitivity could also be extended across a concern that student teachers engage purposefully with children, that they function effectively as an adult within a group and that they have a resourcefulness both in applying their own developing knowledge and skills and also in seeking the support of other experienced adults. Kate was particularly aware of the implications of this for her role. She endeavoured to *allow* and *facilitate* the student teacher's entry into the work climate to enable the student teacher to gain a *feel* of how staff, children and parents interact with each other (Kate, RSB: 23/8/92).

Such manifestations of style complement harmonious working relationships which are indicative of an attunement. The next section of this chapter explores the three aspects of style which the cooperating teachers considered to be important - attunement, awareness and confidence.

ATTUNEMENT AS AN ASPECT OF STYLE

Matthew felt that there was:

> *a correlation between student teacher's attunedness in relation to children, to centre expectations, and between centre and university expectations, and level of student teacher functioning.* (Matthew: RTS5: 4/11/92: p.1)

The relatedness evident in this view of *attunedness* led to the development of Matthew's themed story - Being in Tune. It provided Matthew's perspective on an aspect of style (Matthew, TS5: 9/9/92).

Being receptive and *having a sensitivity towards* the other were characteristics of personal style which were of particular concern to Irene (Irene, 44A: 17/11/92: c.150). Both these activities require an ability to take cues from the environment. Kate perceived that this

ability comes with *maturity* (Kate, RTS5: 10/3/93: p.2) whereas Elaine placed considerable emphasis on *experience* (Elaine, TS4: 14/8/92). Kate's sense of maturity was less professionally oriented than Elaine's expression of concern for experience (Elaine, TS4: 14/8/92).

Sensitivity towards children is enacted as student teachers combine their theoretical knowledge with an alertness and responsiveness to the context so that they may involve themselves in meaningful interactions with children. Student teachers are expected to move beyond routine actions and become engaged in what Matthew refers to as *thinking-on-the-job* (Matthew, 23A: 12/8/92: c.45) or *thinking-on-your-feet* (Matthew, 44B: 17/11/92: c.60). What Matthew is referring to here could be said to be similar to Schon's reflection-in-action which he argues is the basis for the development of professional knowledge in teaching (Schon, 1983). Such engagement with children requires an attunement to them. It is the most involved level of three levels of functioning identified by Matthew.

These levels of student teacher function Matthew identified as *activity functional, theoretically developmentally functional and practically applied developmentally functional* (Matthew, RTS1: 31/7/9: pp.2 & 4; RTS5: 4/11/92: p.1). While further explanation of these levels appears in Chapter Six, what is important here is to note that attunement could be a developing characteristic which all student teachers may not necessarily display.

Matthew saw that student teachers with whom he worked varied across the range:

> *from eight out of ten not being self analytical and not knowing what they want out of the prac. other than to pass.... (to)... highly talented ones who are perceptive and think deeply about what they do and how to seek out your response.* (Matthew, 48B: 21/1/94: c.85, c.208)

Matthew's valuing of *attunedness, perceptiveness* and *contextually applied knowledge* are all reflected in his conceptions of style (Matthew, RTS5: 4/11/92). Perceptiveness is closely linked to awareness which will now be examined through Julie's themed story drawn from her concerns about student teacher awareness.

AWARENESS AS AN ASPECT OF STYLE

Julie's story reveals the complexity of relationships associated with knowing, thinking and acting within the dimensions of style. Her concerns about student teacher style which have been alluded to in Chapter Four are now addressed more specifically here as her understanding of awareness is explored. This section of the chapter takes up the concerns expressed within her themed story Being Aware (Julie, TS6: 2/12/92) which raises a concern regarding the degree of responsibility accepted by student teachers for themselves and their work within the practicum. It also raises issues about personal/professional aspects of maturity and experience.

The themed story was responded to by Kate (Kate, RTS6: 10/3/93) and Irene (Irene, RTS6: 18/12/92) as well as Julie herself (Julie, RTS6: 11/12/92). Their responses are included here as verification of the extent to which key concepts within the themed story reflect the understandings of other cooperating teachers in the study. In commenting on her understanding of the importance of awareness, Julie says:

> *You have to be aware of what is going on (around you) before you can adapt it or change...(your own)...behaviour...Being aware of the total environment...(is) ...basic...almost the foundation of what you need to do to make the day a success.* (Julie, 46A: 23/11/92: p.11, 1.3)

For Julie, a student teacher who was completing her initial three years of undergraduate work should be able to show evidence of developing skills in taking responsibility not only for what she described as *the whole room* but for every child within it. She explained that to be able to do this, the student teacher needed to be *aware of what's going on* (Julie, RTS6: 11/12/92: p.1).

What does *being aware* mean for Julie?

Awareness seems to be a form of conscious knowing - an ability to see connectedness and relationships (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.11, p.20). The following interpretation of Julie's understanding of awareness was specifically highlighted by Irene (Irene, RTS6: 18/12/92: p.1) who strongly supported the interpretation:

It is like registering in your mind that you have observed something. It's like making a note of what has been observed so that the interpretation of the observation can be drawn upon for future reference and application. The observation may be of yourself and your actions as well as actions of others. It may also be an interpretation of messages which are interpreted from the actions of others and the feelings associated with these. (Julie, TS6: 2/12/92: p.1)

Julie referred to knowing (in relation to teacher-like behaviour) as a feeling of what it is like *being* a teacher (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.9, 1.30). In contrast to acting routinely, Julie indicated how important it was for the student teachers to experience the feeling of what being a teacher is like. Where a student teacher did things *automatically* (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.10, 1.30) without understanding the rationale behind particular practices, then this way of acting inhibited the student teacher's professional development. Julie spoke about the student teacher for whom she was responsible in this way:

She has to become aware of what she's doing and how she's doing it... To know that she's doing it. I think it would give her more self confidence, knowing that what she's doing is the beginning of being a teacher. (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.10, 1.31; p.11, 1.5)

In speaking about *being a teacher* rather than being *like a teacher*, Julie drew on her own experiences to illustrate how important she perceived this to be in the development of real understanding of the professional role and responsibilities of an early childhood teacher. Julie considered that *being aware* forms part of one's life. As a teacher it was necessary to be *attuned to* what goes on around you. More than being receptive (i.e., just receiving messages), awareness, for Julie, had an aspect of sensitivity to the whole social and physical context in which one is working. For Irene, such awareness *is a very important part of teaching (in early childhood)... (for)... without it you miss so many opportunities to extend children's learning* (Irene, RTS6: 18/12/92: p.2). But what is this *awareness* and how it is identified?

How is awareness identified?

Awareness can be considered as contextual and personal. It is contextual awareness that Julie considered should influence curriculum decision making within the practicum (Julie, RTS6: 11/12/92: p.2) and there are two issues dealing with context. These are, the

practicum curriculum guidelines established by the university (and the coursework associated with this), and the setting in which the student teacher has been placed for the practicum.

The practicum curriculum guidelines provide the university's perception of what student teachers should do during the practicum. Macquarie University, for example, sets out specific objectives within its curriculum guidelines and indicates that the objectives would 'form the criteria for assessment of the student teacher' (Macquarie University, 1992a, p.1). In order to clarify the 'teaching-learning and assessment process' for the participants in the practicum, specific tasks were identified.

The setting or placement environment has a number of elements which, when known to the student teacher, may enable her/him to function more effectively within that environment. While these elements largely relate to the children and the knowing of explicit policies and implicit practices regarding how things operate within the setting, they also reflect the expectations of parents. Together the policies and expectations, the people and the physical characteristics all interact and form the organisational climate of the centre (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.14, l.11; p.21, l.7)

Since teamwork is an integral part of the early childhood environment it is not surprising that other staff, in addition to the cooperating teacher, commented on the ways in which the student teacher's presence impacted on working relationships. Julie noted the extent to which she was aware of the changing dynamics of the room and the effect that one adult (in this case, the student teacher) can have on the relationships between adults and between adults and children (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.15, l.9). She felt that student teachers needed to be sensitive to the existing organisational climate of the preschool.

Emerging from an appreciation that each individual within a team can hold differing perceptions yet work cooperatively within that team was an acknowledgment that there is a certain centre ethos or *work climate* (Kate, RTS2: 31/7/92: p.3, p.4). This may be intangible but nevertheless it provides a perspective which impacts on practices within the day-to-day functioning of the centre. Awareness of both the social (e.g., nature of the working team) and physical (e.g., where to find equipment) environments as well as the

routine procedures of the day Julie considered to be an important criterion for judging the student teacher (Julie, TS6: 2/12/92: p.3).

The personal has at least two dimensions - the personal-other and personal-self. The personal-other dimension has a number of aspects which can be referred to, for ease of discussion, as *practical, relational* and *professional.* The perspective that is taken here differs from Matthew's levels of functioning identified earlier in that it takes account of the embodied nature of 'the personal' (my emphasis). It reflects an aspect of the emotional, evaluative and cognitive nature of the personal meanings which permeate teacher's knowledge (Elbaz, 1990). As will be discussed in Chapter Six, Matthew's levels of functioning are less attuned to feelings and emotions which are evident within Julie's understanding of attunement and in her concern for awareness.

Practical aspects can be considered to be the useful/*commonsense* things (Julie, RTS6: 11/12/92: p.3) such as *knowing what materials are required for an activity... being able to make decisions for herself about what size container to use...* (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.3, 1.23). For Julie, *it didn't matter if it's not the right size, you can always change it* (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.3, 1.28).

Practical things are those that a student teacher should be readily able to pick up from observing the actions of other staff. Julie was frustrated by having to give the student teacher specific instructions about what to do and where to find materials. She perceived that the practical aspects were common/routine features typically found across early childhood centre environments. While this student teacher had already undertaken a number of practicum experiences there was limited evidence of her *using her eyes* (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.2, 1.29), not only to see something but to have placed this seeing within her repertoire of experiences from which she could draw. Julie did not see that it was her role as cooperating teacher to continually direct the student teacher (Julie, RTS6: 11/12/92: p.4).

Irene, like Julie, spoke of being able to not only *read* the situation but use initiative and act on what has been observed (Irene, RTS6: 18/12/92: p.4). Irene had a concern about a student teacher's lack of *practical sense.* The concern began with an incident where a

student teacher, who had planned to read a story to a four-year-old, chose to sit with the child in the shade   on the concrete steps leading to the playground to read the story. While this was not a dangerous position, it was cold, uncomfortable and in a traffic area with many children passing by. Irene felt that *commonsense* should have prevailed regarding the appropriateness of the location, however, the student teacher did not seem to appreciate the situational problem - she lacked *practical sense* (Irene, TS1: 2/7/92). In many ways the story mirrors Julie's concerns about lack of awareness.

The second aspect of personal-other is *personal/relational*. These are those things related to working as a member of a team. Student teachers need to be *aware of what is going on around them and to follow up on their understandings for this is part of the responsibility of being a teacher instead of just being there* (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.4, l.29).

In order to enter into a professional working relationship Julie considered it important for the student teacher to be aware of and sensitive to the way in which the team worked (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: p.19, l.6). Julie felt that there was more acceptance of the student teacher by the team when the student teacher started to share resources, show initiative and contribute her ideas (Julie, 41B: 13/11/92: p.8, l.32). These attributes she considered to be critical elements of teaming, and sensitivity to them was an important aspect of professional development.

While the personal/relational area has an element of professional practice, there is also an element of expectation concerning common courtesies and personal responsibility. For example, Julie said that she did not mind sharing her planning with the student teacher but she felt that the student teacher needed to work with that and consider her own adaptations instead of directly copying Julie's format (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.11, l.15). By just applying something developed by someone else there was no sense of having a clear rationale for why particular curriculum objectives were chosen and how they applied to individual children (Irene, RTS6: 18/12/92: p.4). Irene expected the student teacher to consider **her own rationale** for adopting particular curriculum decisions rather than directly applying those developed by someone else.

Awareness in this personal/relational aspect has to do with an ownership of decision making

and its consequences as well as accepting responsibility for such a decision. Acceptance of that ownership may be difficult where there is a lack of self-confidence.

The third aspect of personal-other is *personal/professional*. To some extent, this is also aligned to the philosophical approaches generally accepted in early childhood education. In particular, this is where the expertise required of the early childhood teacher-as-professional surfaces, in knowing when and how it is appropriate to intervene in children's play to facilitate their learning. It is here that there is a concern with ability to interpret the observed behaviour of children, apply theoretical knowledge and interpret these observations and understandings in the fostering of children's development. The outcomes of such deliberations should be a sound rationale for the establishment of appropriate environments for the facilitation of children's learning. As Julie explained, *although the written requirements are met... it's the transferring of these into action that is critical* (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.5, l.9).

Awareness referred to here is a consciousness concerned with knowing about individual children and the group, as well as the individual child within the group. Julie cited an example of a group experience where the student teacher seemed unaware of children who were sitting at the back of the group playing with blocks (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.14, l.18). Julie knew that these children had a valuable contribution to make to the topic the student teacher was discussing with the group but the student teacher was not sufficiently perceptive to pick up on the cues. The student teacher appeared to be unaware of the potential of the situation for children's learning. Even when Julie drew the student teacher's attention to the fact that a child had found a hexagon, there appeared to be little awareness on the part of the student teacher that this provided an excellent opportunity for follow-up/extension. From the perspective of social development, there was little recognition of the worth of the child's contribution and the importance of this for building self-esteem.

In summary, the personal-other dimensions refer to the relational aspects of awareness and a knowing that involves understandings of the personal/professional context in which one works. A sensitivity is required here to the nature of the context and to the expectations that others hold of you as an individual within that context.

Personal-self is a knowing-from-within (that is, self-awareness). It was seen by Julie to show in the student teacher's ability to work effectively in fostering children's development and to be sensitive to the personal dynamics of student teacher/staff relationships and to her role as a team member (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.15, l.10). Irene considered that student teachers needed to be able to *read* themselves and have some understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses before asking someone else for their opinion. Unless this occurs, there would be a danger in student teachers basing their perceptions on someone else's appraisal of them (Irene, RTS6: 18/12/92: p.6). This is not to suggest that the student teacher should not be sensitive to the perceptions which others may have of them. Julie considered it important for the student teacher to make a contribution to discussions relating to professional practices and so indicate a degree of resourcefulness.

There are at least two aspects to be considered in relation to personal-self, *attunement* and *self-trust*. These are to do with the *inner self*. Knowing oneself involves both a knowledge of and attunement to one's own way of being and experiencing. It also involves a trust or confidence in self which supports a willingness for personal disclosure or a revealing of oneself. While the student teacher *seemed to be listening* during feedback times that Julie had with her, Julie said that she did not know whether the student teacher agreed with her or not. She said that:

> *the student teacher wasn't letting any of her feelings (be known)... she was lacking in confidence... and ... needed to get into the swing ... of working in a preschool, and of working as a teacher in a preschool. She was uninvolved ... and lacked enthusiasm... She was not wanting to ask questions for clarification and in search of information.* (Julie, 46A: 23/11/92: p.6, l.6; p.8, l.10; RTS6: 11/12/92: p.6)

Here Julie is suggesting that there needs to be a motivation towards involvement and initiative that comes from within. As with Kate and Irene, she saw that personal motivation and initiative were important factors in developing self-trust and confidence (Irene, TS1: 2/7/92; Kate, RTS1: 6/8/92: p.3). The key elements of awareness that have been discussed are now displayed in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1: A display of the key elements of awareness developed from Julie's data.
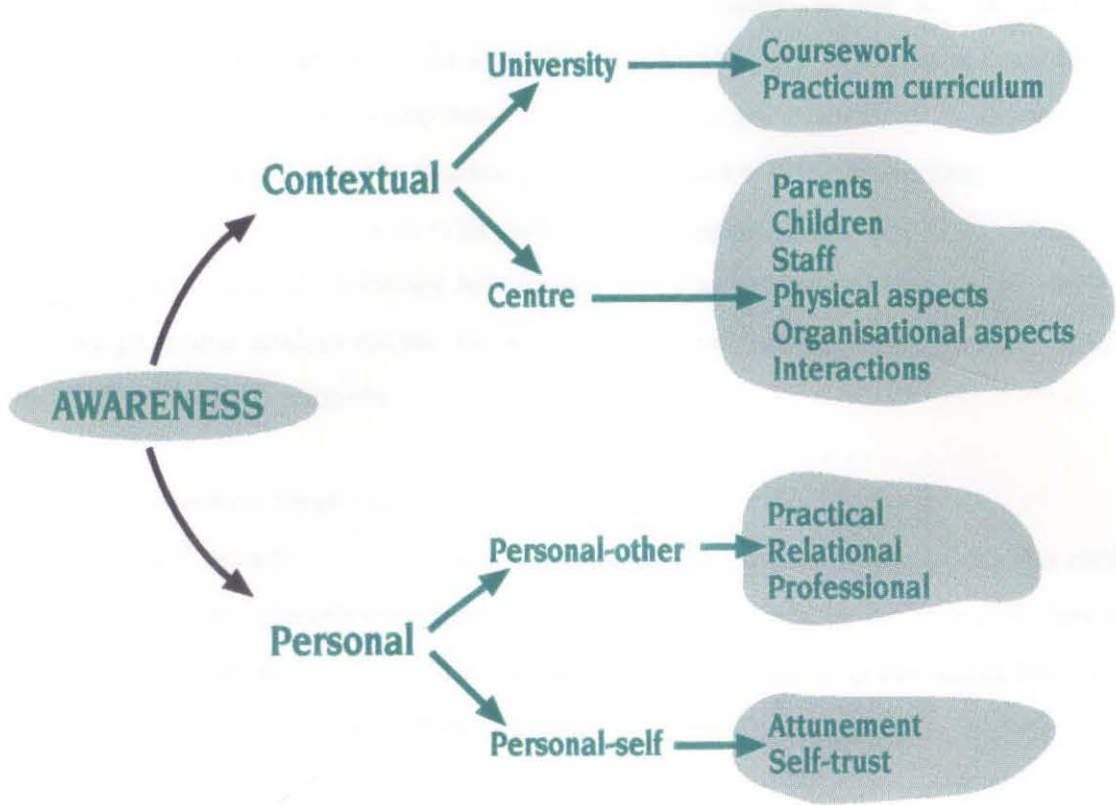
While Julie, as cooperating teacher, valued the opportunity for a student teacher to experience a growing personal awareness, she, like Kate and Matthew, also believed that the children's development was always paramount (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.18, 1.2; 46A: 23/11/92: p.23, 1.19; Kate, RTS5: 10/3/93: p.4; Matthew, TS5: 9/9/92: p.4). Anything that Julie did to facilitate the student teacher's development was not to be at the expense of the children. As was revealed in Chapter Four, Julie felt, because of the student teacher's lack of awareness and her own concern for the children, she needed to intervene in situations where she believed what was happening (or not happening) was not in the best interests of the children. Such intervention restricted opportunities for the student teacher to experience the outcomes of her actions.

If it were possible to display Figure 5.1 from a three-dimensional perspective the personal aspects would be located within the contextual. The integration of the multidimensional

nature of the concept of awareness and its component parts, provide, in diagrammatic form, a picture of Julie's image of what she valued in a beginning teacher. The interrelationship between contextual and personal is a fluid relationship, as are all the subsequent components of awareness. As far as student teachers are concerned, Julie considers that awareness underpins the development of self-esteem, opportunity for professional growth and development and how the student teacher functions within the practicum. Changes in one component of awareness have the potential to bring about changes in the other. Some of these perceptions which formed Julie's image of a student teacher who is aware were met by the particular student teacher for whom she was responsible, while the lack of others formed the basis of criticism.

Why is *awareness* important?

From Julie's perspective, the practicum provided the context within which the student teacher's personal growth and professional development could be facilitated. As has been expressed in Chapter Four, Julie felt that the university can develop *the basics* but it is the application of this *in context* which is critical.

Awareness, (and, by implication, attunedness) is necessary to provide for the balancing of contextual dimensions, the personal dispositions and the acquired professional knowledge of the developing professional (Kate, RTS6: 10/3/93: p.9). *How very true* Irene found it to be that a student teacher can complete technical requirements in terms of a list of items on a checklist (e.g., provide experiences within each of the curriculum areas) without necessarily indicating the contextual awareness of centre goals and sensitivity towards others (Irene, RTS6: 18/12/92: p.7). Kate saw this as representing what Matthew had identified earlier in the chapter as a *theoretically developmentally functional* level of functioning (Kate, RTS6: 10/3/93: p.8). While it is possible to convey developmental understanding and identify interests and needs of individual children, elements of awareness that are captured in responsiveness and resourcefulness may not be so evident until the student teacher engages in the daily activities in a centre and with children. One of the reasons why the practicum is so important therefore, is that without that context, there would be little opportunity both to identify student teachers' awareness and to enable them to develop this important aspect of their professional work. For development to occur, however, Irene argues that student teachers need to establish a positive self-image and

sufficient confidence to be able to reach out beyond themselves, to take risks and learn from their experiences. The next section of this chapter takes up Irene's perspectives on the importance of confidence and the cyclical effect that lack of confidence can have on the growth and development of the student teacher.

CONFIDENCE AS AN ASPECT OF STYLE

For Irene, personal knowing or a *knowing from the inside* (Irene, 44A: 17/11/92: c.170) leads to a feeling of confidence (Irene, 42B: 10/11/92: c.160) which is displayed through the ways in which student teachers make their presence known to both adults and children. Hence, it is an aspect of style.

Julie considered that when student teachers become aware of the ways in which their functioning is indicative of being a teacher then they will more readily grow in confidence (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.10, 1.31). As discussed in the previous section, it was the lack of self-confidence, however, that was of concern to Julie and Irene and caused Kate to reflect on the nature of confidence as not only an awareness but a *trust in oneself* (Kate, RTS6: 10/3/93: p.8).

It is Irene's data that provides a further elaboration of an understanding of confidence and its importance as an aspect of style. This section of the chapter reports on those understandings within a professional perspective provided by Irene. It is her understanding that confidence enables the developing early childhood professional to act purposefully with sensitivity and understanding in interactions with children (Irene, 44A: 17/11/92: c.155; 42B: 10/11/92: c.140, c.160). Thus self-confidence facilitates the enactment of style.

Knowing and having confidence - a professional perspective

In considering style it is always contextualised within relationships, for style is depicted in relation with another and is identified by the other. Kate, Julie and Irene considered that, to work effectively with young children, the early childhood teacher needs to have particular *personal qualities* reflected in the earlier discussions of style in Chapter Four. Such qualities reflected dispositions and feelings and the other indicators of style. Aspects of style which

contribute to the early childhood teacher's ability to act as a *confident knower* (my term) reflect three broad areas of concern addressed by Irene. They are a professionally oriented theoretical way of knowing, technical knowing and personal knowing.

The professionally oriented theoretical way of knowing includes an understanding of child development and knowledge of curriculum referred to by the cooperating teachers as *the basics*. Technical knowing is knowing about skills and strategies which can be employed when working with young children (Irene, 44A: 17/11/92: c.186; 42B: 10/11/92: c.160-165). Irene considers that the university is largely responsible for ensuring that student teachers have acquired these *concrete things* (Irene, 9B: 22/6/92: c.107).

The third kind of knowing is a personal knowing found within the self. It is this aspect of knowing that is of particular concern to Irene, for the nature of this knowing lies at the heart of confidence (Irene, 42B: 10/11/92: c.160). When you have an awareness of self you *know how deeply you lack confidence and nobody can tell you in X amount of time that its going to change* (Irene, 50A: 3/12/92: c.170).

Personal knowing, where one has self-confidence, (which may require knowledge, skills and personal manner) is more likely to enable individuals to look beyond themselves. They are more likely to be able to give part of themselves in their involvement with the children; to be able to *read* the children and *be part of them* (Irene, RSE: 17/11/92). To be able to do this requires not only knowing the interests and needs of individual children but also when, how and at what level to interact with them (Irene, 44A: 17/11/92: c.155), for *planning can look good on paper but may not be at an appropriate level for (a particular) child* (Irene, 47A: 26/11/92: c. 65).

While knowing about children is important, knowing children in context can provide an appreciation of the personal and environmental factors which impact upon their development. Such knowledge is more likely to contribute to effective planning for them. Theories can provide *basic* knowledge about children's development which can assist in making judgements about children, in interpreting what can be expected from them, in understanding how children best learn and in considering the sequential aspects of learning. However, each child's development is individually constructed and influenced by the

particular context in which they are situated.

Early childhood teachers who work with young children can use this knowledge of individual children within a context to plan effectively and to provide interesting and challenging opportunities which will promote their growth and development. The aim is for student teachers to be able to *read* the children in this way (Irene, 44A: 17/11/92: c.178; RSE: 17/11/92). With this knowledge, there is the potential to provide opportunities for children's engagement with some anticipation of how each child will respond (Irene, 49B: 1/12/92: c.420). Being able to anticipate outcomes means that the teacher can be partially prepared for additional opportunities to extend the children's interests. The ability to anticipate requires knowledge and skills. It also requires the teacher's willingness and confidence, focusing away from self towards involvement of self with the children (Irene, 1A: 1/6/92: c.1).

Irene reported that where the student teacher has developed basic skills and appears to be more confident it is possible to extend the student. Where there is limited evidence of this basic knowledge and confidence is lacking, then a more didactic approach is taken by her when working with the student teacher (Irene, 50A: 3/12/92: c.250). And as revealed through the previous chapter, such an approach was also taken by Julie.

The early childhood professional needs to have confidence in and a trust of self and of others (Irene, 49B: 1/12/92: c.140). The nature of relationships within that context, the necessity for each individual staff member to be aware of children's involvement and the ability to act with confidence in a dynamic environment, require self-confidence as adults respond to their perceptions of children's behaviour. Adults need not only to be able to read the children but to also make decisions about the management of children and to the choice of activities for the children within the context of the preschool and its curriculum.

Conceptions of confidence in student teachers
Irene held a view of confidence which she used to interpret the behaviour of student teachers and to consider, therefore, how she might work to foster their development. In being contextually located, Irene found that confidence is not necessarily generalised across all situations. It can be seen with *this child/this setting* (Irene.47A: 26/11/92: c.65), but not

evident in a group situation, nor in overall management strategies during free play (Irene, 42B: 10/11/92: c.1), or in *running the show* (Irene, 42B: 10/11/92: c.45). Confidence is evidenced in the way in which student teachers approach children and staff and in the way in which what they do invites people to react to them (Irene, 51A: 9/12/92: c.164). *Real confidence shines where the student teacher gets involved and does things without having to be told* (Irene, 51A: 9/12/92: c.60).

It is possible for student teachers to have (theoretical) knowledge but not confidence (Irene, 38B: 30/10/92: c. 270). It is also possible to have *nurturing qualities* but not confidence (Irene, 38B: 30/10/92: c.300). Irene draws the distinction between what she terms *theoretical knowledge* and *natural ability* but does not necessarily include nurturing qualities in natural ability (Irene, 50A: 3/12/92: c.90; 49B: 1/12/92: c.260). In having confidence there *is a deeper level of knowing* (Irene, 17A: 4/8/92: c.220) which is portrayed as *looking... (as though she)... wants to hear what the child has to say* (Irene, 50A: 3/12/92: c.90).

The more confident student teachers, who had trust in themselves, were more aware of themselves (important for the reasons addressed in the previous section) and therefore more in control of what was happening both to them as learners and within the environment (Irene, 38B: 30/10/92: c.74). They were more willing to take risks and therefore *will attempt things that may be closer to what the child was wanting to do because they were not afraid of trying things that may be a little more difficult* (Irene, 47A: 26/11/92: c. 40). Having confidence was seen by Irene to be related to trust. However, *self-confidence is only part of the whole confidence issue* as where there is confidence in self, there is more likely to develop a trust in others (Irene, 47A: 26/11/92: c.125).

Where there is confidence in self and in others through a trusting relationship, the student teacher is *more likely to openly question for they do not feel threatened nor are they threatening to others* because of their openness (Irene, 47A: 26/11/92: c.133). There is a flexibility that is demonstrated through *a willingness to change/adapt* (Irene, 38B: 30/10/92: c.390). The student teacher who has such confidence is able to *read in the children's faces* that something is of particular interest to them and so *give up their own priorities in order to extend the children's interests* (Irene, 44A: 17/11/92: c.150). Self-

doubt (Irene, 49B: 1/12/92: c.210) and an inability to make decisions (Irene, 49B: 1/12/92: c.440) occur where confidence is lacking.

The relational aspects of confidence are evident in a sense of common understanding between teacher and children. In such situations, children are often able to read the teacher's expectations of appropriate behaviour from the teacher's body language or facial expressions. As Irene says, she can *give them the eye* and they know what she expects of their behaviour (Irene, 42B: 10/11/92: c.120-130). The opportunity for student teachers to develop these kinds of relationships is limited by the lack of continuity of contact that they have with individual children and compounded by short block practicum periods.

The ways in which student teachers act with children, while reflected in conceptions of style, reveal a particular regard for the self and the importance of confidence and the ability to act purposefully. The following exploration of purposefulness investigates the extent to which acting purposefully reflects the ethos of early childhood education.

Acting purposefully - as an early childhood professional
One of the reasons for Irene's focus on confidence was her concern that student teachers, and early childhood professionals in particular, have a responsibility to act purposefully with young children. For her, part of this was to do with *as a profession, we need to show what we do is worthwhile* (Irene, 38B: 26/10/92: c.34). Being purposeful means that the early childhood teacher has *a worthwhile rationale behind the activities that are planned for the children* (Irene, 16B: 31/7/92: c.72; 42B: 10/11/92: c.95) and that what is planned is sufficiently *challenging and engaging* for the children (Irene, 17A: 4/8/92: c.50; 42B: 10/11/92: c.75).

To be able to act purposefully, it is important to *know the children from the inside* and this requires being able to carefully observe and interpret their behaviour (Irene, 44A: 17/11/92: c.170-180). For Irene this involves:

> ► *picking up on where the children's attention is focused whether on the student teacher, on a friend or on another part of the room;*

> ► *being able to see through the children's non-verbals, where working to redirect the children's interest is of little use as their interest is*

somewhere else - knowing how many times to try to draw them in;

▶ *seeing the child's eyes light up when they see or hear something of interest and extending on that interest;*

▶ *having an idea of the child's level of logic and concept development and targeting language and experiences at that level or slightly above and monitoring the child's verbal and non-verbal responses to see if their understanding does match to experience;*

▶ *coming down to the children's level (physically and in terms of language or emotionally); sharing humour, sadness, interest, anger and sincere empathy for the child.* (Irene, RRSE: 26/11/92: p.1)

It is possible to read the children but not have the confidence to be able to work effectively with them. Irene identified this concern in a particular student teacher:

...there will be great improvement when she learns how to believe in herself. In some ways perhaps, the student teacher reads adults too much and wants to model herself into their expectations. She considers her own needs too far down the track. She needs to learn to change her priority structures and put herself up higher. This is essential in order for her to take control of a group of children and extend their experiences. (Irene, RRSE: 26/11/92: p.2)

Here Irene was indicating her own reading of the student teacher's behaviour and from it identified what she considered to be significant changes which need to occur in the student teacher's style. Taking Irene's own comments concerning *natural ability* (Irene, 50A: 3/12/92: c.90) and comments made earlier about acquisition of dispositions and skills, then fostering the development of the student teacher's confidence was a challenging task for Irene. She considered the implications for student teachers who had problems with confidence and these culminated in her identification of the cyclical nature of confidence in relation to personal professional growth. Irene took into consideration the need for the student teacher to develop greater self-confidence in choosing appropriate interventions and when offering to have a particular student teacher back at the centre for a second practicum period. Although it was not a regular practice to do this, Irene thought that it would be to the student's advantage to already know the children, the staff and how the centre operated. The student teacher could act more purposefully (Irene, 44A: 17/11/92: c.245). However, while she felt that she *had to do it for the student teacher, she just didn't know whether she should be doing it for us* (the staff and children) (Irene, 38B: 30/10/92: c.310).

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In considering any strategies she should use in working with a student teacher, Irene determined that, while she could provide a supportive environment, the student teacher needed to take ownership of and think through the strategies she was going to employ in her work (Irene, 44A: 17/11/92: c.65). Irene, recognising the individuality of each person's approach, considered that it would be quite inappropriate for the student teacher to imitate the strategies she used. For Irene, to act purposefully is to appreciate the basis upon which judgments and decisions are made (Irene, 44A: 17/11/92: c.60).

Irene's view was that a student teacher's lack of confidence impacted on her work in a number of ways. These she identified within what she considered to be a cyclical effect (Irene, 38B: 30/10/92: c.74). The cycle begins with the identification by Irene of a need for the student teacher to have confidence. Where there was a lack of confidence, the student teacher did not search out information. Irene saw that there was a need for the student teacher to question why and have a deeper understanding than that which was displayed in her work (Irene, 9B: 22/6/92: c.245). When information had not been adequately resourced then the student teacher's planning was not ideal (Irene, 42B: 10/11/92: c.1). Within the planning, not enough thought was given to linking together developmental understanding, analysis of observations, objectives and strategies, with a clear rationale (Irene, 47A: 26/11/92: c.35).

Irene identified that when planning was not ideal, implementation then became a problem. The student teacher used closed questions, the children became restless (Irene, 38B: 30/10/92: c.134) and they were not extended (Irene, 38B: 30/10/92: c.180). An outcome of this was that management of the children then became difficult. The student teacher felt that she was not in control of the environment. In relying on *textbook practices* for managing the children the student teacher did not have the flexibility of considering contextual factors. The student teacher was unable to address the individuality of these children, their needs and the appropriateness of strategies which could be successful with them (Irene, 38B: 30/10/92: c.190). Underlying this was what Irene perceived to be a lack of clarity of understanding regarding the purpose of what the student teacher was trying to achieve (Irene, 38B: 30/10/92: c.245). This was evident in the difficulty experienced by the student teacher in *evaluating analytically* (Irene, RTS4: 25/8/92: p.7) and in appreciating the value of evaluation for future planning (Irene, 44A: 17/11/92: c.50).

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For Irene, a clearer understanding and greater purposefulness is more likely to occur when there is intervention by the cooperating teacher to encourage the student teacher to search out information. When rationale, objectives and strategies come together, confidence improves (Irene, 47A: 26/11/92: c.35) and implementation becomes more successful. As things are seen to go well, confidence improves.

A model of the cyclical effect of lack of confidence is presented in Figure 5.2 below. The model also identifies the potential points for intervention by the cooperating teacher to interrupt the cyclical effects of lack of confidence. These reflect Irene's view that the development of confidence can be facilitated given that the student teacher has other qualities on which to draw. She accepted that the particular student teacher about whom she was concerned had *nurturing qualities* which could not be taught but are critical elements of style which were valued by her (Irene, 38B: 30/10/92: c.288). Irene considered that her interventions to enhance the student teacher's self-esteem could occur at a number of points within the cycle. While these were not elaborated upon by Irene, the model, and Irene's explanation of its major points, identifies areas which could be targeted.

Figure 5.2: The cyclical effect of lack of confidence
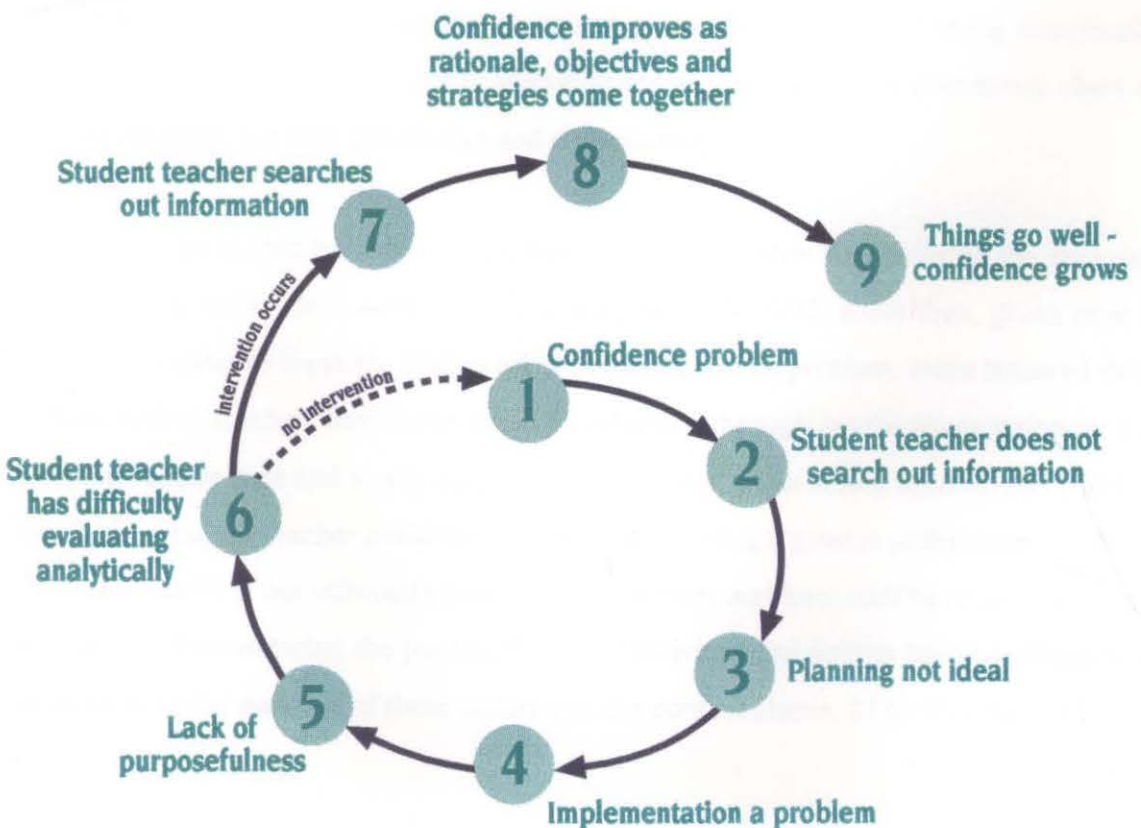
Irene's comments reflected her concern about a particular student teacher whom she perceived to have had little previous experience in being with children (Irene, 7B: 15/6/92: c.52).The comments Irene made about the student teacher's way of being with children (i.e., style) were made after observing the student teacher's lack of spontaneity with the children. She felt that the student teacher *needed to see that they are individual and how individual they can be* (Irene, 17A: 4/8/92: c.195).

Irene spoke of another student teacher who, while relating well to children, lacked confidence in searching out information (Irene, 9B: 22/6/92: c.245) and Irene considered that this was a factor influencing her planning which was not informed and was therefore not ideal. Irene considered that the student teacher had difficulties with poor rationale because of limited developmental understanding of the children, inappropriate objectives and the use of strategies which were not relevant to the children's experiences (Irene, 42B: 10/11/92: c. 2, c. 48). Since the planning was not ideal, implementation of those plans became a problem because the student teacher tended to manage the group experience by using closed questions. The children became restless because their thinking was not extended (Irene, 42B: 10/11/92: c.180). This way of managing children within the group reflected what Irene perceived to be a lack of purposefulness and understanding by the student teacher of what she was trying to achieve (reflecting the poor rationale) (Irene, 42B: 10/11/92: c.245). The student teacher then had difficulty in evaluating analytically because of her lack of confidence in searching out beyond herself for contextual clues as well as applying her own knowledge and understandings.

Irene considered that because this particular student teacher had some of the personal qualities *that were worth working with* (Irene, 38B: 30/10/92: c.90) then, given time it would be possible to break the cyclical effect of the confidence problem. Irene believed that, for this student teacher, confidence could be enhanced through practicum experiences but it would require time and a very supportive environment. She would need to find ways in which the student teacher could be assisted in developing a greater understanding of the children, in seeking out information about their interests and how staff have been working with them, in considering the purposefulness of activities and linking her knowledge and skills to an understanding of these children in this context (Irene, 51A: 9/12/92: c.15).

Irene's strategies were resourced by her previous experience as a cooperating teacher and her knowledge of and experience in the many aspects of the centre's functioning. She would therefore find ways to address the individual needs of the student teacher within the centre context (Irene, 51A: 9/12/92: c.15). An important advantage that Irene felt she had, as a cooperating teacher, over university personnel in working with the student teacher was that she knew the context and could more readily work on the less tangible aspects of style within a context where strategies were more appropriate to (her) children (Irene, 50A: 3/12/92: c.190).

CONCLUDING COMMENT

In summary, confidence, awareness and attunement as aspects of style, are found within relationships. Confidence exists where there is *a knowing of oneself* (Kate, RTS5: 10/3/93: p.2) and a feeling of equilibrium between self and other (Julie, RTS6: 11/12/92: p.6) and therefore an ability to act appropriately. Knowing of self and others occurs through awareness (Kate, RTS5: 10/3/93: p.10). Such awareness is particularly necessary in relationships with children so that the overall feeling of the children as individuals can be identified and acted upon (Julie, RTS6: 11/12/92: p.2).

Confidence and awareness occur where there is harmony within self and attunedness. Understanding which develops from that attunedness then fosters the development of greater confidence and so the process becomes cyclical in nature (Matthew, RTS5: 4/11/92: p.2). Again I searched the literature to gain some insight into what may be the shared understandings across the aspects of style which have been identified. They are the elements which enable the 'good teacher (to)... thinkingly act... with the immediacy of insight' (Van Manen, 1995, p.4). Such an 'abstract and complex concept' (McLean, 1992, p.8) may more readily be expressed through the following story which was told to me by an early childhood teacher, external to the study but responding to my use of storying as a research tool (See TS8 in Appendix 3.3). The episode is a way of expressing what the cooperating teachers were searching for in identifying and expressing their understandings of aspects of style.

I was outside in the playground with the children when I noticed Ben, one of our two year olds, over in the other corner of the playground. A small bird flew by and landed on the grass quite close to him.

Ben stood in awe and watched as the bird hopped about in the freshly mown grass picking up and then discarding bits and pieces, here and there. Ben stood quite still. He didn't make a sound.

Then, ever so quickly, the bird raised its wings and flew off carrying a small morsel away with it in its beak.

Ben was excited. He quickly scanned the playground looking for someone to share in his excitement. I caught his eye. We both knew that we had witnessed a unique event.

But we were also aware of something very special between us. We were standing quite a distance apart but we didn't feel the need to reach each other. We were not adult and child but two human beings who were able to share in the wonderment of lived experience and an excitement of being part of that.

This golden moment was so powerful between us and yet there was silence. We didn't need to do anything more. There was no need for the teachable moment.
(TS8: 20/7/95)

Attunement, confidence, awareness and responsiveness are all found within the episode. So too, are indications of understanding of the individual child and the nature of teaching and learning in young children. There is a knowing of the child and a knowing about relationships. Many *intangible* aspects of style can be found within the *golden moment* held by this teacher and the child.

The cooperating teachers identified that style had internal dimensions indicative of attitude and self-trust and that while these were difficult to identify objectively, they were revealed through external dimensions of voice and action. Two of the internal dimensions, awareness and confidence, pervaded the thoughts of Julie and Irene as they worked with student teachers who were experiencing difficulties in the practicum. The importance of these dimensions was evident in the cooperating teachers' concerns as to whether to fail the student teachers because of difficulties in these areas. In making such judgements, the cooperating teachers contrasted what they observed about the student teachers with their own images of what student teachers, as developing early childhood professionals, ought to be like.

Images which the cooperating teachers held of student teachers may be considered to represent ideals of developing professionals. However, the episode represented above suggests that those ideals are not unrealistic. Within the practicum, the responsibility for fostering student teacher development towards these ideals falls on the cooperating teacher. It is the cooperating teacher's role which will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

COOPERATING TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS
OF THEIR ROLE

> Embedded in... the web of... teachers' work and development... (are a set of issues reflecting the)... intricate interactions between teacher's knowledge and values, assumptions about knowing, a craft, and relationships (Lyons, 1990, p.161).

The two previous chapters have focused on the nature of cooperating teaching as artistry and the cooperating teachers' images of student teachers. These have been set within a context of early childhood education. This chapter now addresses the cooperating teachers' conceptions of their role within the practicum and those factors which they identified as influencing the ways in which they worked with student teachers. It tells how they resourced their role and reveals their reflections on how that role was undertaken in practice. Finally, cooperating teachers' metaphors are used as a way of synthesising their experience of being a cooperating teacher during the practicum. The metaphors reflect the ways in which the cooperating teachers considered they came to know and understand the student teacher. This was important as it guided them in their choice of strategies used in supporting the student teachers' learning (Irene, 12B: 23/7/92: c. 15; Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.0-5, c.172).

While the activities which the cooperating teachers were required to undertake as cooperating teachers were identified in university practicum handbooks or curriculum guidelines, they were largely left to their own resources in determining how that role should be fulfilled (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.278). What actually happened in practice was often not what they had hoped for. Their images of practice often represented an *unresourced ideal* (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.248, c.297). As such, their images were a point of reference from which tensions emerged as they became aware of the inconsistencies between the *espousing of belief about what should happen* and *the way in which the role is fulfilled* (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.215).

Cooperating teaching is a generic term that I have adopted to reflect the ongoing nature of the work in which cooperating teachers engage within the context of their regular

responsibilities within the preschool. It does not necessarily imply, however, that cooperating teachers actually work in cooperation with the university.

Throughout the conversations with the cooperating teachers they often focused on events or incidents in their day-to-day work with student teachers which served as prompts for further reflection, elaboration and explication of their role. They told stories of their work and of the feelings they had experienced as they reacted to their observations of student teachers' behaviours. The events or incidents became catalysts for the themed stories which were written by the researcher and subsequently returned to the cooperating teachers for their verification. As issues were explored in the telling, the cooperating teachers' own professional beliefs and values were exposed and these furthered their understandings of their work with individual student teachers. However, it was only possible to more fully appreciate the cooperating teachers' metaphors of experience as I gained greater insights into what those experiences were really like for them. That understanding is framed within the nature of the early childhood context and the nature of adult/child interactions. It was this context that largely informed the cooperating teachers' view of their role.

INFORMING THE COOPERATING TEACHING ROLE

There were many factors which contributed to the images the cooperating teachers held of their role. These included their own life experiences as adult learners, experiences in working with other student teachers, the images they held of themselves as early childhood teachers, perceptions of their relationships with student teachers, and university resources. This section explores differing resourcing patterns of each of the cooperating teachers. It also highlights the extent to which student teachers may experience differing approaches by cooperating teachers to their work.

DRAWING ON EXPERIENCE

Being a cooperating teacher was not new to any of the five teachers in the study. They had all previously been responsible for student teachers and had witnessed the activities of

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cooperating teachers during their own field experiences as student teachers. As they all worked in multi-unit preschools, the cooperating teachers also had opportunities to observe and discuss with other staff ways in which they were involved with student teachers (Irene, 50A: 3/12/92: c.143; Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.4, l.12; Kate, RTS2: 31/7/92: p.2).

Matthew, in thinking about student teacher confidence within the context of the practicum, felt that for him it took *about three years of teaching* before he felt comfortable with other adults being present in the room with him when he was taking planned group experiences. This was an important issue for him because he saw teaching as being a *risky business* (Matthew, 29B: 24/9/92: c.153). Student teachers therefore needed to be supported in trying out things so that they were not shattered when what they planned did not work out as they expected.

Julie, the most recent graduate of all the cooperating teachers, used her own experiences as a student teacher to resource how she might enable the student teacher for whom she was responsible to experience what teaching in early childhood is really like. Julie had been concerned that the student teacher's view of teaching was with filling the children with information. These thoughts were uppermost in her mind when considering how she might enable the student teacher not only to become more confident in her work but to be empowered through an appreciation of what being an early childhood teacher was like. For Julie, t*eaching is about the feeling you have when you have captured the interest of the children...* (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.13, l.1). This feeling of what being a teacher was like was important to Julie - *she had experienced it as a student teacher* (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.12, l.26). Matthew also recalled how *the realisation that what you were involved in was teaching was a major leap inside of you* (Matthew, 35B: 15/10/92: c.180).

Julie also had a strong desire that the student teacher should also have the same opportunity. However, in guiding the student teacher Julie felt that she had little support from the university supervisor and often there appeared to be little initiative and reflectiveness on the part of the student teacher (Julie, NR1: 8/8/93). She had anticipated support from the university supervisor in addressing what she had identified as areas for the student teacher's further development, but this was not forthcoming. Julie therefore drew on what she knew best - her own experiences (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.4, l. 1; p.5, l. 6-7).

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Irene added to her experiences her expectations as a parent. She relied heavily on her own personal/professional judgement when dealing with her concerns about student teachers (J1: 17/6/92: p.17). In a difficult situation where a student teacher appeared willing to listen to Irene's suggestions but had difficulty in applying *practical sense* (Irene, TS1: 20/7/92), Irene drew on her personal resources as a parent and her values/beliefs about young children to rationalise and support her decision to recommend a failing grade for the student teacher. Irene had been concerned that there was little support from the university in making such a decision. She therefore resourced what she knew best - what she valued as a parent and as an early childhood teacher:

> *I have a preschool age child I think in terms of how I would feel about this person (student teacher) teaching my child. That helps when you have a student like the one I am worried about because even though I'm feeling like a terrible person, and will probably fail (her) in prac. So as to make myself feel better I say, 'Will I feel comfortable in this person working with my child?' ... So... (I felt that) I'm doing the right thing for early childhood.* (Irene, 9B: 22/6/92: c. 550)

Irene often rationalised her decisions in terms of her values and beliefs about children's welfare and development and her own strong ethical ideals both for children and professional behaviour which had moral overtones in attitudes and values being conveyed to children (Irene, 13B: 27/7/92: c.70; 16B: 31/7/92: c.220, c.325).

Elaine's focus was also strongly oriented towards values and beliefs she held about children:

> *It's important... to give children the dignity of their own name... to keep problems in perspective... to be able to ask for help... to have confidence in oneself....with the expectation that you will succeed. I don't want others to suffer as I did (as a child).* (Elaine: 13A: 24/7/95: p.6, 1.32;18A: 5/8/92: p.8)

Much of what Elaine sought in the student teacher was a confirming of her personal values and beliefs about children which were readily observed through her daily interactions with them (J1: 13/8/92: pp.92-93). In recognition of the student teacher's prior experience in childcare Elaine wanted to work collaboratively with the student teacher as a professional peer. Where opportunities arose, she shared group work with the student teacher and supported her in the implementation of planned activities (J1: 13/8/92: p.92). While not

made explicit, this was Elaine's way of supporting the student teacher's professional development.

A VIEW OF 'PRACTICAL SENSE'

The cooperating teachers shared a common view of their role as one of *extending (student teachers) in the practical sense* (Irene, 9B: 22/6/92: p.3, 1.4). Irene's themed story 'Practical Sense' (Irene, TS1: 2/7/92) and the responses made by Kate (RTS1: 6/8/92; RSB, 23/8/92) Matthew (RTS1: 31/7/92) and Irene herself (RTS1: 20/7/92) highlight how attention is given to understanding the student teacher and how that understanding influenced how they worked with student teachers (See Appendix 3.3).

The conversations between Irene's texts and the responses of Matthew, Kate and Irene herself clearly identify the need for student teachers to display practical sense. Like commonsense, practical sense takes into account context and application. The cooperating teachers placed considerable importance on the student teachers' sensitivity towards those attitudes which were conveyed to children through adults behaviours indicative of a professional style or way of being with children. Matthew's view of practical sense is grounded in developmental knowledge and understanding (RTS1: 31/7/92: p.4). On the other hand, Irene saw practical sense to be located within the experience. For her, a student teacher needs to have the sensitivity to appreciate how they are part of the experience rather than being someone who is more distanced and who feeds knowledge to the children (RTS1: 20/7/92: p.4).

Matthew drew the distinction between a prescriptive student teacher who *works by the book* and therefore expects work to be *rubber stamped*, and the thinking/creative student teacher who has knowledge and developmental understanding which can be readily applied within a given context. Underpinning these thoughts can be found the essence of child- centred pedagogy where flexibility, individualisation and concern for the ways in which young children learn drive the nature of the early childhood teacher's work.

SELF AS EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER

The images cooperating teachers held of self-as-cooperating-teacher were contextualised within self-as-early-childhood-teacher (Irene, 21B: 10/8/92: c. 120; c.100). All the cooperating teachers accepted responsibility for a student teacher in addition to their normal responsibilities. As early childhood teachers, their primary concern was always for the welfare of the children within their care. In accepting responsibility for a student teacher they also accepted responsibility for that student teacher's practices in relation to the children.

Unlike in the employment of staff, there was no selection process for acceptance of a student teacher. Student teachers were allocated a place at the preschool by the university. The opportunity for a cooperating teacher to consider the potential match between student teacher and centre ethos was therefore not available. With no choice in the selection of student teacher, Matthew and Irene, who had many student teachers, found themselves in a position of having to deal with a wide range of student teachers of differing abilities. Even Elaine, whose only student teacher had been working in childcare for many years, questioned the motives of the university in placing an *experienced* student teacher with her (Elaine, TS4: 14/8/92). She wondered what the university expected of her.

All the cooperating teachers found that, as an additional adult, the student teacher had to be taken into account when planning and managing the preschool environment. One section of Elaine's weekly planning (which she really did on a Sunday night) could not be completed because this was the section for which the student teacher was to be responsible. Elaine would not know what the student teacher had planned until she arrived at the preschool on Monday morning.

In accepting a student teacher, cooperating teachers also needed to accept that there would be disruptions to their regular practices. Cooperating teachers sometimes had to relinquish some of their day-to-day responsibilities to the student teacher. Sometimes this was difficult. Sometimes it was even difficult to meet long term goals for the children because of particular tasks or responsibilities that the university required the student teacher to undertake (Irene, 37A: 21/10/92: c.395; Julie, 46A: 23/11/92: p.23, 1.16).

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The nature of student teacher/child relationships was the focus of concern during student teacher orientation into the practicum. Cooperating teacher's initial assessments of student teacher functioning were all related to the ways in which student teachers responded to children.

SEEKING A *'COMFORTABLENESS'*

The essential dynamic in the practicum is the student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship (Matthew, RTS5: 24/9/92: p.4; Julie, NR1: 8/8/93; Irene, 38B: 30/10/92: c.100). Cooperating teachers' perceptions of their role and the qualities that the student teacher brought to the practicum contributed to the nature of the relationship between student teacher and cooperating teacher (Matthew 48A: 21/1/94: c.1, c.231). The student teacher's motivation and willingness to take responsibility for their own learning strongly influenced the cooperating teacher's motivation towards enhancing that learning (Elaine, 18A: 5/8/92: c.473; c.530; Matthew, 48B: 21/1/94: c.130, c.158). Where there was little change in student teacher behaviour, Irene found that she was questioning her own expectations of that student teacher by *constantly looking inside (herself) for resources and stuff* (Irene, 9B: 22/6/91: p.5, l. 43; p.4, l.16; 25B: 25/8/92: c.275).

Matthew felt that cooperating teachers did care about student teachers as developing professionals and this is partly the reason why they accepted a student teacher in the first place (Matthew, 16A: 31/7/92: c.520). As indicated in Chapter Six, he and the other cooperating teachers in the study looked for responsiveness in the student teacher (Matthew, 29A: 10/9/92: c.25; 35B: 15/10/92: c.340; 47B: 26/11/92: c.10). They sought student teacher responsiveness both to children and to themselves as experienced, practising teachers. They also sought in student teachers a willingness to consider child needs before self needs. Difficulties arose where student teachers were still dealing with self needs. While Irene identified self-confidence as being particularly important she considered that a basic need was *practical sense* (Irene, TS1: 2/7/92).

Kate's responsibility for the management of a large community based preschool and her interest in the quality of the work climate provided a particular orientation to her work with

(what she considered to be) a competent student teacher. She commented early in the practicum how the student teacher was *confident/competent* and therefore did not require much *supervision* (Kate, 2A: 3/6/92: p.1, l.19; 4A: 10/6/92: p.2, l. 25; 5A: 11/6/92: p.8, l.13):

> *It's important (for the student teacher) to know-thyself* (RTS5: 10/3/93: p.2) *... (and have a sense of how) ...they impose themselves on the (centre) work climate* (Kate, 8A: 16/6/92: p.5; RTS2: 31/7/92, p.3) *...and to be sensitive to the tolerance levels of staff.* (Irene, 9B: 22/6/92: c.437)

The student teacher was able to fit comfortably into what was already a *harmonious staff team* (Kate, 4A: 10/6/92: p.4, l.4; 5A: 11/6/92: p.8, l.26).

Kate's interests and particular responsibilities matched with her perceptions of student teacher functioning enabled her to broaden opportunities in which the student teacher could be involved. Because Kate had a *trust in the student teacher* she saw herself as the *supportive person* (Kate, 5A: 11/6/92: p.6, p.10). She was *comfortable with (the student teacher's) style and manner* and considered that the student teacher was *intrinsically motivated* (Kate, 5A: 11/6/92: p.13, l.2, l.25). What was being conveyed was *enthusiasm... dedication... and responsibility* as a developing professional and this Kate (and other staff) responded to through being supportive of the student teacher's needs and encouraging her to try out new experiences (Kate, 5A: 11/6/92: p.3, pp.6-8; 9A: 18/6/92: p.3, p.5). Kate was aware that the student teacher had had previous experience in childcare but, more importantly she conveyed that she had *feeling for children* as opposed to *experience with* children (Kate, 25A: 25/8/92: p3, l.29). Where a student teacher lacks enthusiasm and conveys an attitude that they *'don't know what they want out of the prac. other than to pass'* (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.88) there is often limited resourcing by the cooperating teacher.

While the cooperating teacher's role may be one of resourcing the student teacher, it also has other dimensions. A distinction can be drawn between *facilitating* and *teaching* when it is viewed from a didactic perspective of teaching as being instructional (Irene, 50A: 3/12/92: c.290). Facilitating is a way of working with the student teacher's internal dimensions of motivation, enthusiasm and commitment. It is possible to extend student

teachers' learning through the practicum where the student teachers demonstrate that they are capable and have basic knowledge and skills as well as those natural abilities which convey a professional attitude towards their work with children (Irene, 50A: 3/12/92: c.295).

It is the university that Irene expected to make judgements on the student teacher's professional knowledge and the quality of the student teacher's written work. However, in the practicum situation there is a need for cooperating teachers to ensure that what the student teacher does is appropriate to the children with whom the student teacher works (Irene, 50A: 3/12/92: c.205). Monitoring such appropriateness is an important part of the early childhood teacher's work. Julie raised this as an issue in identifying tensions in the artistry of cooperating teaching where the university supervisor's focus is on the student teacher rather than on the children (Chapter Four). Her experiences indicate that the artistry of cooperating teaching involves the cooperating teacher in diverse activities requiring a responsiveness to the student teacher not readily identified in the list of responsibilities indicated in university practicum documents. The following section in this chapter looks at the university documentation to identify the university's perspectives on the role of the cooperating teacher.

'KNOWING WITHIN' RATHER THAN 'KNOWING ABOUT'

In addition to personal experience, university documentation for the practicum identifies the tasks which cooperating teachers were expected to undertake. Of the four universities who placed student teachers with the cooperating teachers in this study, the most comprehensive listing of cooperating teacher responsibilities came from the University of Newcastle, 1992a). They include the following:

- ▶ welcome the student teacher and arrange induction to the environment...
- ▶ facilitate the development of the student teacher's professional attitudes, especially in their relationships with children, other staff and parents...
- ▶ advise and assist the student teacher with planning and evaluation...
- ▶ advise on content of experiences and teaching strategies...

- ► check planning prior to student teacher teaching...
- ► communicate with the University supervisor regarding the day to day professional development of the student teacher...
- ► help the student teacher evaluate their performance...
- ► demonstrate techniques...
- ► evaluate student teacher performance using the Student Teacher Appraisal Guide...
- ► write a Practicum Report...
- ► recommend a grade for the Practicum...
- ► encourage student teacher competence in individualising interaction skills, mastery of small and large group management, and program planning.

It is suggested that the cooperating teacher ... will provide a model for the student teacher and will be able to provide active and positive supervision of the student teacher's teaching. (University of Newcastle, 1992a)

These tasks are largely of a functional nature. They require the cooperating teachers to enable student teachers to meet practicum requirements, to supervise student teachers and their plans to carry out activities, and to generally contribute to the professional development and assessment of the student teacher. What particularly concerned Julie and Irene, however, was the importance of engaging with the student teacher in facilitating their learning. Such engagement is process oriented and is the knowing within the experience that became important. The cooperating teachers therefore looked for other ways in which to resource the role in order to work more effectively with individual student teachers (Elaine, 12A: 21/7/92: p.1, l.24). For as Matthew suggests:

> *you can have a lot of theory but this may not help you to act upon situations... you need to be able to tie things together in a way that provides an outcome which can lead to growth and development... for this to happen you have to understand it.* (Matthew, 34B: 13/10/92: c.125)

Matthew sees that *the practicum is the only opportunity that student teachers have to get inside activities and explore what is involved* (Matthew, 10A: 22/6/92: c.150) in terms of *the aims of the activity and the skills involved in effectively using the activity to promote children's development and learning* (Matthew: 10A: 22/6/92: c.150). The student teachers needed opportunities in which they could gain this realisation for themselves which meant much more than the cooperating teacher continually *making corrections* (Matthew, 13B: 27/7/92: c.100). His view encompassed an experiential view of student teacher learning.

PERSPECTIVES ON WORKING WITH STUDENT TEACHERS.

The cooperating teachers were very aware of the practicum being part of a much broader programme of preservice education undertaken by the student teachers within the university context. While there is an expectation by the university that cooperating teachers engage in the supervision of student teachers, the only formal responsibility that cooperating teachers have is the completion of student teacher assessment documentation. In two instances, however, a particular university claimed that it would take full responsibility for student teacher supervision and assessment and therefore the regular payment made to cooperating teachers would be foregone (Irene, 10B: 25/6/92: c.280). While the financial aspect may have been an issue for a university's practicum budget, for Matthew, while *he didn't care whether (he) got paid or not*, the issue was one of *receiving recognition for the work involved* (Matthew, 16A: 31/7/92: c.545).

Quality standards which apply within any preschool require that the cooperating teacher who is responsible for the children in the preschool must, by implication, accept the same responsibility for student teachers as for any adult working with the children. It is therefore a requirement that they monitor the student teacher's activities with children in the preschool whether payment is made or not. The other part of that responsibility is making judgements about the student teacher's work. These judgements may occur more formally when the university requests cooperating teachers to undertake assessments of student teachers and make recommendations regarding the student teacher's professional development (Macquarie University, 1992a; University of Newcastle, 1992a; University of Western Sydney - Macarthur, 1992a; University of Western Sydney - Nepean, 1992a). So, while a university may choose to accept full responsibility for student teacher assessment, it is the cooperating teacher who considers the student teacher's day-to-day functioning within the preschool context. It is here that the cooperating teacher's work often focuses more on a concern for student teacher attitude rather than the technical aspects of meeting university task requirements.

Some of the activities in which the cooperating teachers engaged with the student teachers did, however, reflect a more technical role. Matthew appreciated opportunities to sit down with student teachers and *pull apart their plans* (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.145) as a means

by which he could support them in having a clearer focus on the purposefulness of their work through the development of a clearly defined rationale. Irene encouraged one particular student teacher to visualise how children may respond so that the student teacher could resource possible response options and therefore be prepared to act flexibly and creatively with a respect for the children (Irene, 9A: 17/6/92: c.85). As an outcome of this concern, Irene, Matthew and Julie felt the tensions within their relationships with the university and these will be taken up in the next chapter.

Matthew made a number of references to quality standards in the cooperating teacher role (Matthew, 48B: 21/1/92: c.60). Many of these focused on the need for greater collaboration between cooperating teachers and university personnel responsible for the practicum and its supervision. He also considered that there were many *lost opportunities* for student teacher learning because there was never sufficient time to sit down with the student teacher and discuss, analyse and reflect upon the successes and failures of the day (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.427; 48B: 21/1/94: c.65).

The uncertainty of the preschool day, the wide range of responsibilities held by the cooperating teacher, the commitment and motivation of the student teacher, and the cooperating teacher's approaches to student teacher supervision were all factors which contributed to the cooperating teachers' perspectives (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.412). As was particularly evident in Chapter Four, these factors influenced the ways in which the cooperating teachers worked with student teachers. Often within the busy day-to-day life of the cooperating teachers and the early childhood context within which they worked, extended blocks of time were not freely available to spend with student teachers. As with early childhood staff, there were frequent interactions about the children and the events that occurred and student teachers were most often expected to be part of these processes which contributed to the dynamics of the day.

CONVERSATIONS *'ON THE FLY'*

The unpredictability of the preschool day where *you never know at the beginning of the day exactly what you are going to be doing* (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c. 427) has implications

for how the cooperating teacher works with the student teacher. It also has implications for what is conveyed to the student teacher about what *the reality of teaching* is like in early childhood education (Matthew, 10A: 22/6/92: c.215). In fitting their cooperating teacher role into their teaching day, cooperating teachers' conversations with student teachers are often undertaken *on the fly* (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.450). This informal approach to the provision of information and giving the student teacher feedback involves the cooperating teacher in frequently making brief comments to the student teacher throughout the day. These can occur following activities that the student teacher has introduced, during activities as the student teacher works with the children, at quieter times when the student teacher is not directly engaged with the children or break periods during transition times when children are moving from one activity to another (Julie, 36A: 16/10/92: p.4, l.35).

Since the practicum was experiential in nature and flowed on regardless of the ways in which the cooperating teachers undertook their role, there were many opportunities for student teacher learning to occur. Cooperating teachers largely set the climate for student teacher learning by enabling them to have space in which to meet university requirements (Irene, 10B: 25/6/92: c.367; 22B: 12/8/92: c.145), to participate in the ongoing activities of the preschool (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.26, l.19; 39B: 2/11/92: p.8, l.22), engage in planned experiences (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.10, l.1), undertake observations and discuss the cooperating teacher's explanation and their own interpretation of those observations (Matthew, 12B: 23/7/92: c.250), and to be involved in discussions about the children (Irene, 17A: 4/8/92: c.206; Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.9, l.14; 36B: 22/10/92: p.5, l.15).

Just as early childhood teachers individualise their planning for young children, these cooperating teachers saw student teachers as individuals and, given opportunities to do so, aimed to individualise their work with them (Irene, 1B: 2/6/92: c.87; 37A: 21/10/92: c.278; Julie, NR1: 8/8/93). To individualise meant that it was necessary to change the focus of feedback and support the changing needs of the student teacher (Julie, NR1: 8/8/93; Irene, 21A: 7/8/92: c.52). Individualising often occurred during informal conversations between the cooperating teacher and student teacher (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.3, l.22). These were times when it was possible for cooperating teachers to focus on a concrete experience and react/respond to it (Irene, 9A: 17/6/92: c.35; 12B: 23/7/92: c.60; 47A: 26/11/92: c.33; Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.25, l.23; 39B: 2/11/91: p.1, l.1), often using their own personal

resource frame (Irene, 1B: 2/6/92: c.68; Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.27, l.11; 36A: 16/10/92: p.9, l.26; 39B: 2/11/92: p.13, l.17; Matthew, 10A: 22/6/92: c.215). Sometimes, Matthew saw it as important to *wait to see* whether the student teachers themselves respond to children's inappropriate behaviour *before stepping in and redirecting children's play* (Matthew, 12B: 23/7/92: c.280) for *the realisation by the student teachers themselves* was seen to be *much more meaningful for them than any correction from the teacher* (Matthew, 13B: 27/7/92: c.100). At other times Matthew engaged in what he described as *on-the-job-analysis*, providing feedback to the student teacher as the children engaged in the activities so ensuring that the feedback was contextually meaningful and that the student teacher could make immediate changes and then observe the children's responses (Matthew, 23A: 12/8/92: c.33). It also avoided what Matthew considered to be *the 'guess what the teacher is thinking' situation* (Matthew, 13B: 27/7/92: c.227).

At other times the cooperating teachers provided more formal written feedback or guidance to the student teachers (Irene, 44A: 17/11/92: c.20). Matthew would sometimes:

> *write down concrete examples of children's behaviour so that the student teacher could spend some time thinking about and working through what had happened, why it had happened and what they might do next time.* (Matthew: 35B: 15/10/92: c.280)

The strategy that Matthew used was only one of a number of ways in which the cooperating teachers tried to be supportive of the student teachers. They became concerned, however, if they saw little evidence of student teacher commitment to their own professional development (Julie, NR1: 8/8/93; 32A: 22/9/92: p.7, l.12).

Time constraints and the nature of the work of early childhood teachers often tipped the balance towards providing feedback through more spontaneous and informal conversations rather than the formal times that had been predetermined. Julie felt it important to make a comment to the student teacher after her planned group experiences:

> *so she knows that what she's doing is good and she can feel good about herself without having to wait to the end of the day... because by the end of the day you tend to forget the detail of things.* (Julie, 41A: 5/11/92: p.5, l.4)

It was difficult to find sufficient time in which to carefully consider the overall development of the student teacher and provide *more formal and indepth* feedback within the context of the student teacher's learning (Matthew, 37B: 26/10/92: c.190). It was most often the nature of the student teacher rather than university requirements that changed the demands made on the cooperating teacher during the practicum (Irene, 3B: 9/6/92: c.175).

On other occasions, more formal feedback was provided through time set aside for the analysis of student teacher plans (Julie, 39A: 29/10/92: p.17, l.1; 39B: 2/11/92: pp.1-2). At such times it was possible to be more analytical - *to get inside something and understand why it is there* (Matthew, 37B: 26/10/92: c.190; 17B: 4/8/92: c.125), to comment on the nature of student teacher involvement with the children and how they managed children's behaviour. Where feedback and support were present, the cooperating teachers resourced their role in many ways.

It was Matthew who made a distinction between two approaches to student teacher supervision - *a functional approach*... and... the *quality way*:

> *The functional approach... is indicative of a tick-the-box syndrome. The quality way is more personalised... (and)... intellectually considered. (It)... lies in the thought and the analysis of what has gone before, what happened then and what you hope to do later.* (Matthew, 48A: 20/1/94: c.115, c.370)

Matthew was looking for a more relational way of working and made several comments about his concern with a more behavioural approach indicative of what he described as functional.

THE *'TICK-THE-BOX SYNDROME'*

Matthew perceived that a functional approach was reductionist. It assumes that 'cooperating teaching' (the thoughts and actions which are involved in the engagement of the cooperating teacher with the student teacher in which the focus is student teacher learning) can be broken down into a set of skills and/or specific tasks. The expert cooperating teacher is then viewed as a technician who can undertake a particular task by

drawing on a listing of reproducible and educable skills. The assumption is that, having drawn on these identifiable skills, it is then possible to check them off on a list and so determine whether the cooperating teachers have technically fulfilled their role. Rather than accepting individuality and fostering a personalised approach to student teacher development this *tick-the-box syndrome* was seen by Matthew as *compromising* professionalism and enabling *mediocracy* to prevail (Matthew, 48B: 21/1/94: c.25; c.44). Matthew sometimes felt distanced or disconnected from the student teachers for whom he was responsible - *so many student teachers, so little time* (Matthew, 48B: 21/1/94: c.1). He found that it was only possible for him to work really effectively with one or possibly two of the ten student teachers for whom he was responsible over the seven month period of the research (48B: 21/1/94: c. 131). Matthew explained that where a student teachers' attitude was one of, *'Oh well, I suppose so, if it says I've got to'*, he lost interest and reverted to a *tick-the-box mode*. Such an attitude he saw as representing a functional rather than an individualised, relational approach.

A 'FUNCTIONAL' APPROACH

From a *functional perspective*, the activities in which cooperating teachers engage with student teachers can largely be grouped within three broad areas:

> ▸ *providing opportunities which will enable student teachers to fulfil university requirements;*
> ▸ *facilitating student teacher personal/professional development through a supportive environment where student teachers can:*
> - *engage in experiences with children;*
> - *observe ways in which cooperating teachers work with and relate to children and adults;*
> - *resource ideas and strategies;*
> .- *receive ongoing feedback about their planning and their day-to-day interactions with children and other adults in the preschool;*
> - *collaborate with the cooperating teacher in the determination of appropriate practices.*
> ▸ *making judgements concerning the student teacher's professional development.*(Irene, 9B: 22/6/92: c.212; 21A: 7/8/92: c.100; 34A: 13/10/92: c.18; Matthew, 48B: 21/1/94: c.44)

Matthew stressed that it is the way in which these functions are undertaken that is likely to have a dramatic effect on student teacher development. He proposed that aspects of quality

need to be considered in the ways in which cooperating teachers work with student teachers and as part of this, the level of student teacher functioning needs to be taken into account. Matthew, in clarifying how cooperating teachers may work with student teachers on the basis of their understanding of student teacher functioning, identified three levels of functioning which he considered represented how student teachers presented themselves during the practicum. He then saw that cooperating teachers responded differently to each of these levels of functioning.

IDENTIFYING AND RESPONDING TO STUDENT TEACHER FUNCTIONAL LEVELS

An analytical approach to student teacher functioning enabled Matthew to theorise how his responses as a cooperating teacher reflected his perceptions of student teachers. This approach was preferred by Matthew in his work with student teachers. He frequently made reference to student teacher planning. He saw the need for those plans to have not only a clear rationale but clear links between rationale, objectives and strategies for their implementation; more importantly, he sought a *weighted rationale* which stems from theory but takes the individual child and the context into account (Matthew, RTS5: 4/11/92: p.1).

When responding to Irene's story 'Practical Sense' (Irene, TS1: 2/7/92) Matthew identified three levels of student teacher functioning; activity functional, theoretically developmentally functional and practically applied developmentally functional (Matthew, RTS3: 31/7/92: p.2). The three tables that follow provide an overview of the levels of functioning and the ways in which student teacher behaviour and cooperating teacher actions reflect each of the levels. The development of the tables is an outgrowth of Matthew's reductionist/functionalist approach to analysis and development of understanding. It contrasts with a more holistic approach which will be explored further, later in this chapter, through the cooperating teachers' metaphors of practice.

Table 6.1 identifies levels of functioning which Matthew anticipated would be displayed in student teacher behaviour. Movement from one level to the next reflects the development of student teachers' ability to integrate decision making. Student teacher behaviours

indicative of each of the three levels of functioning are displayed in the table.

TABLE 6.1: Indicators of student teachers' levels of functioning.

	Activity functional	Theoretically developmentally functional	Practically applied developmentally functional
ST[9] Indicator	No evidence of the integration of theory and developmental understanding in the presentation of activities.	Activities selected on the basis of developmental theory but little or no understanding or attunedness to individual children in specific situations.	Programme planning and application reflects developmental theory and attunedness to children within individual contexts.
Basis for ST functioning	The category or presence of the activity is sufficient in itself.	Programme decision making is drawn directly from developmental theory.	Programme decision making involves the application of developmental theory within the *weighted* needs of child/staff/ centre (Matthew, RTS5: 24/9/92: p.1).

The activity functional level is very much one of having theoretical knowledge but no understanding of its application. The second level, *theoretically developmentally functional*, occurs when application is made without developmental understanding. It is the third level where integration occurs within a context. Matthew then looks behind these three levels of functioning to suggest the basis of student teacher understanding indicative of each level of functioning.

The levels of functioning are hierarchical. However, working alongside and within these is the personal element of attunedness (TS5: 9/9/92; RTS5: 4/11/92). As was indicated in Chapter Five, attunedness refers to the tone and manner conveyed by the student teacher in their relationships with children (Matthew, TS5: 9/9/92). It is possible to have lots of theory but this may not help one to act upon situations (Matthew, 34B: 13/10/92: c.125). Moving from a focus on activities it is expected that with the development of knowledge and understanding the student teacher would acquire the capacity to take into account a

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[9] For ease of presentation, the abbreviations CT (cooperating teacher) and ST (student teacher) have been used within Tables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 .

weighted rationale for her work. Weighted rationale reflects the application of contextual knowledge where it is important to consider how the *physical environment is arranged and what everyone is doing within it* (Irene, 37A: 21/10/92: c.300). Where *developmental thought* (Matthew, 37B: 21/10/92: c. 1) occurs, such a rationale is:

> *one that stems from developmental theory yet takes into account the relative importance of and individual differences in children, setting, moment and all manner of other specific details.* (RTS5: 4/11/92)

In taking a holistic perspective, Matthew sought to address the integrated nature of teaching. Irene also focuses on a sense of awareness within contextual responsibilities. She considers that early childhood professionals need to:

-     *be aware of what everyone is doing;*
-     *be able to direct (children) at the right time rather than leave them or jump at one child before they need to be directed;*
-     *have an awareness to know what is happening, what is going to happen next and be able to feel where the group is going; and*
-     *be able to ensure that all staff are aware of where you want them to be.*
  (Irene, 37A: 21/10/92: c.280)

Because teaching is *contextually located* (Irene 47A: 26/11/92: c.65) student teachers' practical work does not occur in isolation. Nor is it possible that the levels of functioning can operate apart from the context in which the student teachers take action. While it is the experiences of the practicum in which student teachers are required to engage, it is always the children that are of primary concern to the cooperating teachers. The levels of functioning must, therefore, take into account child, centre and the university requirements (Matthew, TS5: 9/9/92).

Matthew's conception of student teacher attunedness across child, centre and university as it is implicated within the three levels of functioning is shown in Table 6.2.

TABLE 6.2: Range of student teacher attunedness across child, centre and university contexts reflecting levels of functioning.

	Activity functional	Theoretically developmentally functional	Practically applied developmentally functional
CHILD	Focus for action/planning is the activity not needs of individual child.	Minimal data (drawn from detailed but infrequent observations of child behaviour) used to make assumptions about child's functioning.	Contextual knowledge of child functioning and individual needs framed within developmental theory.
CENTRE	Little sensitivity towards staff/ centre needs and ongoing programme.	Attention to developmentally appropriate practices in isolation from the particular child/ centre context.	Able to question focus of programme and staff behaviours in light of own interpretation of theoretical understandings.
UNIVERSITY	Requirements met by completing type/number of activities indicated in university expectations.	Requirements met with theoretical understanding but little appreciation of individual/ contextual factors.	Understands the fullest ramifications of the university expectations which are not seen at odds with the expectations of staff.

The table illustrates how, at the activity functional level there is little attunedness between theoretical knowledge and the context in which it is applied. The aim is to have student teachers functioning towards the third level in which student teacher's planning is applied within the context of *this child* and *this setting* (Irene, 47A: 26/11/92: c.65). The degree of attunedness moves from a purely activity functional approach to planning to an appreciation of contextual factors. Ideally, the student teacher functioning at the top level begins to appreciate that there is a relationship between university expectations and those of the cooperating teacher working with individual children within a preschool centre context. It would seem that, for this to occur, many opportunities are needed for the cooperating teacher not only to engage in discussion with the student but also to communicate their understanding of the rationale behind their own practices.

Just as *experience feeds on itself* (Matthew, 48B: 21/1/94: c.163), so too do the negative aspects of disharmony which come from student teacher inability to *be in tune* (RTS5: 4/11/92). In situations where there is little attunedness and the rationale for student

teacher's planning is superficial it is less likely that they will *act in an informed manner...* *and more likely that they will... get it all wrong* (Matthew, RTS5: 24/9/92: p.3). Such a situation is of concern to the cooperating teacher because the student teacher is not sufficiently perceptive to see a need for deeper consultation nor a need to work in particular ways (Matthew, RTS5: 24/9/92: p.4, 5).

Matthew clarified in his own mind how his reactions to student teacher levels of functioning influenced the various approaches he took in working with them. The student teacher who functions at the lower levels sees the cooperating teacher's *non-specific advice or broad suggestions* as an *added not complementary requirement... and such feedback is of little help* to the student teacher (Matthew, RST5: 24/9/92: p.2).

Where the student teacher exhibited greater attunedness, a *problem-solving approach* to fostering student teacher development could be more readily undertaken (RTS1: 31/7/92: p.2; TS5: 9/9/92: p.2). Matthew's considered response to student teacher functioning across functional levels is summarised in Table 6.3. A student teacher who was attuned to the children, the centre and to university expectations readily *read the cues* from the cooperating teacher's *non-verbal messages* during the more structured aspects of the programme (Matthew, TS5: 9/9/92: p.2).

TABLE 6.3: Cooperating teacher actions in response to student teacher levels of functioning

	Activity functional	Theoretically developmentally functional	Practically applied developmentally functional
ST functioning	ST's work is shallow.	ST's planning is inappropriate to the children, based on theory alone with little evidence of contextual knowledge.	ST is perceptive and sensitive to context. ST uses developmental theory in making sense of child/staff actions and programme development. Planning reflects this.
CT action	CT provides information about the context which is seen by ST as being additional work and at odds with the university requirements.	CT facilitates ST thinking through of rationale and objectives by: . joint analysis of ST's work; and/or . observation and analysis of CT's work supported by theory and contextual information. (Matthew, 17B: 4/8/92: c.19, c.40; 12B: 23/7/92: c.272; 10A: 22/6/92: c.190; 13B: 27/7/92: c.227; 40B: 3/11/92: c.19)	CT has confidence in ST's ability to work within centre team therefore ST given freedom to try things out. CT assists ST in *getting what they have in their heads onto paper.* (Matthew 48B: 21/1/94: c.190)

In the above table, the cooperating teacher's perceptions of student teacher functioning are shown to be reflected in cooperating teacher actions. These vary from being more directive and providing the framework within which student teachers act to working collaboratively and in harmony with the student teacher in a shared understanding (Irene, 49B: 1/12/92: c.98).

A student teacher who has confidence and functions at what Matthew calls a *practically applied developmentally functional level* will:

> *come back to you having analysed the little bits that you gave them on the fly and which didn't quite fit in... Those are the ones where you should be spending the time.* (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.470)

An approach *where student teachers have the confidence to question... feeds on itself* (48B: 21/1/94: c.163) because the student teacher is less threatened by the teacher who challenges what they are doing. To Matthew, attunedness was an indicator of quality practices. The

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degree of student teacher attunedness influenced his responsiveness to the student teacher and the cyclical nature of the interactions so aptly conveyed by Julie in Chapter Four. Student teacher attunedness and cooperating teacher responsiveness are caught up in the ongoing nature of student teacher/cooperating teacher relationships throughout the practicum. They appear to be grounded in what has been explored in Chapter Five as a sense of awareness.

Attunedness becomes evident in the practicum situation. It is more difficult to identify within university coursework because the measures by which it is assessed are interactive practical experiences (Matthew, RTS5: 4/11/92: p.3). The ebb and flow of being a cooperating teacher, which was expressed by Julie in Chapter Five, is touched by Matthew's functional levels. However, he also recognised the importance of process in his *intellectually considered* approach which he considered to be indicative of a *quality way* (Matthew, 48B: 21/1/94: c.60).

THE *'QUALITY'* WAY...

The quality of a cooperating teachers' work lies in that teacher's ability to assess and plan effective strategies to promote student teachers' analysis of their work (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94/: c.375). The *quality way* is an individualised approach to working with student teachers which is more personalised and intellectually considered (Matthew, 48B: 21/1/94: c.50; Irene, 37A: 21/10/92: c.278, c.285). As an *intellectually considered* approach, this requires not only observation and interpretation of student teacher behaviour but an appreciation of student teachers' prior learning (Matthew, 48B: 21/1/94: c.50). From this perspective, learning is seen as contextual, within a continuum of experience.

The cooperating teacher's role is not only to provide opportunities for student teachers to be involved in experiences but to extend each student teacher's interpretation of these experiences and further develop their *practical sense* (Irene, 9B: 22/6/92: c.207). Here the focus is on the extension of student teacher thinking rather than just on the student teacher being able to complete tasks. However, the outcome is not entirely dependent on the cooperating teacher. While they may engage in *self-talk* (Irene, 1B: 2/6/92: c.509) as they

reflect on their practices and search for a basis for their judgement of student teachers' abilities and needs (Irene, 1B: 2/6/92: c.87; Matthew, 48B: 21/1/94: c.20, c.87), final responsibility for learning and growing does lie with the student teacher. It is what the student teacher brings to task responsibilities *that separates the excellent student teacher from the good student teacher and the average student teacher* (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.450).

In summary, what was valued by the cooperating teachers was an individualised and contextually located approach in working with student teachers. That approach may well represent an ideal given the nature of the preschool day and the length of time the student teacher has to come to know and understand the nuances of the practicum environment.

The last section in this chapter now moves from the cooperating teachers' perceptions of ways of working with the student teachers and Matthew's explanation of responses to student level functioning. It takes up the cooperating teachers' images of their role as revealed through their metaphors of practice as ways of synthesising cooperating teachers' experiences .

COOPERATING TEACHERS' METAPHORS OF EXPERIENCE

Metaphors are useful because they provide a way of viewing the experiences of cooperating teaching from a perspective in which there can be shared understanding without a direct focusing on self. The images portrayed through the metaphors not only assisted in conveying the essence of their experiences but facilitated their own understanding of what they were experiencing.

There were three metaphors within the cooperating teachers' texts which not only serve as useful representations of the cooperating teachers' thoughts and concerns but reflect key issues which permeated the cooperating teachers' conversations. These metaphors have been selected because they are fundamental to the experiences of the cooperating teachers.

The first issue, which focuses on processes indicative of quality practices, is revealed

through the metaphor of window cleaning (Matthew 48B: 21/1/94: c.44). The second issue is concerned with what student teachers bring to the practicum, where student teacher thinking is symbolised as a cauldron (Irene, 35A: 15/10/92: c.20). The third issue is concerned with the experiential nature of the practicum and here the experiences of the practicum are represented within the metaphor of a stream (Julie, 41A: 5/11/93: c.450).

'DOING THE JOB'

A task oriented, functional approach focuses on actions. Matthew used the metaphor of window cleaning to express his understanding of the difference between a tick-the-box or functional approach and the quality way in which cooperating teachers work. However, if the purpose of the wiping is to **clean** the windows and the outcomes rely on a judgement of cleanliness, then the process or way in which the job is undertaken is as important as steps taken to complete the task itself. For Matthew, *we may be aware of the things we do but it is the way of doing that has such a dramatic effect* (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.465). The *windows* can be *wiped* but not necessarily **cleaned**. A functional approach focuses on the activity of wiping:

> *It's like, I have wiped the windows. Yes! They're still covered in dirt but I have done it. I have done my job.* (Matthew, 48B: 21/1/94: c.44-60)

Quality lies in the value that is placed on the processes and on the checking to see that the processes have achieved the desired outcome. The focus of quality is on the process that brings about the desired outcome of particular actions rather than *something that is laid on in a prescriptive* way (Matthew, 48B: 21/1/94: c.18):

> *Quality is not in what happens on the day, necessarily. The quality is in the thought and the analysis of what has gone before, what has happened then and what you hope to do later. That is what suffers when you get busy.* (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.375)

Most often, the student teacher operating at the activity functional level focuses on the activity rather than on what is to be achieved through the activity. In wiping the window, the purpose of undertaking the task or completing the activity is to be able to see clearly

through the glass and into the depth of what lies beyond. In working with young children, it is not the activity itself that is important but what is achieved that is relevant to the child's long term development.

One of the purposes of cooperating teaching is to enable the student teacher to think things through and develop an understanding of what teaching in early childhood is like, so that those understandings may be applied in different contexts. Strategies that the cooperating teacher employs in working with the student teacher need to be *matched to the student teacher's level of understanding* (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.39). An astute assessment of student teacher functioning by the cooperating teacher is required in the process, for:

> *you can't walk in with preconceived ideas about what they are going to learn at prac. because you don't know what they are up to.* (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.28)

For the cooperating teacher to *see clearly* is to develop an understanding of the student teacher and use selected strategies to facilitate student teacher learning through practicum experiences. For quality to exist and improvement of student teacher practices to occur both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher need to be willing to *problem solve* (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.167). Matthew considered that, where the student teacher is not responsive to the actions of the cooperating teacher then the interest of the cooperating teacher is likely to wane and a *minimalist approach* is again adopted (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.535).

Where the cooperating teacher and/or the student teacher have limited time or do not see the value in spending time undertaking an analysis of the student teacher's work and drawing threads together, quality suffers. The functions of providing feedback, substantiating and directing/resourcing, as ways to facilitate student teacher learning, are most often not fulfilled. Quality suffers when the cooperating teacher is unable to follow the student teacher's *thread of learning* (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.380).

'WEAVING THE THREADS'

A narrative thread is a linking of similar ideas within a themed story (Kate, TS2: 2/7/92: p.1). One of the themes that became evident in the work of the cooperating teachers is that there is no one prescriptive way in which student teacher learning can be facilitated. However, the following general themes emerged across the data:

- ► to enhance student teacher learning the cooperating teacher *needs to know where they are within the course and... (within their own developmental continuum of development)... so that you can work out your final expectation* (Irene, 35A: 15/10/92: c. 146; Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.5);

- ► student teachers, as adult learners must accept responsibility for their own learning (Matthew, 48B: 21/1/94: c.22);

- ► experiencing is an important part of learning (Elaine, TS4: 14/8/92);

- ► student teacher attitude strongly influences the ways in which the cooperating teacher works with the student teacher (Julie, TS6: 2/12/92; Matthew, TS5: 9/9/92; Irene, 38B: 26/10/92: c.65, c.190, c.245).

As indicated in the previous chapter on style, potentially successful student teachers come to the practicum with a sensitivity to the nature of teaching in early childhood, a degree of self-confidence and maturity which enables them to explore the learning potential of the practicum as well as be sensitive in their relationships with others. These student teachers appear to the cooperating teachers as being secure in the knowledge that they can question, challenge and learn from the knowledge and skills of the cooperating teacher. They are able to engage in the more sophisticated aspects of *thinking things out* (Matthew, 12B: 23/7/92: c.250) and *thinking-on-the job* (Matthew, 23A: 12/8/92: c.45) or *thinking-on-your-feet* (Matthew, 44B: 17/11/92: c.60) in which they integrate knowledge, skills and understandings and apply them within a context about which they have already become informed.

They come with enthusiasm which is *deep* and personal, *something that is really them* (Irene, 35A: 15/10/92: c.20). There is no constant of imitative behaviour where a student teacher should merely copy, *in a superficial way*, the way in which the cooperating teacher

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acts (Irene, 35A: 15/10/92: c.5). Irene explained that early childhood teaching is:

> *much deeper than objectives ... you have to think about what everyone else is doing... (You need the) ... awareness to know what's happening ... and the way all the staff are working together.* (Irene, 37A: 21/10/92: c.296)

Irene wondered whether it is always a matter of meaning or seeing relationships in a patterned form or whether what occurred was a much greater mix of *knowledge and personal/professional experiences* (Irene, 35A: 15/10/92: c.20).

The thread which wove its way through the cooperating teachers' conceptions of their role was the uncertainty and unpredictability of cooperating teaching. While there were expectations that student teachers would come with knowledge and skills developed through university coursework, cooperating teachers had to develop their own understandings of the student teacher's functioning within a relatively short period of time if they were going to be able to successfully individualise their work with that student teacher. To be able to assist student teachers and make judgements about them, the cooperating teachers need to be able to pull together a whole lot of threads rather than take a unidimensional view.

'MIXING THE SOUP CAULDRON'

Irene likened the ongoing nature of teacher thinking in practice to a soup cauldron in which thought and action are fluid and intertwined. It is this activity in which the more astute student teachers begin to engage as they undertake what Matthew described as thinking-on-the-job.

In Irene's metaphor it is possible to understand some of the complexities of teaching. The *soup*, while already within the person, may be stirred by individualised strategies found in the type of spoon that the cooperating teacher uses to draw out student teacher ideas. The cooperating teacher may also choose to add additional ingredients (Irene, 37A: 21/10/92: c.278). The way in which the 'stirring' occurs can be can be *modified (and) feedback given according to (the cooperating teacher's) own assessment of student teacher's strengths*

and weaknesses (Irene, 1B: 2/6/92: c.38; 87; 21A: 7/8/92: c.52; 22B: 12/8/92: c.316; 37A: 21/10/92: c.285; 38A: 26/10/92: c.214). It is through this process that the cooperating teacher *individualises* (Irene, 37A: 21/10/92: c.278) according to *their understanding of the student teacher's perspectives* (Irene, 38B: 30/10/92: c.191). The cooperating teacher is always there. They can *step in and support the student teacher's learning from experience... (in a positive way)... so avoiding being shattered by that experience* (Irene, 21A: 7/8/92: c.183). Student teachers may be guided in their planning and supported in their work with children so that their confidence is promoted and their capacity to be self-reliant is fostered.

Sometimes the cooperating teacher makes a decision to take out the 'spoon' to enable the student teacher to experience the consequences of their actions, or they 'ladle' out small amounts of information or support at a time (Irene, 37A: 21/10/92: c.390, c.460). Always the cooperating teacher is aware of balancing the needs of student teachers with a concern for lost opportunities for children's learning (Irene, 37A: 21/10/92: c.470, c.490).

Cooperating teachers 'fuel' student teacher understanding through their own contextual and professional knowledge. It is the cooperating teacher who best *knows children and is able to interpret their behaviour in the context of how they came to be that way* (Irene, 17A: 4/8/92: c.206). They can resource the student teacher by suggesting strategies and using examples drawn from everyday concrete experiences in which the student teacher is engaged (Irene, 21B: 10/8/92: c.100).

The key aspects of Irene's *practical sense* (Irene, TS1: 2/7/92) bubble within the cauldron. These are the motivational aspects of teaching within the context of what is known about these children at this point in time and within this context. Consideration here needs to be given to such things as:

> *appropriate selection of topic, careful choice of materials, positioning of children in group; questioning and other techniques used to create and maintain interest; flexibility in presentation so that there are opportunities to respond to and extend contributions made by the children; being prepared to follow and extend children's particular interests.* (Irene, 9B: 22/6/92: c.212; 34A: 13/10/92: c.18)

The extensive nature of opportunities available to student teachers and the diversity of feedback is always limited by time constraints or length of practicum period. While attention to the individual student teacher and the student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship are important, the practicum itself reaches beyond these foci within a wider context of personal/professional development and values and beliefs about young children's learning.

Learning is more than being academic - it is experiencing. Elaine valued life's experiences and was desirous that environments in which young children took part were conducive to their affective development. She therefore implied to the student teacher the importance of enabling children to become independent and self-reliant, accepting responsibility for themselves. The metaphor of a web (Elaine, TS4: 14/8/92) reflected for Elaine the intricate yet interconnected dimensions of life and of teacher's work.

Connections come in both thought and action - in the association of ideas through relationships. Underlying this there is a sense of responsibility and feeling towards but also a responsiveness to the other. There is a caring relationship here between cooperating teacher and student teacher. That relationship is evident in Julie's metaphor of practicum as a stream.

'PADDLING THE STREAM' OF THE PRACTICUM

This metaphor has been chosen because it reveals the sense of movement and continuity found within experience - the living and the feeling. It portrays the pressure or force that both contains and directs the boundaries of the experience. It reflects the essence of what cooperating teachers experienced as they worked through the periods of time when they were responsible for student teachers.

The 'stream' represented Julie's view of the practicum experience from a holistic perspective:

> *It (the practicum and student teacher/cooperating teacher relationships*
> *within it)... is almost like a development each day ...*
> *It's like a stream... flowing along...*
> *It keeps on going as each week goes by.*

A lot of things happen.
It's good...
It's not.
Let's go back and try another way.
It flows on ...
As each week went on a lot of things happened.
Even if it was good or bad it flowed on from experience.
'I tried that way last week... I'll have to try something else this week'.
All this tossing.
Toing and froing the whole time 'til completion.
There are rocks...(and)... rapids (to negotiate).
Not knowing which way to go.
Paddle back and go the other way.
(The university) expects it to be clear sailing... the student teacher and
cooperating teacher to flow all the way (down the stream) but it doesn't
happen like that... There is nobody (able to assist the cooperating
teacher)... if they get stuck.

(Julie, 43A: 5/11/93: c.450).

The *stream* begins with the commencement of the practicum and ends with the student teacher's departure at the conclusion of the block period. Julie's thoughts initially focused on the *flow* of the stream. At the surface level, this flow appears to have generic qualities depicted by the university's view of the practicum. Such a view is outlined in practicum requirements which are designed to cater for all student teachers in varying contexts. The practicum curriculum guidelines are seen as *generic*, being designed to have wide applicability (Kate: J2: 27/6/94). Yet little responsibility was given to cooperating teachers to adapt the guidelines to meet the structure of individual preschools, children's developmental and cultural background or patterns of attendance, staff policy and rotation processes (Matthew, 48B: 21/1/94: c.1). There was also little recognition of the individuality experienced within each student teacher/cooperating teacher dyad (Kate, J2: 27/6/94[10]).

The living and experiencing associated with the journey of being a cooperating teacher is represented in Julie's metaphor through the ongoing *flow* of the *stream*. The cooperating teacher and the student teacher are caught up in the flow which is beyond their control. There are obstacles. Some of these may be able to be anticipated, others remain hidden within the personal form of the student teacher (Julie, J2: 27/6/94).

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[10] There is no page number given for reference as it was a large flow chart developed in conjunction with Julie and Kate.

The route for the journey is largely one of *paddling* through uncharted waters. For Julie, the events that unfolded caused *toing and froing* and a *tossing (about)* which sometimes required *a paddling back... (to)... go the other way*. Like *real life, the practicum is unpredictable...* one can't necessarily see the future (Kate, J2: 27/6/94).

Julie's metaphor of a stream partly reveals the 'stream' of ongoing experience of being a cooperating teacher - its ever-changing dimensions and the tensions. Always moving; new and changing circumstances; being caught up and mixed with what has gone before. There was the *not knowing which way to go* and the questioning as to what alternative approaches could be adopted with the student teacher. The water was muddy. Sometimes, the actions Julie took and the feedback she provided to the student teacher did not bring the changes in the student teacher's practices that she had anticipated. Dilemmas were experienced - not knowing which way to go. Julie did not always feel that she was skilled in paddling. She expected support from university personnel but that was not forthcoming. She expected the student teacher to act on suggestions but the student teacher was not responsive. Julie would test-the-water as she considered and used particular strategies with the student teacher. Sometimes she could flow on with these strategies. Sometimes they had to be reviewed and alternate paths found. There were many occasions when Julie felt the need to find another way to *paddle* with the student teacher.

Time and timing acted as constraints. They impacted on the force of the flow. The length of the block practicum and when the practicum occurred within the teacher education programme influenced Julie's expectations of the student teacher. As it was a final practicum before graduation Julie expected that the student teacher should be able to function as an early childhood teacher.

Flow also brings to mind *volume. There are... (*requirements that have to be met*)... and measures that have to be taken* (Kate, J2: 27/6/94). The work to be undertaken by the student teacher represented the *constant* and *predictable* requirements of the university found within the practicum curriculum guidelines.

Flow might suggest that things move easily and smoothly but there can be force or pressure from either outside or inside. While the smoothness of the waters may be influenced by the

generic quality of the universities' practicum expectations, judgements are made by the cooperating teacher and university personnel regarding the student teacher's successful completion of the practicum. Where the student teacher's purpose in undertaking the practicum is purely to pass in order to graduate, then the motivation leads more readily to the completion merely of university set tasks.

The completion of required tasks and the application of criteria or minimal standards established by the university signify the end of the stream. For Julie and her student teacher, this was a final practicum prior to the student teacher's graduation. The outcomes therefore had the potential to impact immediately on the student teacher's ability to gain employment as a qualified professional. Julie's feedback to the university on the student teacher's performance thus had major implications for the student teacher.

Julie found that, as the practicum flowed on, there were many obstacles (i.e., *rocks)*. Some of these could be dodged, others stood as barriers. Still others became dislodged and moved to other positions. Some rocks remained deep below the surface yet, like experience, they influenced life's flow.

The obstacles challenged Julie's personal resources and caused her to try other ways of supporting the student teacher in reaching the university's criteria and Julie's own expectations. Sometimes she felt that she was '*paddling*' against the tide when practicum time was running out and there was little change in the behaviour of the student teacher.

The *flow* of student teacher/cooperating teacher relationships was an important issue. Not only were cooperating teachers having to deal with professional issues but also moral issues concerning student teacher behaviour. Julie, Irene and Matthew all spoke of a comfortableness or comfortableness with student teachers and the decisions they made about them. To be comfortable in their relationships with the student teachers was to have a feeling that they and the student teacher had common understanding or a common sense of purpose. There was a feeling of discomfort when the student teacher's actions did not reflect what the cooperating teacher believed was in the best interest of the children or was not perceived by the cooperating teacher to reflect appropriate professional behaviour.

The relational aspects of the flow were fragile for Julie as she and the student teacher *paddled* - were they together or were they in separate boats? For the student teacher, whose main interest is in securing a passing grade for the four week block, the need is to know what has to be done to get there (Kate, J2: 27/6/94). For the cooperating teacher there is the 'not knowing what' the student teacher may bring with them in terms of knowledge, skills, and life's experiences. The cooperating teacher and the student teacher may not be *paddling* in the same direction. Where the student teacher's image of teaching is different from that of the cooperating teacher they may be 'paddling in different boats'. Whether student teacher and cooperating teacher have the same or different goals, the quality of cooperating teaching has implications for student teachers.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

The threads of cooperating teachers' perceptions of their work weave the patterns from their experiences, perceptions of teaching in early childhood, images of student teachers and perceptions of the cooperating teachers' role. The cooperating teachers' metaphors of experience reveal the extent to which they were purposefully involved in being a cooperating teacher. There is evidence that that involvement goes far beyond undertaking routine ways of practice (Matthew, 47B: 26/11/92: c.110). Whether facilitating or teaching, the cooperating teachers did more than perform roles. Their commitment is evident in the *buzz* (Matthew, 48A: 21/1/94: c.530) and *excitement* (Irene, 47A: 26/11/92: p.1) in knowing that they have made a difference in the student teachers' practices or enabled a student teacher to *see the light* (Irene, 47A: 26/11/92: c.5).

Being a cooperating teacher is more than just being there; it is more than the doing or acting in a role. It is living on a day-to-day basis in a relationship with a student teacher. Whether fuelling and stirring the cauldron of student teacher thinking, paddling in a relationship or focusing on the processes involved in quality practices, the cooperating teachers were caught up in the rhythm of events which were the practicum. Their thoughts and actions were set in the continuity of time and the sense that they made of what they experienced came through the inner revelations they depicted in their metaphors.

The messages revealed here through metaphors are as much a cultural 'telling' as they are a record of the experiences of five cooperating teachers. Whether the metaphors reflect experience or reveal images there is an underlying unity which expresses the concern of the cooperating teachers for what is right for the well being of children. In that sense, their work with student teachers has moral overtones.

Cooperating teachers offer student teachers more than opportunities to apply knowledge and implement techniques acquired at the university. They offer experiences in the democratic group life of the preschool centre. What is more important to them than the student teacher's choice of topic or activities found in their planning, is the child(ren) for whom they have planned these activities and/or the children with whom they work in informal situations. This is the essence of caring relationships and it is this caring that is of major concern to the cooperating teachers. There are underlying principles at work in the role as cooperating teacher. Each child's developmental needs and the ethical and moral practices in which adults engage are brought to bear within the environments they create for student teachers.

The cooperating teachers viewed themselves as sharers of knowledge and as carers who may have the wisdom of knowledge and experience. For them, being a cooperating teacher brought with it not only the responsibility for a student teacher but in that responsibility a commitment to the provision of appropriate experiences for young children. As developing professionals, student teachers are expected to be part of the staff team - to swim in the centre's organisational stream and to be accountable for their own efforts. Cooperating teachers accept responsibility for the student teacher in the knowledge that they are accountable for what happens to the young children in their care. Tensions arise where the student teachers perceive that their only responsibility is to the university and the programme in which they are enrolled. The cooperating teacher has a responsibility to ensure that as an adult working with children, the student teacher is not placed in a position which contravenes regulatory standards. Yet the cooperating teacher does not have the authority to determine the practicum curriculum. Student teachers are ultimately accountable to the university, not to preschool centre management.

The next chapter discusses how the cooperating teachers viewed their relationships with the

universities. They were aware of those relationships through practicum documentation, the requirement to provide student teacher assessments and through the activities that the student teachers themselves sought to be involved in. The strength of the university's impact on how the cooperating teachers viewed their role became more evident when tensions arose which challenged the images they held of that role.

CHAPTER 7

DISENCHANTMENT IN COOPERATING TEACHER/ UNIVERSITY RELATIONSHIPS

Earlier data analysis chapters have revealed the cooperating teachers' perspectives on the nature of cooperating teaching, the expectations they have of student teachers, and their own role within the practicm. Those chapters have drawn heavily on data from Julie's story reconstruction and the themed stories written from the cooperating teachers' transcripts. As will be discussed in detail in Chapter Nine, the presentation of these data analysis chapters provided an opportunity to explore the efficacy of different forms of narrative as a tool for reconstructing lived experiences.

This chapter focuses on the organisation of practicum itself and the nature of communications between the cooperating teachers and the universities. While still engaging in a form of storying, it differs from previous chapters in the way in which it is constructed. It uses Elaine's experiences of her relationships with the university to trigger reporting of accounts from the other cooperating teachers. It also capitalises on the use of key words found within the texts of one or other of the cooperating teachers to further explore key issues.

There are at least two reasons for the differences in approach that has been taken here. First, as with the previous chapter, this chapter attempts to not only expose and draw together the contrasting views of the cooperating teachers but locates these specifically within the context of the practicum as established by the university. Second, while drawing heavily on their texts, the chapter has been written after the completion of my work with the cooperating teachers and has not been shared with them. Therefore, the ongoing exploration of concepts has not been as direct as it was where I shared my writing with the cooperating teachers.

As my own commentaries are woven within the texts of the cooperating teachers that are reported here, there are indeed many 'stories' in this chapter. These include elements of both biography and autobiography as the cooperating teachers draw on their own

experiences. The language of those experiences includes description, metaphor, interpretation and analysis. Each of the cooperating teacher's voices will be heard. Some speak more strongly than others, yet the chorus is one of concern and disenchantment.

It is Elaine's voice that has been chosen to lead the presentation for it is she who struggles in managing her relationships with the university. Elaine's themed story (Appendix 3.3) explored the web of experience. In that account experience was conceived as *the skills, practical knowledge and wisdom gained by observing, doing or living through situations or events* (Elaine, TS4: 14/8/92: p.1). The narrative account that emerges within this chapter is constructed around three occasions when contact with the university impacts on the life of the cooperating teacher. These are the times when first, the university introduces its expectations of the practicum; second, the university supervisor visits the preschool during the practicum itself; and third, the time at which final assessment of the student teacher occurs. Tensions between the authority and responsibility of cooperating teachers and those of the university become evident as the final assessment of the student teacher is undertaken.

The cooperating teachers' perspectives on each of the occasions of contact with the university, along with brief interpretative comments, form the three sections to be found within the chapter. When considered as a whole, the three sections reflect the mapping of the practicum as it proceeds from an initial introduction of university expectations to a conclusion upon the completion of the block practicum. However, while the process may be represented at the surface level through the three occasions, elaborations on these events by the cooperating teachers would suggest otherwise.

Previous chapters have addressed some of the tensions that exist in the ways in which the cooperating teachers experience the journeys of the student teachers through the practicum. This chapter explores the underlying hopes and expectations that cooperating teachers hold of university supervisors, and the degree to which these remain unfulfilled. It also identifies the potential for difficulties to exist where there is only one way communication, from the university to cooperating teachers.

HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS WITHIN THE WEB OF EXPERIENCE

There is an expectation by cooperating teachers that, having indicated their willingness to have a student teacher for the practicum, particular events and outcomes will occur. Cooperating teachers have knowledge of the nature of the practicum from their own teacher training. They know what teaching in early childhood is like (because that is what they do), and they have expectations of student teachers as developing professionals. With the professional development of student teachers in mind, cooperating teachers in this study expected that student teachers would come to the practicum with university requirements to be met and that these would be documented for both the student teachers and the cooperating teachers. Therefore, they expected a package of written material (including practicum curriculum guidelines and student teacher assessment documents), to be sent to them from the university, prior to the commencement of the practicum (Elaine, 12A: 21/7/92: p.1, l.5; Irene, 16B: 31/7/92: c.277).

Elaine shared with me the documentation that she received from the university - the teaching experience report form, a student teacher appraisal guide, and university curriculum guidelines (University of Newcastle, 1992a, 1992b, 1992c). The report form was to be completed by Elaine in conjunction with the student teacher and the university supervisor at the conclusion of the practicum. Elaine remarked how the appraisal guide supported her in identifying those aspects of the student teacher's work that she should comment upon in the ongoing and final assessment of the student teacher (Elaine, 10A: 24/6/92: p.1, l.18). From her own experience Elaine knew that the practicum curriculum guidelines would indicate what tasks the student teacher was required to complete during the practicum. However, she was also aware of the need to negotiate with the student teacher how and when these tasks may be undertaken. The tasks needed to be accommodated within the web of experiences available within the preschool.

SEARCHING THE WEB

Changes within the established preschool programme were sometimes necessary in order to accommodate the requirements that the university made of student teachers. There was

therefore a potential that student teachers, and therefore changes, would impact on all staff within the preschool. The degree of success in fulfilling such task requirements was often dependent upon the extent to which the cooperating teacher managed the relationships between student teachers, staff and university requirements.

It is not only the tasks which the student teacher needed to undertake that had to be addressed but also the nature of experiences in which the student teachers could participate. Opportunities to discuss the student teacher's work with them and to identify requirements needing to be accommodated within the preschool programme were important. It cannot be assumed, however, that the student teacher learns through experience alone. The challenge for the cooperating teachers was to find ways of fostering the student teacher's development through the task requirements and engagement in other experiences within the preschool. Since the block practicum period was relatively short there was a limited time during which the cooperating teachers were able to foster student teacher development and effect change.

Like the other cooperating teachers, Elaine had written documentation to guide her in her role as cooperating teacher. But, unlike the other cooperating teachers, she was offered an opportunity to meet with university personnel at a pre-practicum meeting to be held at the university. This meeting was organised by the university for all cooperating teachers associated with that university's practicum programme. Although she had quite a distance to travel, Elaine felt it important to attend. At her own expense, she engaged another staff member to replace her at the preschool and drove the one hundred and fifty kilometres that it took to reach the university to be present at the late afternoon meeting (Elaine, 10A: 24/6/92: p.2, l.10). She was out to seek the *magic formula* so that she could adequately fulfill her obligations as a cooperating teacher (Elaine,12A: 21/7/92: p.1, l.24). She thought that maybe someone would be able to give her some ideas about how she could best meet the university's expectations of her and of the student teacher.

Elaine spent most of the time at the pre-practicum meeting talking with other cooperating teachers. Many of the cooperating teachers who were present sought clarification regarding the specific student teachers who had been assigned to them. It was a busy time for the university staff and Elaine understood how important it was to ensure that all of the

practicum details were finalised. However, this left little time for group discussion concerning the supervision of student teachers. No magic formula was forthcoming.

Elaine felt disappointed. Without the magic formula, she searched for her own personal meaning of the practicum. Without particular training in the supervision skills required of a cooperating teacher she thought about her own experiences as a mature age student, her knowledge of university coursework and of the university staff who had developed and would be supervising the practicum. Like the other cooperating teachers, she would draw on her own *inner resources* in guiding the student teachers.

What is required in quality teaching and learning is more than magical practices and recipes, it requires knowledge, skills and a sensitivity to application within a context. Elaine *looked forward to gaining a lot from the student teacher.. (yet) how does the cooperating teacher set about enhancing the development of a good student teacher* (Elaine, 10A: 24/6/92: p.1, l.12)? Elaine expressed her concern - *I want the university to get what they want from me but I'm not quite sure what they want* (Elaine, 10A: 24/6/92: p.1, l.19).

To what extent is it possible for the university to take individual contexts and the nature of life as an early childhood teacher into account when establishing the practicum curriculum and the assessment of student teachers within it? A magic formula addresses the surface things that you do. It is understanding the rationale behind the doing, the knowing of why as well as the how, that is important (Matthew, 42A: 6/11/92: c..104).

The practicum curriculum guidelines provide the structure. They tell what has to be done and identify the role(s) of the cooperating teacher, but how can the cooperating teacher most effectively fulfill that role? How is it best to work with individual student teachers? What is it that the cooperating teacher should be trying to achieve in relation to the student teacher? There is a puzzlement here and while each cooperating teacher may address these questions from an individual perspective surely there must be anticipation by the university of a common outcome. Can this be found in the university's student teacher assessment document? Maybe, but Elaine was unsure about the process by which the outcomes within it may be achieved. And yet, she says that she already knew *the university supervisor's expectations... (for) they are internalised... (She just has difficulty)... dragging them forth*

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(Elaine, 15A: 30/7/92: c.370). Understandings may be internalised yet it is important to be able to express those understandings. Did Elaine have the language of practice?

One of the items in the student teacher assessment document referred to leadership skills (University of Newcastle, 1992c). When Elaine was asked what she understood these to be she said that she would *think about it a little bit more* (Elaine, 15A: 30/7/92: c.303). Some days later she engaged in a conversation using the notes she had specifically prepared in order to convey her understanding of the university's expectation of leadership qualities (Elaine, 18A: 5/8/92: c.135).

The issue of expectations was not only one of what was expected of student teachers but also what was expected by the university of cooperating teachers. Elaine had expressed her underlying concern as she sought the magic formula. For the other cooperating teachers it surfaced in other ways as they considered their expectations of student teachers and those of the university. It was not just the activities or tasks that student teachers needed to undertake that was of concern to the cooperating teachers but what it was that the university wished to develop in student teachers as a result of engaging in such activities or by completing specified tasks.

'HAVING A RATIONALE...'

There was a concern that, within the practicum curriculum guidelines, *the university appears to be more concerned with quantity rather than quality* (Irene, 31B: 18/9/92: c. 140). While the university practicum curriculum guidelines provided the structure, the cooperating teachers sought flexibility in their application. Once the rationale for requiring the student teacher to undertake particular tasks was clear, then the ways in which the skills inherent in that task could be developed and applied, might be determined (Irene, 31B: 18/9/92: c.140; Matthew, 13B: 27/7/92: c.330). Irene considered *it made the practices so much more worthwhile and interesting when you are (aware of) the rationale* (Irene, RTS4: 25/8/92: p.6) for otherwise, not only do student teachers *fail to see the importance but are unable to appreciate the purposefulness of their work* (Irene, RRSD: 18/9/92: p.1).

Both Irene and Matthew wished that they could negotiate the curriculum guidelines (Matthew, 42A: 6/11/92: c.135; 40B: 3/11/92: C.132). For example, the issue of the student teacher being required to undertake delegation and responsibility within the playroom was, in their view, an unreasonable and unnatural expectation (Matthew, 40B: 3/11/92: c.162). For Matthew and Irene, it was the rationale behind the university's requirement that student teachers undertake delegation that needed to be addressed. Why not look at those skills required to delegate and choose some small group activity in which they could be readily demonstrated? Matthew could not see that there was:

> *some magic thing about delegating the whole day that makes you any better at it, than demonstrating that you can delegate when you've got an activity planned... the same sort of skills are demonstrated* (Matthew, 42A: 6/11/92: c.104-112).

It was disconcerting for Matthew and Irene to find that curriculum guidelines outlining university requirements of student teachers did not reflect the particular type of setting (i.e., preschool) in which the student teacher was undertaking their practicum. Matthew drew my attention to the university's practicum curriculum guidelines which identified the tasks to be undertaken with children from birth to five years, yet student teachers were placed in preschool settings which catered for 3-5 year olds (Matthew, 17B: 4/8/92: c.300). In this same situation the assessment criteria did not emphasise what he considered to be the critical competencies required of an early childhood professional (Matthew, 17B: 4/8/92: p.10, l.3). These obvious discrepancies Matthew identified in conjunction with his concern about the insensitivity of university requirements to practices within the preschool environment. Matthew and Irene dealt with this by setting specific requirements for the student teacher and asserting that *it is a requirements here... it doesn't worry us whether it's a requirement of the university or not* (Matthew, 16A: 31/7/92: c.180).

Irene considered that, as an adult, it was the student teacher's responsibility to ensure that the university expectations were met (Irene, 17A: 4/8/92: c.23). However, she was also aware that her own expectations of student teachers may overshadow those set within the university guidelines:

> *Sometimes, I won't even read them... I rely on the student teachers to work*

them out... After all it is the student teacher .... who is the one who will
finally be judged by the university (Irene, 16B: 31/7/92: c.277).

Alternatively, Julie and Elaine felt personally responsible for ensuring that the student teacher successfully completed her practicum (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: p.6, l.11). If the student teacher did not fulfill university requirements then Julie felt that it was seen as a reflection on herself. While she and other cooperating teachers were critical of university expectations they did try to accommodate the student teacher's requests (Julie, 32A: 22/9/92: pp.9-10; Irene, 17A: 4/8/92: c.23; 31B: 18/9/92: c.140). Where there was tension between university expectations and what the cooperating teacher expected, the deciding factor was what was common practice in a particular preschool (Irene, 16B: 31/7/92: c.277; 21A: 7/8/92: c.80; Matthew, 12B: 23/7/92: c.420).

Student teachers cannot act alone in the practicum. Part of their success will be achieved through their working relationship with the cooperating teacher. Elaine was sensitive to the intrusiveness that a student teacher may feel in coming into a fully functioning preschool to undertake tasks that had been determined by the university which had no knowledge of the work climate or the programme of individual preschools. She remembers that, as a student teacher, she was concerned how the preschool in which she undertook her practicum was imposed upon (Elaine: 14A: 28/7/92: c.375). She also remembers the supervisory visits by university personnel and how stressful they were for her.

Cooperating teachers had a respect for student teachers as people. This meant that their relationship was one of not wanting *to be horrible* (Irene, 44A: 17/11/92: c.190) in criticising the student teacher. They formed a relationship with the student teacher but within that relationship they were expected to make judgements about the student teacher's work.

There is a personal contact with the university for the cooperating teacher through the university supervisor. While the curriculum guidelines are a link between the university and cooperating teachers the relationship at this level is an impersonal one. Visits by university supervisors have the potential to have much more personal impact. While any visitor (including myself as researcher) must be accommodated within the daily programme,

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university supervisors come for a purpose - to follow up on the student teacher's progress. To that extent, university supervisors may be seen to have an impact on student teacher/cooperating teacher relationships. They are much more likely to have an impact on the organisational climate of the preschool because any visitor must be accommodated within the daily programme.

The balance of that relationship can be tipped by personal and circumstantial factors. One of these is the way in which the university supervisor enters the student teacher/cooperating teacher relationship and makes judgements about the student teacher's work. The next section in this chapter addresses the tentativeness of student teacher/cooperating teacher relationships and the ways in which these relationships accommodate the university supervisor.

STUDENT TEACHER/COOPERATING TEACHER/UNIVERSITY RELATIONSHIPS

Elaine felt that she was developing a *good relationship* with the student teacher. Together they were able to share in the joys and challenges of their day-to-day work within the preschool. Elaine told of how she was *absolutely delighted* with the response the student teacher gained from a child whose low self-esteem had been of concern. She exclaimed excitedly... *if you'd seen my face you would have known it* (Elaine, 13A: 24/7/92: c.30). This personal investment was also evident in Irene's *excitement* about having effected changes in student teacher behaviour (Irene, 47A: 26/11/92: c.1).

Elaine recognised the stress that university supervisory visits can cause for student teacher (Elaine, 14A: 28/7/92: c.20). She felt an empathy with this student teacher for *that was me* (Elaine, 13A: 24/7/92: c.90). The visit by the university supervisor would, however, impact not only on the student teacher but also on the responsibilities she had as a cooperating teacher. The university supervisor was not a stranger to her for she had worked with her on previous occasions. While Elaine felt that she could look on this person more *as a friend,* she also perceived that as a supervisor *you are further up the hierarchy and you are seen to have more power* (Elaine, 14A: 28/7/92: c.445) .

Friend or not, Elaine sometimes felt that the university supervisor or even the cooperating teacher can make it very difficult for the student teacher (Elaine, 14A: 28/7/92: c.510). On the positive side, the university supervisor is in a position to deal more in *a more clinical way* (Irene: 44A: 17/11/92: c.210) with student teacher difficulties. The university supervisor/student teacher relationship is one where there is less personal involvement. By distancing the cooperating teacher from particular issues, the university supervisor *can make things more comfortable* (Irene, 44A: 17/11/92: c.213) for the cooperating teacher's ongoing relationships with the student teacher. Elaine was very sensitive to such a relationship. She did not want anything to occur that may have a negative effect on the student teacher for whom she was responsible (Elaine, 14A: 28/7/92: c.520).

Kate had a clearer view of the purpose of the supervisory visit. She saw it as being an opportunity for the university supervisor to observe the student teacher, read and discuss the student teacher's planning and engage in discussion with the student teacher and herself concerning aspects of the student teacher's work with children (Kate, 4A: 10/6/92: p.4, l.34). These activities were to culminate in the university supervisor undertaking with her (as the cooperating teacher) and the student teacher a round table conference which included the progressive assessment of the student teacher according to the criteria within the university's student teacher assessment document.

There was nothing unusual about these activities in that they were what might be considered to be typical by the university. University handbooks listed expectations of university supervisors as well as those of the cooperating teacher and the student teacher (see Appendix 12 for list of university documents). The requirements of university supervisors are also informally communicated to university supervisors.

Elaine felt positive in that the university supervisor would be able to spend most of the day at the preschool (Elaine, 14A: 28/7/92: c.165). This was in contrast to the other cooperating teachers whose experiences were with university supervisors who had limited time to spend on a supervisory visit.

University supervisors often do not have the opportunity to observe more than surface behaviours on their fleeting visits to student teachers. Or is it, Irene wondered, that the

university's concerns are only with addressing the concrete things and the way you act or the attainment of sets of competencies which can be checked off as they are attained (Irene, 9B: 22/6/92: c.107), and not the nature of the student teacher's relationships with the children and their responsiveness to them? (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.23, 1.3).

ANTICIPATING *THE FLYING VISITOR*

Sometimes university supervisors are known to the cooperating teachers but on many occasions they are not. While Elaine felt she knew the supervisor quite well, Kate had not had any previous experience with the supervisor who came to visit her student teacher. She had, however, had experiences with many other supervisors. Kate was aware that, because of the number of student teachers that university supervisors needed to visit, it was possible that, on this occasion, the supervisor may only spend a half hour or so observing the student teacher (Kate, 4A: 10/6/92: p.2, 1.30).

Matthew wondered about what could be achieved in the short, hasty *flying visits* of the university supervisor (Matthew, 29A: 10/9/92: c.130). For Irene and Matthew, there were many instances when university supervisors made only brief visits to meet with the student teacher and the cooperating teacher. The *flying visitor* arrived in a flurry, quickly checked the student teacher's log book, sometimes spent a little time talking with the cooperating teacher about the student teacher's assessment and then was off again (Matthew, 29A: 10/9/92: c.130). Under these circumstances, there was little time to establish relationships with the university supervisor; hence a perception arose that the university supervisor was not sufficiently well informed about the student teacher, the context in which the student teacher was completing their practicum requirements or, in some cases, the university requirements within the practicum itself (Irene, 10B: 25/6/92: c.242; 21A: 7/8/92: c.156: Matthew, 16A: 31/7/92: c.186; c.300; 23A: 12/8/92: c.170; 29A: 24/9/92: c.171). While flying visitors may be present for only a short time, their presence was disruptive to the normal functioning of the preschool day.

There are a number of things which can contribute to the disruptive nature of supervisory visits. Sometimes it is the expectations of the cooperating teacher, sometimes the qualities

of the student teacher, and sometimes the personality and expertise of the university supervisor. The visits of the university supervisor often had an effect on the tone of cooperating teacher/student teacher relationships.

Cooperating teachers in this study made judgements about their relationships with student teachers and how they would manage the impact of the university supervisor's visit on the student teacher's contribution to and participation in the assessment. Their responses varied. When the university supervisor rang to say that she was coming *tomorrow* instead of *later in the week*, Kate had no hesitation in accepting the change in plans (Kate, 4A: 10/6/92: p.2, l.25).

Kate felt that she really knew the student teacher and was confident about her work. She discussed with the student teacher what the university supervisor's visit to-morrow might be like. She began by reassuring the student teacher - *I said to her that the university supervisor had asked me how everything was going and I said that you were fine...a very competent student, and I didn't think that there were any problems* (Kate, 4A: 10/6/92: p.2, l.3). Kate hoped that this would reassure the student teacher. She and the student teacher had developed a trustful relationship and they engaged in open communication. Was the student teacher apprehensive? No, only a little nervous. The supportive nature of the relationship between Kate and the student teacher enabled them both to work together towards the enhancement of the student teacher's professional skills and to address university expectations.

Julie and Matthew were also particularly supportive of student teachers when they knew that supervisory visits were to be made. Julie readily understood that there is something about having a student teacher and sharing professional responsibility with them. Somehow in establishing a relationship with them, you, as the cooperating teacher, accept personal responsibility for them and, as was found in Julie's relationship with the university supervisor (Chapter Four), this influences the way in which you discuss a student teacher's work with the university supervisor.

On the other hand, Matthew focused not on personal relationships between himself and the student teachers but on protecting the student teacher from any intrusion by the university

supervisor which would place the student teacher *in an invidious position where their behaviour is worse than it really is to the flying visitor* (Matthew, 29A: 10/9/92: c.130). Matthew, Irene and Julie were aware of the problems where university supervisors make judgements about student teachers on limited observation and scanning of the student teacher's planning book (Irene, 16B: 31//7/92: c.155; 21A: 7/8/92: c.100; Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.4, l.11; p.22, l.22; Matthew, 23A: 12/8/92: c.160; 42A: 6/11/92: c.170).

Because of their shared responsibility for a number of student teachers, Matthew and Irene did not have the same opportunity to develop ongoing relationships with the student teachers (Matthew, 10B: 25/6/92: c.228). Unlike the other cooperating teachers, who had student teachers for longer periods of time, they were responsible for a student teacher for only two weeks at a time (J1: 1/6/92: p.1). However, one advantage they had was the opportunity to discuss their perceptions of student teachers within a shared context and therefore the potential to act as a resource to each other (J1: 12/6/92: p.18).

Support for student teachers often overrode support for university supervisors. Elaine was wary because, if it was anything like what she experienced as a student teacher, the visit would be quite stressful. Therefore, she did what she could to support the student teacher emotionally (Elaine, 14A: 28/7/92: p.20). Matthew and Irene, exposed to many different university supervisors whose knowledge of practicum expectations was often quite limited, managed their expectations of student teachers and did not take any particular steps towards facilitating the visits of the university supervisors (J1: 31/7/92: pp.71-73; 12/8/92: p.90). They were always welcome to come at any time. For them, the university supervisor needed to be prepared to fit into the day's routine.

Since Irene and Matthew had many student teachers, they considered that their flexible approach would enable them to mange the flow and expectations of university supervisors as well as the requirements of the student teachers themselves. The actions taken by Irene and Matthew were contextualised within the preschool environment rather than being a direct response to the university requirements. Such an approach was reflected in the ways in which they managed student teachers. Matthew spoke of the importance of student teachers *slotting in* to the regular pattern of experiences provided for children at the preschool (Matthew, 10B: 25/6/92: c.65). It was, therefore, important to allow student

teachers time to *melt down and become part of the team* (Irene, 3B: 9/6/92: c.230).

There was one occasion, when the university indicated that it would accept responsibility for a particular student teacher's supervision and assessment (Matthew, 21B: 10/8/92: c.160). The perceptions of Irene and Matthew were that, at least on the surface, they were not to have any influence over that student teacher because the university had not assigned any responsibility to them, yet they were responsible for any adult (including the student teacher) who worked in the preschool with the children. Here, it was the cooperating teacher rather than the student teacher who was actually placed in an invidious position by the stance taken by the university. It was important for the student teacher to work within the preschool organisational climate, yet the university was suggesting that cooperating teachers had no authority to require this to happen.

On another occasion, another university said that cooperating teachers were to take full responsibility for student teachers yet no payment was to be made to them for that additional responsibility and the university still retained the right to pass or fail the student teacher (Matthew, 35B: 15/10/92: c. 40). Variations between the universities in their expectations of cooperating teachers and in one university from time to time surely contributed to Irene's and Matthew's sense of responsibility towards and expectations of student teachers. Such variations also exacerbated the lack of regard for the knowledge and skills of the university supervisor and the limited time they had available. While the cooperating teachers had expectations of university supervisors and anticipated what would occur on the occasion of that visit, those expectations were not always fulfilled. Time was a factor, but also of importance were the knowledge, skills and understandings held by the university supervisors themselves.

THE 'FLYING VISITOR'

Kate organised her day so that time could be set aside for discussion of the student teacher's progress (which sometimes can be quite long and involved), and time for the supervisor to observe the student teacher. In preparation for the visit, Kate checked the criteria on the assessment document and *had a quick chat* to the student teacher about

what she was going to say (Kate, 4A: 10/6/92: p.5, 1.5). She wanted to also gain the student teacher's perceptions of herself so that there were not great differences in their perceptions.

Sometimes supervisors are quite perceptive and alert to student teacher needs but *you still have to be quite careful about what you're saying to the supervisor... so that you don't jeopardise a student teacher's assessment* (Kate, 4A: 10/6/92: pp.4-5). Kate wanted to facilitate an interactive discussion of the student teacher's work rather than put the student *on the spot* (Kate, 4A: 10/6/92: p.5, 1.13).

There were assumptions that Kate made about what the university supervisor's perceptions of the student teacher's work might be. However, she felt that having ensured that she and the student teacher held perspectives in common, they together could address issues and concerns that the university supervisor might raise (Kate, 4A: 10/6/92: p.5, 1.9). Tensions would arise only if the judgements the university supervisor made about the student teacher appeared to Kate to be in conflict to those she had formulated through her continuous monitoring of the student teacher's work.

Preparation by the cooperating teachers extends beyond a preparedness to discuss student teacher assessment. While provisions may be made for the university supervisor to undertake observation of the student teacher, check the student teacher's planning book and discuss the student teacher's work with them, most of these activities need to be undertaken within a relatively short time frame. Some disruption to the regular preschool day is caused by these activities. Round table conferencing does not always occur but the cooperating teachers needed to be prepared and so organise time to be available for this. Other staff then become involved as they have to share responsibilities in order to free the cooperating teacher's time for discussion. These are the more routine practices that cooperating teachers could expect to be associated with a university supervisor's visit. However, they also need to be prepared for the unexpected.

DEALING WITH *'THE WILD CARD'*

It is not surprising to find that university supervisors, on their supervisory visits, rely heavily

on adherence to the curriculum guidelines and other written documentation and focus on the technical aspects of teaching when discussing student teachers' work. In their flying visits university supervisors have little opportunity to come to know and understand how the student teacher works within the context of this group of children (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.23, l.18; Irene, 21A: 7/8/92: c.156).

University supervisors readily focus on the technical aspects of teaching. It is difficult for them to do otherwise when they have limited opportunities to come to know and understand the developing relationships between student teacher, children and cooperating teacher (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: p.23, l.9; Matthew, 42A: 6/11/92: c.170). As Irene explained:

> *cooperating teachers know the children... the university supervisor may be helpful in terms of book work but in terms of how the student teachers work with the children, it is preschool staff who know the children and how they respond* (Irene, 49B: 1/12/92: c.484).

Matthew considered that this is why university supervisors may often only make generalised assumptions about student teachers.

University supervisors do not have opportunities to get to know the children and therefore may find it difficult to make judgements about the degree of artistry in which student teachers may engage. It was the difficulty in being able to judge the student teacher's responsiveness to the children that Julie found to be one of the factors relating to the stressfulness in her relationship with the university supervisor (Julie, NR1: 8/8/93).

Matthew and Irene had many different university supervisors visiting the preschool to supervise the large number of student teachers they had agreed to accept during the period of this study. Many of these university supervisors they had not met before. On the other hand, Julie, Kate and Elaine knew, or had heard about, the university supervisors who were to visit the student teachers for whom they were responsible. However, as was Julie's experience (Chapter Four), knowing about the university supervisor did not necessarily mean that she could predict what would occur when she visited to observe and discuss the student teacher's work.

If the challenge for student teachers is not there in the kinds of support given by a cooperating teacher (for example, the perspectives provided by Elaine) it certainly may come with the expectations and actions of university supervisors (Irene, 16B: 31/7/92: c.205). Not only may they present an alternative perspective to that of the cooperating teacher on the student teacher's work, they may make requirements which contradict those of the cooperating teacher or just not know what is required (Matthew, 16A: 31/7/92: c.300; 23A: 12/8/92: c.160; Irene, 16B: 31/7/92: c.205; 51A: 9/12/92: c.220).

The actions of university supervisors are sometimes seen by the cooperating teachers, to be intrusive in the personal relationship which they have developed with the student teacher (Irene, 16B: 31/7/92: c.254). Working in close relationships with the student teachers means that cooperating teachers develop a personal responsiveness to student teacher needs. Where the university supervisor identifies with the student teacher and together they hold a different view from that of the cooperating teacher, this causes tension within the student teacher/cooperating teacher relationships. Inadvertently, it may also undermine the confidence of the student teacher (Irene, 16B: 31/7/92: c. 175, c.205; Matthew, 23A: 12/8/92: c.170). This tension is exacerbated where a university supervisor does not have the knowledge or skills expected by cooperating teachers for someone seen to be in an advisory/support role (Matthew, 23A: 12/8/92: c.175). In such instances the quality of the feedback that the university supervisor can then provide to student teachers is questionable and could be disadvantageous for the student teacher (Matthew, 29A: 10/9/92: c.171).

It certainly feels as if there is a far greater *oneness of purpose between you and the student teacher...* (when there is no university supervisor making visits*). ... No fear of a wild card resulting in stress on you... the wild card intrudes on the oneness of purpose* (between you, as cooperating teacher and the student teacher) (Matthew, 37B: 21/10/92: c. 250). There is a concern as to *whether the university really understands what cooperating teachers do* (Matthew, 35B: 15/10/92: c.40) when there is *little or no support... (by the university)... for the work being done by cooperating teachers* (Irene, 10B: 25/6/92: c.25) and when they go ahead and *make alternate practicum arrangements at your centre without even consultation with you* (Irene, 16B: 31/7/92: c.254).

Elaine was comfortable with the visit of the university supervisor when she visited midway

during the practicum but she then had to prepare for the student teacher's final assessment. Elaine referred to the Student Teacher Assessment Guide as a resource to guide her in what it was that she ought to be commenting upon in her assessment of the student teacher but she did not actually mark it off (Elaine, 22A: 11/8/92: c.230). What was really of concern to her were the written comments that were required on the final assessment report. Because of her uncertainty, she *rang a couple of friends* to see what they did (Elaine, 22A: 11/8/92: c.262).

Elaine felt a responsibility here but again was unsure of what the university expected so she began with some rough notes. She said that she thought the university supervisor would have similar perceptions of the student teacher to hers but did she really know? She was hesitant to formally record her comments (Elaine, 22A: 11/8/92: c.338). Her notes were supported by the university supervisor and the student teacher. In writing freely about the student teacher's warmth, spontaneity and responsiveness to children and adults, the diversity of teaching interests and abilities, Elaine had gained the result she wanted. The student teacher would be recommended for distinction in the practicum. Elaine was pleased for the student teacher but she was also pleased that she had contributed to this very successful outcome for she felt that outcome was a reflection on her ability too. Elaine had also felt the tension of my presence as researcher and noted this within the student teacher's assessment as being something that the student teacher also had to deal with (J2: 13/8/92: p.93). Elaine's feeling for and with the student teacher remained with her until the completion of the practicum.

In summary, the nature of student teacher/cooperating teacher relationships was recognised by the cooperating teachers as being a tentative one where the university supervisor as the third person in the triadic student teacher/cooperating teacher/university relationships may often be seen to be intrusive. Cooperating teachers and student teachers working together on a daily basis developed a greater oneness of purpose within the organisational climate of the preschool and the context of children's interests than could be realised by the university supervisors. Tensions arose where university supervisors were unable to support the cooperating teachers or even recognise the perspectives that cooperating teachers brought to working with student teachers within the practicum. The culmination of such tensions was often found at the time of completion of student teacher assessments. Ideally

(and according to university curriculum guidelines and assessment documents), the determination of what should appear in the comments within student teacher assessment documents is negotiated between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher along with the university supervisor. However, this is not always the case. The process, whether undertaken jointly or as an outcome of the cooperating teacher's own decision making brings into question the degree of authority held by the cooperating teachers.

THE TENSION BETWEEN AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Tensions arose where the cooperating teachers felt that university expectations of student teachers were contrary to the regular practices of the preschool or general principles associated with the education of young children. It is problematic, for example, to insist on *global planning... (when it)... runs counter to planning for individual children* (Matthew, 40B: 3/11/92: c.132); to say that a focus child plan developed for an individual child can be implemented with another child (Irene, 1B: 2/6/92: c.520); or to expect the student teacher to be responsible for the whole environment and delegate responsibilities to permanent staff who have already established their own working relationships within the staff team (Matthew, 40B: 3/11/92: c.162). There were contradictions here between the give and take indicative of the nature of teamwork and university requirements that student teachers take authority and assign responsibility to staff who already are accustomed to working as team members with shared responsibilities. Matthew saw it as placing student teachers in a false position of authority (Matthew, 40B: 3/11/92: c.162).

The problems can be seen to exist within the day-to-day working climate of the preschool. One of the problems of requiring student teachers to take full responsibility for the functioning of the playroom, for example, is that student teachers are expected to self-evaluate and therefore staff are asked not to intervene. However, a week may go by before the student teacher realises that not only does a problem exist but something has to be done about it. By this time *the staff are upset and bad feelings have been created between them and the student teacher* because of the inappropriateness of the university requirement (Matthew, 40B: 3/11/92: c. 168). The student teacher is not considered a staff member within child care regulations nor by the preschool staff. It is therefore not possible for the

student teacher to have the same responsibility for the preschool programme and the children within it, as do the other staff (Matthew 40B: 3/11/92: c.162).

As was indicated in Chapter Four regarding the difficulties experienced by Julie, there were also tensions in the contrasting understandings which cooperating teachers and university supervisors held of student teachers' work. The cooperating teachers found that it was frustrating when the ongoing support they sought from the university supervisor was not forthcoming. Julie, for example, felt the need to challenge what she perceived to the authority of the university supervisor. It was near the end of the practicum block when the university supervisor visited to discuss the student teacher's progress. The university supervisor suggested that the student teacher change her planning format. Julie responded with annoyance arguing that it was the last week of the practicum and, as both the student teacher and Julie herself could follow the plans when they were set out that way, it was really impractical to ask the student teacher to change as she perceived that it would serve no useful purpose at this stage (Julie, 45A: 18/11/92: pp.18-19).

Of course, on many occasions, the university supervisor may not be present when cooperating teachers have to deal with a difficult situation involving a student teacher. They therefore just accept responsibility and deal with it on the basis of their own professional judgement. Irene told of an incident where she was particularly concerned when a student teacher became upset while taking a planned experience with a small group of children and left the group (Irene, 49B: 1/12/92: c.120). It had been a frustrating day for Irene for the student teacher was supposed to be taking responsibility for managing the whole environment yet she was not letting other staff know of her expectations (Irene, 49B: 1/12/92: c.110). She needed to delegate responsibilities but was not doing so. It was now time for the student teacher to call all the children together into a large group. She did this without making any requests for assistance from the other staff (Irene, 49B: 1/12/92: c.140). The student teacher began assigning small groups of children to individual staff members. Irene watched as the student teacher sat down with her own group of children. She waited, then she got up from the chair on which she was sitting and left the room. Irene, became puzzled. Maybe the student teacher had forgotten something. But, when she did not return Irene asked if I would take the group while she went to see what the problem was (J2: 1/12/92: p.41).

Irene found the student teacher in the staffroom. She asked the student teacher why she had walked off. The reason given by the student teacher was that it was *all too much*. Irene felt quite angry and explained that under no circumstances were children to be left alone - *she didn't seem to understand that you can't leave a group of children on their own* (Irene, 49B: 1/12/92: c.136). If the student were acting in the role of a staff member, this could be considered to be in breach of safety regulations. Irene felt that she had the responsibility of dealing with both the immediacy of care for the children and the student teacher's distress. She needed to handle the situation within the context in which the problem had arisen (Irene, 49B: 1/12/92: c.122). Some days later, Irene and the student teacher reflected on this incident and recognised how the *counselling session* enabled the situation to be resolved in terms of the student teacher's understanding of the difficulties and Irene's *feeling comfortable* with her decision to confront the student teacher with the issues (Irene, 51A: 9/12/92: c.120).

In accepting responsibility for a student teacher Irene had become accountable to the licensing authority for that student as an adult working with young children. While Irene had responsibility and may have discussed the incident with the student teacher and the university, she did however, feel that she had the authority to determine whether the student teacher's actions should result in a failing grade for the practicum (Irene, 49B: 1/12/92: c.270, c.418). Irene had to deal with a student teacher in a difficult situation but this is what one has to do as a cooperating teacher. Just as teaching children involves working with artistry in unpredictable situations, so does cooperating teaching. The university supervisor is not there to take any of that responsibility.

This incident was only one of a number of events reflecting difficulties that the particular student teacher had been experiencing. Irene, therefore, was confident in her decision to recommend a failing grade for the student teacher - *you can not just walk out on young children* (Irene, 49B: 1/12/92: c.122). Irene did not feel the need to consult the university. Then, why should she when little consideration appears to be given to the knowledge and skills of the cooperating teacher in knowing and judging the student teacher's work (Matthew, 16A: 31/7/92: c.186; 23A: 12/8/92: c.85; 29A: 10/9/92: c.171).

KNOWING AND JUDGING THE STUDENT TEACHER'S WORK

Matthew had a concern about what he perceived to be the university's:

> *sloppy approach to the development of criteria for assessment of student teachers (in which) there is little emphasis on the importance of development knowledge, curriculum and the quality of adult/child relationships.* (Matthew, 17B: 4/8/92: c.300)

He had a concern that the university's assessment criteria often inadequately represented the true dimensions of early childhood teaching (discussed in Chapter Six). Often the more abstract characteristics of attitude, values and dispositions are not readily identified in practicum assessment criteria yet they were deemed to be important by the ways in which the cooperating teachers commented on student teachers' behaviours. Communicating these perceptions to university supervisors requires a level of common understanding which was not always possible where there was the limited contact with university supervisors. And yet, there are particular qualities, found within certain people, that Matthew considered you would not want to *inflict on children* (Matthew, 42A: 6/11/92: c.140).

As revealed in Chapter Five, the concerns about student teachers' professional style surfaced as an issue for Julie, Matthew and Irene when considering how to convey their concerns about student teachers' behaviour to the university. It was a challenge for them to convince the university to appreciate these concerns when university coursework is not the context in which aspects of style are readily observed. From Matthew's point of view, there needed to be greater links between the university assessment criteria and professional dimensions of style so that a common understanding of professional goals for student teachers could be achieved.

EXPERIENCING A *'ONENESS OF PURPOSE'*

There was an expectation by cooperating teachers that university supervisors would act both in harmony with them and as resource persons. Elaine had anticipated that she and the university would have *similar views* (Elaine, 22A: 11/8/92: c.338). University supervisors

needed to be able to clarify/interpret university expectations, provide advice on strategies the cooperating teacher may use in working with the student teacher, and suggest appropriate techniques for student supervision (Matthew, 23A: 12/8/92: c.171; 35B: 15/10/92: c.5; 37B: 21/10/95: c.256). Matthew sought, in the university supervisor, the professional knowledge and skills he valued as an early childhood educator. He and the other cooperating teachers looked to university supervisors as colleagues who held views in common with them yet there was a mixed sense of authority (Irene, 16B: 31/7/92: c.205; 44A: 17/11/92: c.210). *Why,* he asks, *should the student be worried where there is no role model... and the university supervisor just breezes in and out, ticks everything, and walks away?* (Matthew, 17B: 4/8/92: c.115). Such an attitude portrays to student teachers a more technical approach to their work and reinforces the perception that so long as the required tasks have been completed they have met the requirements of the university.

Whether their views were positive and supportive of the student teacher or critical of the student teacher's work, the objectivity that the university supervisor had the potential to present was valued by the cooperating teachers (Irene, 16B: 31/7/92: c.155; 22B: 12/8/92: c.50; Matthew, 7A: 12/6/92: c.130). Where there was common understanding between the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor, the personal relationships that developed between student teacher and cooperating teacher were not compromised (Irene, 22B: 12/8/92: c.80; 44A: 17/11/92: c. 190; Elaine, 24B:13/8/92: c.40). Where there was a *oneness of purpose* (Matthew, 37B: 26/10/92: c.252), the cooperating teachers felt confident in supporting the student teacher's development throughout the practicum and in drawing the experience to a satisfactory conclusion for all concerned.

MAKING ASSESSMENT DECISIONS

It was the final assessment and grading of the student teacher that marked the conclusion of the block practicum. However, this experience itself was not without its difficulties. Since a student teacher's progress within the teacher education programme relied upon a satisfactory grade in the practicum the final assessment was critical in the eyes of the student teacher. It was also important for the university's assessment. The tensions are evident in Irene's concern as she reports of what she told the student teacher:

I said that, looking at it on paper there would be a question (of you failing). There are 3s, 4s, and 5s, that have been marked on the rating scale. You would be a pass student and you have been fantastic over the past two days. But, taking into account what happened beforehand, I don't know how deeply this change has been. I don't feel confident in passing you. But, I also don't feel confident in failing you. (Irene: 51A: 9/12/92: c.58)

What Irene did was not only discuss her concerns with the student teacher but also write detailed comments on the student teacher's assessment document. Irene had seen an improvement in the student teacher's work but, after discussing it fully with the student teacher, now began to feel *comfortable* with her decision. There was a feeling of relief.

The tensions of the practicum came to a close with a sense of *relief* for Julie also (Julie, 46A: 23/11/92: p.1, l.9) as well as *freedom* for Irene. Matthew and Julie were both pleased to have the responsibility of their own groups of children again so that they could focus once more on the children's learning. Whatever the reaction, there was evidence that there was some emotional involvement of the cooperating teacher in the practicum.

Elaine had struggled with her own role throughout the practicum. That struggle had built up to the second visit of the university supervisor for the student teacher's final assessment. The satisfactory completion of the practicum was evident in Elaine's response at the end of a rather tense day for her:

We've done it. We got the results we wanted... The university supervisor knows me reasonably well ... and I had a good student teacher... the relationship between us was excellent. So really, there was a feeling of support...of friendship.

After yesterday I feel calmed down... a feeling of great relief... everybody let go... the pressure. There was a feeling of freedom and that's wonderful. (Elaine, 24B: 13/8/92: pp.3-4)

The intenseness of the practicum experience appeared to be registered not only by the student teacher but also by Elaine herself. While there were many issues which the cooperating teachers had in common concerning their relationships with the university what underpinned the ways in which they impacted on the cooperating teachers was the quality of their own relationships with the student teachers.

This same combination of people who had different dimensions created quite a different perspective of the practicum experience for Kate:

> *It's the student teacher's second last day. I have to make time to go through her Final Assessment with her... I've pencilled in most of my perceptions but I want to discuss these with the student teacher before I proceed further...*
>
> *The university supervisor telephoned again this morning. She had previously indicated that she would not be visiting the student teacher again but she called to see whether she could be of assistance in any way. She also asked whether my impressions or perceptions of the student teacher had changed in any way. They hadn't.*
>
> *I think it was actually very supportive of the university supervisor to avail herself in this way.* (Kate, 9A: 18/6/92: pp.7-12)

The cooperating teachers brought their own personal dimensions to the practicum experience and these interacted with those of the student teacher so forming a personal/professional dynamic between cooperating teacher and student teacher within the practicum. Kate's relationship of security and confidence (mentioned earlier) contrasted with the challenges which student teachers often provided in Irene's relationship with them. Elaine's own personal insecurity (identified earlier in this chapter) meant that she lived the emotional aspects of student teaching with the student teacher. Julie's found the student teacher to be a continual challenge (Chapter Four) and, while Matthew became less personally involved, he was quite critical of the quality of the practicum experiences provided for student teachers (Matthew, 48B: 21/1/94: c.60).

Since Julie had experienced difficulty in being able to motivate the student teacher and enhance her general awareness of and responsiveness within the environment she looked forward to the support that could potentially be provided by the university supervisor. This is how she reported her experience of *round table conferencing*, the perceived model for a collaborative approach to the completion of student teacher assessment:

> *Previously, with a different university adviser, it was much more of an open discussion about what was going on and how we felt, and lots of positive input from all sides... I had thought that the assessment meeting would have been an opportunity to really look at aspects of the student teacher's development. We could have discussed it all there but it just didn't work that way. ...But the*

main focus this time was me.

Communication is still difficult with the student teacher. I found the round-table conference between the university supervisor, the student teacher and myself to be a disaster. The university supervisor she seemed to be a bit disorganised. When we sat down for the discussion the university supervisor was a little bit airy fairy about what we were supposed to be doing...

I was wanting to use the opportunity for the university supervisor to give me the support so I could open up and confront the student teacher with the areas she had to work on. But before I had a chance to start anything the University supervisor said 'Oh, the planned group experience was really good.... Lots of good ideas'. Maybe she was just giving encouragement...

I had gone through the assessment criteria with the student teacher beforehand so she was not unaware of what I would say. However, her only contribution to the discussion were brief comments such as 'Yes, that's good' or 'I think so'. When the university supervisor tried to make a conversation out of the discussion the only response she got from the student teacher when she directed the conversation towards here was, 'Yeah, I've done that' or Yeah, I know'... The responses were very abrupt. Sometimes I get the impression that the student teacher doesn't care.

It was difficult. There was not a lot of support from the university supervisor so I felt that I had to support every thing that I said. It was like as if I was on trial... I was sitting there saying, 'Oh, quick, let's read this as soon as I can and get it over and done with and get out of here'... It was me sitting in the middle, one on either side... Maybe she was concentrating purely on the student teacher, while I was concentrating on the student teacher's interactions with my group of children. Maybe, that's where the conflict lies because she doesn't know what those children are really like, and I know that those children could really be extended. So now it is all on my shoulders. Now I think, what am I going to do? In three days the student teacher will be gone.
(Extracts from complete transcript - Julie, 45A: 18/11/92)

Julie's frustration both with the attitude of the student teacher and with the inability of the university supervisor to meet her expectations left her with a feeling of tension created by uncharted waters. There was a combination of student teacher qualities, university supervisor perceptions and her own reactions to these that resonated with Julie.

For Julie, the university supervisor's visit did not solve her problems with the student teacher. Julie looked for *outside support* (Julie, 46A: 23/11/92: p.16: l.16) but it was not forthcoming. Relief came at the end of the practicum when she was able to put the experience out of her mind (Julie, 46A: 23/11/92: p.1: l.7) and refocus on the children's

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needs and a concern for their development (Julie, 46A: 23/11/92: p.20).

CONCLUDING COMMENT

In summary, the cooperating teachers saw the positive aspects of their relationships with the university as being threefold. The university provided a more detached view of desirable student teacher competencies through the university's assessment criteria; it identified, through practicum curriculum guidelines, a range of activities in which student teachers were required to engage; and there was the potential for university supervisors to provide a resourcing role for both the student teachers and the cooperating teachers.

Julie's metaphor of the practicum as stream has aptly captured not only the cooperating teachers' experience of the practicum but can be used to identify the issues which were of concern and therefore surfaced as tensions for the cooperating teachers. Such tensions arose where the images which the cooperating teachers held of cooperating teaching, student teachers, themselves as cooperating teachers and their relationships with the university were not reflected in the reality of the practicum. These tensions became evident as the cooperating teachers worked with the student teachers and addressed each university's requirements of the practicum.

The cooperating teachers in this study looked forward to sharing resources with student teachers and supporting their development as emerging professionals. However, they sought recognition by and support from the university for their involvement in what has been identified in this study as cooperating teaching. While they were prepared to give of their time and expertise, they recognised that their initial responsibility was always to the children and, by implication, their parents. The cooperating teachers were concerned that student teachers should be aware of this, and that through their attitude as developing early childhood professionals they also displayed a sense of responsibility towards the children.

What has been revealed through this and the previous three chapters are many insights into not only the perceptions that these cooperating teachers have of their role, and of teaching in early childhood, but the very essence of what they see to be the qualities of an early

childhood professional. Those qualities and the differences that the cooperating teachers saw between their perceptions and those indicated by the university through university documentation and the university supervisor's visits resulted in many concerns being expressed by the cooperating teachers. One of the ways in which they were able to give voice to the concerns they felt, which were not only literal but involved an emotional experiencing, was through the use of metaphor. The next two discussion chapters explore the cooperating teachers' metaphors and how the use of metaphor enabled them to reconstruct their understandings of and perspectives on their practices.

CHAPTER 8

RECONSTRUCTING THE COOPERATING TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

> Narrative may be thought of as a cyclic reconstruction... of the rhythm of teaching... reflect(ing) a complex of interweaving circles which, when penetrated, create a sense of narrative purpose. (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986, pp. 379, 385)

The four previous chapters have revealed how cooperating teachers used metaphor to both describe the nature of the practicum and convey the ways in which they experienced the events within it. In those chapters little interpretation has been made in relation to the literature. There is a need to move beyond the narrative genre designed to convey the experiential quality of cooperating teaching to another level of understanding in the cyclical reconstruction of meaning (Beattie, 1991, 1995a; Clandinin & Connelly, 1986). Throughout this chapter, the interweaving patterns of narrative texts are penetrated again as the literature is used to extend previous interpretations and find new meanings. In this way a link is made between the personal perspectives revealed in the earlier chapters and Chapter Nine which discusses key issues arising from the study.

Initially, this chapter turns back to the cooperating teachers' metaphors of the practicum and their experiences within it to find another level of interpretation of those experiences to gain further understanding of the nature of cooperating teaching and the identification of student teacher competencies. Consideration is given to how these metaphors were able to illuminate contrasting ecological and technical perspectives of the practicum and support a contextual view of the practicum. In refocusing on an ecological perspective the chapter highlights the importance of relationships whether they be between cooperating teacher and student teacher, between cooperating teacher and the university, or within student teacher/child interactions. As the chapter spotlights student teacher/child relationships, an in-depth analysis of 'care' is undertaken as a reflection of the concept of style (Chapter Five), indicative of particular competencies sought in student teachers. The chapter then focuses on 'responsiveness' as an aspect of care and reveals how the nature and extent of cooperating teachers' concerns for responsiveness not only permeated their work as early childhood teachers but were reflected within cooperating teaching itself. The chapter concludes with an interrupted reading of a short extract from Irene's text. The interrupted

reading shows how the data has been interpreted and provides a mechanism by which the authenticity of the study itself may be checked.

Metaphor became a useful tool in enabling the qualities of Julie's and Matthew's[11] experiences to be revealed through their metaphors of 'a stream' and of 'wiping the window'[12]. The word metaphor is taken from the Greek - *metaphora*, meaning 'to carry over... (or)... across'. These cooperating teachers found that metaphors were able to 'carry across' their understandings so that others may share in their insights into those understandings.

Julie's living metaphor of a stream and the metaphor of cooperating teaching as artistry were able to provide for the 'holistic richness' (Hager & Beckett, 1995, p.3) of cooperating teachers' work which is portrayed as being dynamic and multifaceted. It was also seen to be relational and contextual. The personal attributes required of student teachers within those relationships emerged through the cooperating teachers' themed stories as they expressed their concerns with student teachers' attitudes and behaviour.

Matthew's metaphor of window wiping and Julie's living metaphor of stream provided a contrast between a reductionist, linear and task-oriented perspective of the practicum and one which reflects a relational, interactive and fluid perspective. Matthew's metaphor reflected a concern for the task-oriented nature of the practicum curriculum and the criteria upon which student assessment is based. The metaphor readily addresses a 'rational' approach which is more analytical and therefore accommodates 'categorisation' of skills, 'segmentation of tasks' and 'measurement of competencies' indicative of a behaviourist approach (Capra, 1982, p.39).

Contrasting reductionist and relational metaphors provide opportunities to view the experiences of cooperating teachers from different perspectives which reflect the distinction

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[11] Names of individual cooperating teachers will be used in this discussion where the information presented is drawn from the field texts of the particular teacher who is identified by name. Where comments in the research text refer to all of the five cooperating teachers in the study, then the plural form, *cooperating teachers*, will be used.

[12] Reference to field texts throughout the discussion will be provided only where those references have not been identified in the data analysis chapters or where a quotation from the cooperating teacher's text is included.

made by Capra (1982) between rational (indicative of a more reductionist approach) and intuitive. For Capra, rational thinking is 'linear, focused and analytical' (p.38). On the other hand, 'intuitive knowledge' (Capra, 1982, p.39) is the awareness which Julie sought in her student teacher. 'Intuitive wisdom' (Capra, 1982, p.39) is what Julie sought in herself as she engaged in the uncertainty, uniqueness and tensions of cooperating teaching (Schon, 1987). In contrast with rational and analytical thought, it can be said that intuitive wisdom is the basis of ecological activity (Capra, 1982). Wisdom, reflecting 'knowledge and good judgement based on experience' (Barnhart, 1974) is what Julie drew on as she met the challenges of working with a difficult student teacher. In making judgements about the student teacher Julie, as a cooperating teacher, acted purposefully with intuition, initiative, contextual and professional knowledge and skill in guiding the student teacher. In doing so she displayed many of the competencies sought by the cooperating teachers in student teachers.

It is interesting here to consider the term 'practice teaching'. The phrase 'practice makes perfect' reflects a positivist view in that it has a training orientation placing an emphasis on technical competence and assumes that there is 'an established teacher role into which all potential teachers must fit' (Bullough & Gitlin, 1991, p.37). There is little indication within this ecological view of the nature of the practicum as experienced by the cooperating teachers in this study. Nor does the view reflect the 'personal competencies' advocated by Hager & Butler (1994) in their model for initial professional education or Matthew's *practically applied developmentally functional level* (Chapter Six). Views of a rational nature warrant further analysis because of the implications they have for the current debate concerning the identification of competencies within initial teacher education and implications for the practicum (Kennedy & Preston, 1995; Preston & Kennedy, 1995).

PERSPECTIVES ON THE PRACTICUM

In the previous section, two perspectives of teaching were identified and related to what may be considered as the ecology of the practicum. It is important to identify the essence of both the technical/reductionist perspective and the ecological/relational perspective as they apply to early childhood education before moving on to discuss the importance which

the cooperating teachers in this study gave to the nature of relationships and key elements within them.

A TECHNICAL/REDUCTIONIST PERSPECTIVE

In contrast with the ecological metaphors, Matthew's metaphor of window wiping portrays a technical perspective of student teacher practicum. Such a perspective may be found within an apprenticeship model which, as discussed in the literature review, gives little recognition to the educative and supportive functions of the supervision of student teachers and/or to intelligent action required on the part of the student teachers themselves (Bolin, 1988; Kane, 1995; Roth, 1989; Yarrow, 1992; Zeichner, 1986, 1992). The technical view which Matthew proposed through his metaphor of window wiping focuses largely on what Yonemura describes as 'surface observables' (Yonemura, 1986, p.120), with little attention to the integrative nature of thinking which Matthew sought in student teachers who are able to think-on-their-feet.

There is a difference between wiping and cleaning. The steps are routine and rational and the window wiping task, if analysed in sufficient detail, requires little commitment of the self (other than the motivation to do a good job). Matthew's technical view placed an emphasis on the techniques of student teacher planning whereas an ecological perspective is also concerned with the application or enactment of the plans (J2: 1/12/92: p.42).

A technical perspective of the practicum was seen by Kate and Julie to be represented by a generic practicum curriculum which provided a channel of predictable and controlled activities indicative of routine practice. Cooperating teachers do more than supervise the student teachers' completion of task requirements. Julie and Kate considered that universities held a view of the practicum as having a definite beginning and an end and, within it, a smooth flow of activities to be undertaken during the period (Julie & Kate: J2: 27/6/94). This view, channelled by a specific and task-oriented university curriculum, gave little recognition to the life of the stream of the practicum or the flow of relationships. The life of the stream had been choked by the extent of the detail in the universities' practicum curriculum guidelines.

A technical/task-oriented approach is what Matthew called the 'tick-the-box syndrome' because it focuses on surface observables. These observables are behaviours or activities which could be checked off as incidences of those behaviours are observed. Reflected in this process is an attitude which conceives of teaching as doing teaching and therefore of undertaking tasks. It reflects the contrast Julie made between 'being like a teacher' and experiencing 'being a teacher'. Views of teaching were of concern to the cooperating teachers particularly where a more technical and didactic view reinforced the powerfulness of adults over young children.

The cooperating teachers were concerned that where student teachers were task/activity oriented rather than child oriented they were expressing their authority over children. Where student teachers portrayed a sense of **authority over** children there appeared to be little **sensitivity towards** children.

Of concern to Matthew was that cooperating teachers themselves modelled authority within relationships as, where time was limited, feedback to the student teachers most often focused on the structure and content of student teachers' planning. He could effectively do his job, in terms of university requirements, by giving structured feedback. However, feedback may be undertaken with little consideration being given to fostering an effective relationship with the student teacher or to the student teacher's relationships with children. The likelihood of a focus on meeting task requirements is increased where large numbers of task requirements set by the university need to be met by student teachers over short periods of time. In such situations, it is suggested that student teachers teach for survival (Bullough & Gitlin, 1991).

A technical/task oriented approach by universities to the practicum was of concern to the cooperating teachers for they considered that it would lead student teachers to engage in practices which were more routine. The cooperating teachers also expressed concern that the requirements set for cooperating teachers by the university focused on things that the cooperating teacher was required to do rather than the processes involved. These requirements were seen by Kate to be a form of university control over the generic curriculum of the practicum and this was an indication of the authority held by the university.

The application of a technical perspective

It can be argued that the technical perspective is largely concerned with efficiency, effectiveness and control. It reflects a view of teacher as informer and of teaching as controlling. Within the context of early childhood education the technical perspective is more likely to find its application in custodial and controlling behaviours of caregivers towards young children rather than in situations where there is a high level of response and accepting behaviour towards young children (Clarke-Stewart, 1987; Doherty-Derkowski, 1995; Leavitt, 1991; Wangmann, 1995). In contrast, caring, which incorporates 'emotional responsiveness' (Leavitt, 1994, pp.78-79) has a far deeper connotation than is implied by the notion of 'looking after'. In consideration of this requirement and McLean's claim that there is no 'formula' that can be applied to teaching in early childhood and no 'foolproof recipe' (McLean, 1991, p.224), it is difficult to accept competency and performance as they are interpreted within a behaviourist framework (Kennedy & Preston, 1995). Attention has recently been drawn to:

> developments in cognitive psychology, learning theory and understandings of purposeful action in complex real life situations... where initiative, judgement and collaboration are important... (providing a view of competency that sees a relationship between)... an individual's personal *attributes* (such as knowledge, physical and social skills, values and dispositions), the performance of *tasks* (that can be very broadly defined and can involve professional judgement), in the *context* of practice (which can be complex and unpredictable. (Kennedy & Preston, 1995, p.5)

What is being addressed here by Kennedy and Preston is a concern with processes and relationships and the personal and contextual, which are indicative of a more ecological/relational perspective. Such concerns more readily reflect the cooperating teachers' focus on attitudes and context than do the tasks which the universities required that student teachers undertake.

AN ECOLOGICAL/RELATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Within an ecological perspective, consideration will now be given to cooperating teaching as a process; to working within relationships; to the importance of collegiality within relationships; and to time as a requirement in establishing relationships. An ecological perspective reflects the dynamics of relationships and a connectedness both within and

between those relationships. Ecology accommodates a macro level of interpersonal understanding which is contextual and holistic, and a micro level of self understanding. These will be discussed further, after consideration is given to the process orientation of cooperating teaching.

Cooperating teaching as process

The ebb and flow of the lived experience of cooperating teaching is like a stream. Processes associated with cooperating teaching existed in this study where the cooperating teachers observed, monitored, explored, reflected and acted upon the range of practices they observed in student teachers. An artistry of cooperating teaching was seen to reside in what can be likened to a spiralling action research cycle of registering something about the student teacher, reflecting on it and reacting in some way towards the student teacher (Kate: J2: 27/6/94). The cycles within the spiral occurred more frequently and became tighter where cooperating teachers held particular concerns about the student teacher (Kate: J2: 27/6/94). For example, the tensions Julie experienced, as she alternated between directing the student teacher and providing the student teacher with opportunities to experience the consequences of her actions, were frequently tightened by Julie's concern for the impact that the student teacher's behaviour would have on the children.

Julie was continually involved in the process of observation-review-action as she worked with the student teacher. As she monitored the student teacher's responses to feedback, Julie engaged in processes indicative of what has been described earlier in this study as the artistry of cooperating teaching. The metaphor of cooperating teacher-as-artist may suggest that there is action on, through and with materials. It is useful to draw a distinction here between that view and Schon's (1987) concept of coaching in which there could be successful negotiation between student and coach. Such a perspective would be supported by Zeichner & Liston's view of 'teacher-as-artist' who is able to motivate the learner through their own creative inquiry-oriented endeavours and openmindedness (Zeichner & Liston, 1990, p.13).

Cooperating teaching as working within a relationship

The ecology of the practicum (Zeichner, 1986) operates in at least two ways within a preschool setting - at a macro level of interpersonal understanding as the practicum

functions within the context of the organisational climate and all that impinges on it; and at a micro level, which addresses thought patterns at a personal level within the ecology of the minds of the participating staff. This is not to suggest that these are discrete levels of functioning (for there is interaction between and within them) but to suggest that there are broadening and narrowing dimensions to the dynamics of relationships that exist within the practicum.

Knowledge and understandings, values and beliefs, form part of the ongoing nature of interactions that occur within both the interpersonal and intrapersonal levels of the practicum's ecology. It is here that the living, being and experiencing of teaching can be found within the interactional aspects of ongoing relationships. Matthew valued the knowing that was shared within relationships and made reference to this in his comments about the need for attunedness (Matthew, TS5: 9/9/92).

Attunedness and harmony within free flowing relationships is the ideal. As has been indicated through Kate's work with her student teacher, where there is attunedness between the expectations and personal qualities of those involved, there is a greater likelihood that within practicum life, student teacher learning and experiencing will enable their professional development to flourish.

The practicum and individual cooperating teacher/student teacher relationships within it are like the living stream of life, fluid and unpredictable (Kate: J2: 27/6/94). Fluidity is indicative of the nature of personal relationships and the human exchanges which are an important dimension within the ecology of the practicum. Unpredictability is brought about not only by the nature of teachers' work but also the ways in which student teachers are accommodated within the preschool environment. There are many unknowns. The images held by the cooperating teachers in the study were applied by them in making judgements about their role and their work with student teachers. Tensions arose where the reality of practice did not reflect the images that they held.

Reflectiveness and reciprocity within relationships
Cooperating teachers in this study sought relationships with student teachers within which reciprocity and reflection could occur but, as will be indicated later, time and the attitude

of student teachers often made such activity difficult. For example, the effectiveness of the whole process of Julie's engagement with a student teacher was reliant upon Julie's observational skills. What she observed and felt about the student teacher was not only a part of getting to know the student teacher but also part of Julie's ongoing relationship with the student teacher. Julie then made decisions about how best to work with the student teacher on the basis of her understanding of the student teacher and the student teacher's work.

The other party of the relationship is the student teacher. One of the difficulties Julie experienced in effecting change in the student teacher was the limited extent to which the student teacher responded to Julie's suggestions. Julie felt herself responding more positively where the student teacher appeared willing to engage in reflection and reciprocity. As with the other cooperating teachers in the study, Julie expressed a desire to work collaboratively with the student teacher in a collegial relationship so that such reflection may be encouraged.

Importance of collegiality in relationships

Reflection and reciprocity are indicative of an inquiry-oriented approach to supervisory practices. Inquiry oriented approaches 'unite thought and action' (Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1991, p.x) and this becomes evident where student teachers are more analytical in evaluating their work. Julie was particularly concerned that where there appeared to be little responsiveness and reflection on the part of the student teacher there was little inclination by the student teacher towards professional growth. One of the difficulties in working collegially and in undertaking an inquiry-oriented approach is that it requires time.

Time in establishing relationships and facilitating change

Time was discussed in a previous chapter in relation to its being a constraint in establishing relationships between cooperating teachers and student teachers in the study. When the length of time cooperating teachers had to work with student teachers was restricted, the more routine and managerial tasks required of the cooperating teacher by the university (such as monitoring and commenting upon the student teacher's written work, providing feedback and completing student teacher assessments) set the parameters of their work with the student teachers. Where practicum extended over more than three weeks with any one

cooperating teacher there were greater opportunities for cooperating teachers to support individual student teachers in their work. It was evident that in situations where time was limited (such as that experienced when Irene and Matthew had student teachers for very short periods of practice teaching) the effectiveness of the cooperating teachers' work with student teachers was limited. These limitations applied to both the time in which to establish relationships and the time in which to effect change in student teacher behaviour.

Time did not act as an isolated factor. It did, however, both contribute to and detract from the cooperating teachers' ability to take an ecological perspective of the practicum. At the heart of this was the cooperating teachers' confidence in the student teacher's ability to develop effective relationships with the children. The 'dynamic complexity' of relationships can be represented through the metaphor of *stream*. On the other hand, 'detailed complexity', which does not have the same fluidity, can be conceived more readily in the *cauldron* metaphor (Senge, 1992, p.71). It is the dynamics of living and experiencing that serve best to reveal the complexity of adult/child relationships.

Working within an ecological perspective

The ecological perspective that has been presented here broadens the cooperating teachers' metaphors of experience to cast a wider net across the cooperating teachers' images of practice. Such a perspective, through its focus on relationships and the interdependency between self and other, readily accommodates the importance placed on adult/child interaction within early childhood education.

The interrelatedness between understandings of self, self in relation to others and self within a broader context reflects the essence of the ecological perspective. Such a perspective also acknowledges that the place in which practicum occurs is not just the setting but the organisational climate within it. The organisational climate within the preschool is influenced by both contextual and personal factors and by relationships between and within these. An ecological perspective reflects Julie's concern for awareness.

Julie was anxious that the student teacher for whom she was responsible gain a sense of what **being** a teacher was like and hoped that this sense would bring with it both a willingness and an ability to engage meaningfully in interactions with children. Such

engagement, incorporating receptiveness, responsiveness and attunedness, was shown in Chapter Five to be a desirable characteristic which the cooperating teachers sought in student teachers.

An ecological rather than a technical perspective of personal practical knowledge more readily accommodates the cognitive, affective and moral dimensions of teaching in early childhood. It is realised in Julie's, Irene's and Kate's view of their work with student teachers which was personal and situational (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991a). The cooperating teachers sought those attitudes in student teachers which were indicative of motivation and enthusiasm. They also sought understandings indicative of professional knowledge and skills appropriate to the preschool context and the care and eduction of young children. It was through the practicum, however, that the cooperating teachers sought evidence of the development of student teachers' personal practical knowledge (Clandinin, 1985; Elbaz, 1983, 1991; Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). It is the link between the dynamic complexity of adult/child relationships and the development of social competence in young children that was important to the cooperating teachers in this study. While they may not have expressed it so clearly, the relationships which they sought in student teacher/child interactions were most often underpinned by a concern for the outcomes of such relationships for children.

In order to gain a further understanding of the nature of relationships, attention is now given to the three kinds of relationships considered by the cooperating teachers in this study to be important: cooperating teacher/student teacher relationships, cooperating teacher/university relationships and student teacher/child relationships.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE NATURE OF RELATIONSHIPS

Sensitivity towards and connectedness with children was something which the cooperating teachers in this study sought in student teachers. Where there was evidence of student teachers having confidence in and understanding of themselves in relation to others the cooperating teachers considered that the student teachers tended to exhibit a more caring

attitude towards children. Responsiveness has the effect of supporting the building of relationships. Where student teachers were responsive to children the cooperating teachers felt a greater responsiveness to the student teachers. The importance of establishing relationships should not therefore be underestimated. It is pertinent to teaching in early childhood but also in understanding the tensions experienced by the cooperating teachers in cooperating teaching.

THE NETWORK OF RELATIONSHIPS

The knowing-in-relationship of situated cognition (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989) is reflected in the nature and scope of relationships which are embedded within the cooperating teachers' responsibilities to others. Their role as early childhood educators requires that they work in relation to children and adults and be concerned with the quality of life that is lived within the preschool and in the present (McLean, 1991). It is in early childhood situations that they make judgements about guiding student teachers. Part of this living requires that student teachers also be sensitive to the existence of relationships and to how they establish themselves within those existing relationships.

Cooperating teacher/student teacher relationships

In early childhood education there is an interdependence between the preschool and the community at large. The preschool sits within a broader set of community values and beliefs about young children, about the nature of community responsibility towards them and about society as a whole. Student teachers come to the practicum with their own understandings and conceptions of teaching in early childhood gained through their own life experiences and university coursework. For the cooperating teachers in this study, the sensitivity with which student teachers entered the existing patterns of relationships within the preschool was an important factor in establishing effective communication between the student teachers and the preschool staff.

Cooperating teachers in the study expected that student teachers would have a view of themselves as developing early childhood professionals and of the nature of early childhood teachers' work with young children. They also expected that the student teachers would

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make a contribution to the functioning of the preschool. While student teachers were not necessarily given full responsibility as a team member they were expected to have regard for team members and to accept responsibility for their own work. It was necessary to make adjustments within the staff team when a student teacher entered the network of existing relationships. Where a student teacher was insensitive to the organisational climate of the preschool and the relationships established within it, Kate (who was particularly interested in the nature of teaming) felt that the student teacher was more likely to spin out of the ongoing rhythm of life within the preschool and therefore less likely to gain from the practicum experience.

One of the difficulties in the ways in which universities target their expectations of student teachers is that little attention is given to encouraging student teachers to gain an understanding of the subtleties of the organisational climate of the practicum placement setting; that is, acquiring 'situated knowledge' (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989, p.32).It was not expected that student teachers would necessarily model or clone the behaviours of the cooperating teachers (in fact, Irene found direct imitation to be quite irritating), but it was expected that student teachers would accept some responsibility for sharing ideas and resources within the general organisational structures of the preschool. Student teachers needed to not only see what works, but to gain an understanding of why it works (Kagan, 1992).

Kate and Julie were both keen that the student teachers develop their own style, yet that style needed to enable them to act responsively with children and within the staff team. This aspect of teaming was also regarded as important by Elaine; however, she saw experience as an important contributing factor. For her, the development of a common understanding with other team members often occurred as part of socialisation within the team, which she described as *osmosis*. However, it was evident from Irene's comments that there needed to be a balance between socialising student teachers into attitudes indicative of the profession and replicating observed practice without understanding either the nature of interrelationships or the social context of that practice (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1991).

Various types of metaphor can be used to express the rhythm of patterns and relationships reflected in the mental ecology of the classroom (Bowers & Flinders, 1990). As noted

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earlier, the ecological metaphors of stream and cauldron (in contrast to Matthew's metaphor of window wiping) while providing for unity of data, reflect the rhythm of experience. The word rhythm itself is taken from the Greek *rhythmos* - flow, and the concept of flowing is important in terms of the cooperating teachers' metaphors of stream and cauldron. These are metaphors of relationship and interdependence, of life and living together within the preschool context. They reflect the **knowing how** and **knowing when** to *move in and out of children's play without fracturing it* (Matthew, 12B: 23/7/92: c.330); the *being in tune* (Matthew, TS5: 9/9/92) and the *artistry of cooperating teaching* (Julie, NR1; 8/8/93). Like Yonemura's 'porpoises at play'(Yonemura, 1986, pp.76-77) the metaphors were able to dip below the surface of consciousness and enabled less conscious values, attitudes and beliefs to resurface and find expression in differing contexts within the continuum of experience.

Cooperating teacher/student teacher relationships have been identified as being an important contributing factor to successful teaching practice (Caruso & Fawcett, 1986; Faire, 1994; Turney et al., 1982a). What was revealed through the ways in which the cooperating teachers in this study worked with the student teachers is each cooperating teacher's own personal practical knowledge (Clandinin, 1985; Elbaz, 1983, 1991). Cooperating teachers drew on their own life's experiences including those as student teachers and as novice teachers in understanding their relationships with student teachers. Such knowledge, which included the wisdom and intuition noted earlier, enabled them to engage in artistry and in that engagement they sought to work collaboratively with the student teachers. Therefore any model of supervision that may be proposed needs to take into account how the levelling effect of team relationships can be appreciated by student teachers. Team relationships and cooperating teacher/student teacher relationships were fluid. They were also sensitive to the cooperating teacher's relationship with the university.

Cooperating teacher/university relationships

The literature and the practicum curriculum guidelines forwarded by the universities to cooperating teachers in the study suggest that what cooperating teachers do can readily be identified and listed in the roles and responsibilities of supervisors of student teachers. As indicated earlier, the naming of roles and listing of tasks to be undertaken reflects a more technical approach to the identification of student teacher experiences and development.

Such an approach is reflected in the role identification and the procedural model of clinical supervision (Acheson & Gall, 1992; Turney et al., 1982b; Yarrow, 1992; Zeichner, 1986).

The cooperating teachers in this study were often disappointed with their contact with the university both in relation to university expectations of student teachers and in the supervisory support they received from the university. It was through university documentation that initial contact was made and this was usually followed by a visit of the university supervisor. The cooperating teachers sought professional support from the university supervisor. However, such support was either not forthcoming or at odds with their own professional understandings and expectations. As Julie explained, the university supervisor focused on the student teacher whereas cooperating teachers focused on student teachers within preschool contexts where the cooperating teacher's prime responsibility was for the children.

If the supervisory role is viewed in terms of a clinical supervision model then it would be expected that cooperating teachers engage in the roles of manager, counsellor, instructor, observer, provider of feedback and evaluator (Turney et al., 1982b). The structure found within this model does not reflect the more personal, collegial, responsive and context sensitive ways in which the cooperating teachers in this study perceived their work. In many ways they modelled with student teachers, their images of student teacher/child relationships.

A concern with student teacher/child relationships

Knowing through relationship to self and others is considered important in the ways teachers view the nature of their work and in teaching the child (Hollingsworth, 1994; Nias, 1989). While the word 'self' may be considered to be a 'hypothetical construct' (Nias, 1989) the interpretation that is given to it here is that it encompasses what makes up the individuality of each person. The uniqueness appears in the 'personality, experience, preferences, talents, skills, ideas, attitudes, values and beliefs of each individual' (Nias, 1989, p.26). These are the qualities which the cooperating teachers in the study sought within their view of style which was conceived as a way of conveying a perspective of the qualities valued in adult/child relationships.

STYLE AS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF ADULT/CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

Style addresses the nature of living and experiencing which occurs within early childhood contexts. The focus of the cooperating teachers on student teacher style reflected a strong emphasis placed by individual cooperating teachers on moral/ethical values and standards of practice. This emphasis was set within both a personal understanding and a professional context.

Cooperating teachers expected that student teachers would display, through their style, characteristics which were indicative of a caring relationship with children. Concepts of the dimensions of this caring behaviour varied among the cooperating teachers. For Matthew and Elaine in particular, the nature of caring remained tacit as they explored their perceptions of student teacher relationships with children. However, all the cooperating teachers expected that student teachers demonstrate sensitivity and respectfulness towards staff and an awareness of the organisational climate of the preschool.

While cooperating teachers expected that student teachers convey an attitude of commitment to young children's growth and development through both their verbal and nonverbal communication, they placed considerable importance on nonverbal communication. It is estimated that 65 percent of the communication process occurs through nonverbal behaviour (Bowers & Flinders, 1990). If this can be used as an approximation, then a major form in which messages are conveyed to young children is through the language of the body.

Understanding style as an expression of the concept of care
In identifying style, the attention of Kate, Julie and Irene was initially focused on the **descriptive** aspects of 'the body' as they identified gesture, facial expression and body positioning as being indicators through which one could identify style. These indicators can display internal feelings and the sensory quality of attitude (Van Manen, 1986).

Attempts were made to capture the nature and rhythm of the interrelatedness of verbal and nonverbal communicative behaviours in the photographs of student teacher/child interactions. By focusing on contextual cues of gesture, facial expression and body

positioning it was anticipated that the complexity of adult/child interactions might be explored. One of the intentions in taking the photographs was to depict differing uses of 'social space' (Bowers & Flinders, 1990, p.65). The photographs served a useful purpose in that Kate and Irene were able to expand on their understandings of style which they observed in student teacher/child relationships. For them, style was an important issue for they saw a way in which adults' behaviour with young children (which reflected aspects of style) had the potential to impact on the social and emotional development of the children.

Style however, is **depictive** of 'the mind' and *knowing*, a state of confidence in the self (Kate: RTS5: 10/3/93: p.2). To be responsive, respectful, receptive, empathetic and attuned to children represents what Van Manen identifies as the 'fundamental existential of the pedagogic relationship' (Van Manen, 1982, p.292). It is an outcome of a reflexive dialogue between the I and the self, and between I and self-within-a-social-mileu (Van Manen, 1995). The existential aspects of being in relationship can be found in the aspects of style identified by the cooperating teachers.

Cooperating teachers referred to style in relation to the ways in which verbal and nonverbal communication occurred during student teacher/child interactions. It conveyed an attunedness to children which has been referred to in earlier comments made by Matthew. Irene had a similar perspective in that, for her, style was seen as:

> *active involvement; placing all of one's concentration on them and what they are doing... analysing what you see and hear and extending or drawing out of them as much as they can give you... (In relation to children)... you can see this happening in the intensiveness of eye contact.*
> (Irene, RRSD: 18/9/92: p.2)

In Irene's response to the themed story entitled 'On being with children' (Irene, RRSD: 18/9/92) she focused not only on personal qualities of empathy and responsiveness in the rhythm of student teacher/child relationships but also on the knowledge that student teachers brought to a caring relation.

Self-knowledge comes before an ability to share oneself with others in a caring relation (Hollingsworth, 1994; Kagan, 1992; Noddings, 1984). *Knowing thyself* where self is seen

as one cared-for rather than as an object (Kate: RTS4: 4/9/92: p.7; RTS5: 10/3/93: p.5), *self-confidence* (Irene: 44A: 17/11/92: c.170) and being able to *see oneself* from the perspective of others (Julie: TS6: 2/12/92) have all been identified by the cooperating teachers as being important. In particular, Irene's focus on student teacher confidence and Julie's concern with student teacher awareness reflect their desire that student teachers be able to function with sensitivity in relation to the children. Such sensitivity can be explained within an understanding of an ethic of caring (Noddings, 1984).

Understanding the importance of a caring ethic

The cooperating teachers in the study played down the use of the term 'care' in their discussions about style but played up the importance of a caring ethic in student teacher/child relationships. One explanation of this avoidance of the use of the term is that all the cooperating teachers in the study were graduates of the 1980's during the period of extensive debate about the separation or otherwise of the terms 'education' and 'care'. (This was referred to in Chapter One). They may have therefore consciously avoided the use of the term within a preschool 'education' context or chosen not to make a distinction and accepted that teaching in early childhood means education and care. Whatever the reason, the concept of care pervaded the cooperating teachers' conceptions of student teachers, their identification of critical incidents of student teacher behaviour and the ways in which they worked with the student teachers. The concept of care was found to be implied in all of the cooperating teachers' texts although aspects of care received differing emphasis among the different cooperating teachers as it surfaced in their understandings of style.

It is now possible to draw together the essence of what the cooperating teachers referred to as style and to explore their understandings in more detail. The existence of education/care relationships within early childhood education and the work of Noddings provide the context for an examination of how the cooperating teachers' understandings of style depict what is at the heart of 'care'.

Interpreting how style is enacted

As conceived in this study, 'to care' is to have a regard for or inclination towards someone (Noddings, 1984). To have such an inclination is to be willing to spend some time with the

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other person not only in order to facilitate that person's growth and development but to understand their needs and how they think and feel. In working with young children it is these qualities that are considered important in order to facilitate their development. As Noddings suggests - 'to care is to apprehend the reality of the other' (Noddings, 1984, p.14). To care for the young child requires both cognitive and affective dimensions of knowledge and understanding.

A data display (Table 8.1) has been developed to illustrate, through the use and description of keywords, how the aspects of style which were identified by the cooperating teachers reflect the concept of care. The descriptions of the keywords highlighted in bold within the data display have been sourced by taking the examples from Irene's texts, then searching the literature on caring and early childhood education in order to interpret those understandings (Greenberg, 1992; Hansen, 1993a, 1993b; Hollingsworth, 1994; Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver & Surrey, 1991; Noblit, 1993; Noddings, 1984, 1991; Noddings & Witherell, 1991; Tappan & Brown, 1991). The keywords which identify the descriptors are those which best represent Irene's text. Examples from conversations with Irene have been chosen in preference to the texts of the other cooperating teachers for a number of reasons. The first was that she was one of the two cooperating teachers with whom I worked the longest and this offered opportunities to gain greater insight into her personal practical knowledge. A second reason was that she had many student teachers during the data collection period for this research and therefore the extent of the consistency of her underlying beliefs and values across student teachers could be identified. A third reason was that it was possible to find within her texts examples which would facilitate an interpretation of the many issues raised by other cooperating teachers in the study.

Table 8.1: A data display of descriptors of care with examples drawn from Irene's text

	Descriptor	Examples from Irene's text
C	**Context** - the physical and personal dimensions of the organisational climate. Knowing about the nature of the context enables meaning to be more readily attributed to the tacit meta-messages that are communicated within the relationship of caring.	*The wholeness of the environment... which needs to be taken into account when implementing plans. Having some understanding of other issues in the child care day that affect that day* (Irene: 9B: 22/6/92: c.212; RTSA: 31/7/92: p.2; 17A: 4/8/92: c.40; 35A: 15/10/92: c.146).
	Children - the prime responsibility of the early childhood teacher is to foster children's development within a context where there is a concern for their safety and well-being.	*Children come first ... the child's need ...(is always)... stronger than the student teacher's needs* (Irene, 1B: 2/6/92: c.93).
A	**Affection** - to care with feeling towards the cared-for (i.e., the children) rather than by fixed rule. Moral experience is multidimensional and includes affection, along with cognitive and conative dimensions.	*A sensitivity towards the other... If the children do something unexpected...question yourself before you come down on the children... (they) should not be made to feel guilty for something they didn't really understand* (Irene, 9A: 17/6/92: c.60).
	Attunement - to act in harmony within the context. This involves being 'in tune' with the children and the organisational climate within the setting. It includes awareness or consciousness of self and of self in relation to others.	*Teaching is more than just the technical things of objectives and rationale... (it is) being aware of what is happening in the environment...getting inside the child and having some understanding of what makes them feel good, bad, happy, interested etc.* (Irene, RTS1: 20/7/92: p.4; 37A: 21/10/92: c.290).
R	**Receptiveness** - a willingness to <u>take in</u> something of the other.	*Being really open with children. Really attending to what the children are saying... (your body language suggests that)...all of you wants to take something in* (Irene, 21A: 7/8/92:c. 47; 25: 25/8/92: c.340).
	Respectfulness - having a regard for the other.	*A quality type thing... having a trust of children... I think of children as equals... I'm older and have extra knowledge but I'm not a better person* (Irene,9A: 17/6/92: c.80; 25: 25/8/92: c. 355; 31B: c.126).
	Responsiveness - from the Latin 'to promise back' - involves not only an awareness of and concern for the other but a commitment to act in relation to the other; there is a motivational shift from self (as in receptiveness), to the other.	*Being aware of children's needs... extending their interests... having initiative... being motivated ... becoming involved (physically and mentally) in a spontaneous and confident way with children* (Irene, 3B: 9/6/92: c.210; RRSA: 31/7/92: p.4; RRSD: 18/9/92: p.2; 17A: 4/8/92: c. 1.48).
E	**Empathy** - from the Greek '*in feeling with the other*'. It involves conscious effort to convey to the other, an understanding of what the other is thinking and feeling.	*Getting down to the children's level and sharing humour, sadness, interest, anger and sincere empathy with the children)... knowing children from the inside* (Irene, RSE: 17/11/92: p.1; 44A: 17/11/92: c.176-8).
	Engrossment - a mental state; taking up one's full attention; revealed through engagement in which there is a moving away from self to the other and an indication to the other that what they think, feel and desire 'matter to me'.	*Being actively involved and placing all of ones concentration on the child and what they are saying and doing ... giving away your priorities in terms of what you want to teach them and focussing on what is of particular interest to them today...* (Irene, RRSD: 18/9/92: p.2; 44A: 17/11/92: l.155).
	Ethical ideal - having a commitment and longing to be received, understood and accepted by the other within a context in which there is recognition of the morality that underpins self/other relationships (i.e., in caring for another).	*The way you're brought up, the culture that you come from..everything... makes you what you are and you bring this to the context and in turn, influence the children* (Irene, 25: 25/8/92: c. 275).

The length of time I worked with Irene and the challenge for her in having a number of student teachers with whom to work over that time contributed to the clarity with which Irene's conceptual understanding of aspects of care was able to be made explicit. Irene's interpretations found within her texts have been responded to by the other cooperating teachers in the study or found in the responses made by Irene to the texts of the other cooperating teachers.

The acronym CARE has recently been shared with Irene herself, who is currently on secondment as an early childhood consultant. She affirmed the interpretations made within it by responding in a letter saying how it:

> *illustrated what I see as truly essential qualities in an early childhood educator...(The acronym)... clearly helped me to see that the staff that I am now responsible for resourcing that concern me most, are those who do not overtly care.* (Irene, *personal communication*, 21/8/95)

It is the behaviour that conveys an ethic of caring about which Irene speaks. Just as Irene was concerned with student teacher's ability to *read the children* (Irene, RSE: 17/11/92), there are subtleties in that behaviour from which message can be *read*. Irene was still convinced, some three years later, of the importance of those characteristics which are indicative of style and by implication, aspects of CARE.

While I worked backwards and forwards, reading, reviewing and rereading Irene's text, the keywords within the style chart and concept of care, the acronym took shape. It is presented here not only as an exposition of the value Irene placed on a caring relationship with children but as a signifier of the importance given by the other cooperating teachers to both care and education within early childhood education. Caring has moral and ethical underpinnings which influence the development of dispositions and feelings in young children - an important area of learning in young children. It is within the practicum context that evidence of a caring relation with young children is most likely to be identified, and the cooperating teachers in this study were very attuned to this in their work.

As Irene's stories were responded to and validated by other cooperating teachers, the ideas and understandings conveyed by Irene may be considered as having been triangulated. It is

argued, however that what occurs in postmodernist mixed-genre texts is crystallization rather than triangulation (Richardson, 1994). It is crystallization that has occurred over the period of time I worked, not only with the cooperating teachers in this study but also in exploring the concepts being presented here with other early childhood educators at conferences and in one-to-one communication (Goodfellow, 1994a; 1994b; 1995a; 1995b; TS8: 20/7/95). Crystallization offers the flexibility of growth and change and acknowledges the complexity and practical understanding that one may have on a topic at any one time. By focusing on Irene's text and linking this with explanations found in the texts of the other cooperating teachers and with the literature such crystallization was sought and recognised as an emerging process.

It would have been possible to take examples from the texts of other cooperating teachers; however, by using the extracts from one teacher only, there was a greater opportunity to see the relational continuity between the aspects of style as conceived by one teacher and revealed within the acronym. It will be seen that some of the extracts could be used as examples across more than one of the keywords. However, the extracts were assigned to particular keywords on the basis of 'best fit', for example, *being really open to children* could be an example of both attunement and receptiveness. Receptiveness was chosen because of the personal characteristic which requires a willingness on the part of the self to take something from the other rather than attunement as *being in harmony with* (Matthew, TS5: 9/9/92) the other. Receptiveness can be contrasted with responsiveness which requires not only taking in but giving back.

RESPONSIVENESS WITHIN A CARING RELATIONSHIP

Responsiveness was one of the aspects of style highlighted by the cooperating teachers in this study. It relates to the way in which persons present themselves to others. There is an internal drive within the responsiveness which cooperating teachers sought to be exhibited in student teacher behaviour. The next section explores responsiveness as an aspect of style which focuses on 'the self within'.

Working with a concern for responsiveness

For Matthew, being responsive involved *being aware and able to identify where children's learning would benefit from teacher presence or input* (Matthew, 1A: 2/6/92: c.87-114) and his story 'Being in Tune' reflected this understanding of responsiveness:

> *Student teachers who are in tune have a particular way with children - calm, soothing unabrasive... They are able to draw on personal resources, their developing knowledge and understanding of children, and experiences in early childhood environments, to relate to children in a way that facilitates interaction with them... The student who can tune in to children engages in an art of tapping into what children have chosen to do. The key is in being responsive to them. This responsiveness may be displayed through body language or animated facial expressions. It can also be demonstrated in the ways in which children are drawn to and become involved with the student teacher in experiences which appear to be of common interest.* (TS5: 9/9/92: pp.1-2)

Matthew's perceptions of responsiveness confirm a key factor indicative of the characteristics of high quality early childhood programmes (Bredekamp, 1987; Galinsky, 1990; NAEYC, 1984; NCAC, 1993; Wangmann, 1995; Watts & Patterson, 1984; Williams & Ainley, 1994). Responsiveness within staff/child interactions has also been identified as one of the child care accreditation criteria representing quality within the child care services (NAEYC, 1984; NCAC, 1993). Examples of responsiveness are 'quickly comforting a child in distress... nod(ding)... at a toddler in need of reassurance, reply(ing) to an older child's question or comply(ing) to a verbal request'(NAEYC, 1984, p.8). What is evident within these understandings of responsiveness is that the response can be physical and/or verbal and that it is directed towards the child's initiations.

The more successful student teachers were considered by Matthew to be those who not only displayed responsiveness but who, as part of this, were able to engross themselves in meaningful ways with young children. Engrossment involves not only **being there** but being attentive and attuned. It requires knowledge and understanding. Responsiveness and engrossment require a motivational shift from self to the other.

Having identified the cooperating teacher's perceptions of style and the many aspects of care, the question that is raised in relation to student teachers is the relationship between

what the cooperating teachers valued in student teacher behaviour and those (teaching) behaviours which are valued by the university. Although the cooperating teachers did not highlight research evidence in support of their concerns about student teacher/child interactions and the attitudes which student teachers displayed towards young children, research has shown that caregiver responsiveness can lead to the enhancement of pro-social behaviours in young children (Howes, Hamilton & Matheson, 1994; Wangmann, 1995). Given the concern for interactions and attitude, the next chapter will refer again to these two areas of concern when discussing issues arising from this study.

Experiencing responsiveness: a conversation with Irene's text

In order to place the discussion of responsiveness within a context of the lived experiences of the cooperating teachers, the next part of this chapter uses an extract taken from one of Irene's transcripts (Irene, 9A: 17/6/92: c.5-95) to illustrate what has been discussed so far. The extract shows how Irene came to a realisation that it was not just the technical aspects of teaching about which she was concerned but a student teacher's lack of those characteristics indicative of caring. In the extract, Irene reveals how she worked through the process of understanding what her real concerns were about a student teacher. At the same time it reveals something of the nature of the beliefs Irene holds about what is appropriate for young children.

The extent to which Irene values a caring relation is not only made explicit not only in her initial concern about *comfortableness* but in her emphasis on responsiveness, attunement, empathy towards and respectfulness for young children. Within the extract it can be seen how the elements of care can be found within Irene's concerns about the student teacher and how she moved from dealing with these concerns at a technical level to an understanding of deeper personal and relational issues. She subsequently identifies these issues as being her underlying concerns but began by approaching how to deal with her initial concerns from a more impersonal and technical perspective.

It is a lengthy extract that has already been shared with student teachers and cooperating teachers outside those involved in this study in order to gain a sense of whether the interpretations resonate with them. Most often such stories prompted further retelling by those who had related the experience or by those with whom the story was shared and who

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related the story to their own experiences. Following the interrupted reading of the extract, the chapter concludes by drawing together the nature of responsiveness and of cooperating teaching.

Irene began our conversation by referring to her uncomfortable feeling about the student teacher:

> *I had asked the student to come in early to-day so that I could go through her plans before the children arrived...Yesterday she arrived late. Her plans were not ideal and I felt terribly uncomfortable during her group time...*

She then goes on to describe an incident which indicated that her first concern and greatest responsibility was towards the children. She explains the reasons for these concerns by describing then interpreting what she had observed:

> *The questions...(the student teacher)... asked the children were closed. When a child showed a little bit of creativity or that they were being just a little bit different from the other children, the whole group was quickly drawn together with direct instruction and told that that was silly behaviour... In my opinion they were just following her instruction. I felt that MY (Irene's emphasis) children were being told that they were silly for things they weren't necessarily being silly for. She didn't give them any guidance as to what the silly behaviour was.*

The *direct instruction* to which Irene referred was controlling in nature and reflected a more didactic approach to teaching. Both Julie and Matthew had also experienced student teachers who displayed this type of approach and they too became concerned as did Irene. Irene explains why she is concerned about this student teacher's attitude in terms of the potential impact that this type of behaviour can have on young children:

> *You have to be really clear with the children. I know that she was worried about control but the children were being made to feel guilty for something they didn't really understand. They didn't know what the expectations of this person were. If your expectations of the children are possibly different from what they are accustomed to then you explain to the children what you want them to do .*

Being critical of children and applying restrictive and controlling behaviour are indicative

of non-responsive caregiving (Wangmann, 1995). Such controlling behaviour, rather than taking up the themes of responsive caregiving (reciprocity, empathy and respect for the individual child) 'characterises the caregivers' power as destructive' (Leavitt, 1994, p.42).

Irene now reflects on her own beliefs and her concern for the children:

> *If they do something you haven't expected then you need to question yourself before you come down on the children. It's the first time in a long time that I have felt that I don't want the student working with my children.*

She goes on to explain how she needed to balance her responsibilities towards the student teacher, the children and their parents. Irene highlights the tensions this caused:

> *Today the student teacher was late again... We were talking about her plans in the playground as the children were arriving. That is not a good time because it is then that you've got most of your parent interaction. But... it was my choice to look at the plans before they were implemented and that was the only opportunity that I had. By the time we had finished our discussion it was time for her to take the individual language experience she had planned.*
>
> *I was very uncomfortable about where the experience was positioned. She and the child were in the shade, on the concrete steps, next to a traffic area. Obviously the child was going to be watching the other children as they were coming and going.*

Irene now returns to the technical aspects of teaching and refers to content and structure of the plan the student teacher had developed for the group experience that Irene had observed. She had worked through this with the student teacher in a supportive way, identifying the intent and purpose of the plan and how that may best be achieved; yet there was a dissonance between her perception of the experience and that of the student teacher:

> *I thought, 'I can't believe it...' I had just gone through all the other things in the plan - trying to really work out the rationale, her objectives, why she would read rather than tell the story and when her positioning was poor I thought 'Oh! My God!... There's nothing left that I can focus on where she doesn't need help'.*
>
> *As soon as the plan had finished I said to her... 'How did you feel that went?'*

She said, 'Oh! It went really well... Ben really concentrated'. Now, that made it really awkward because at the time I had been watching her, Ben was watching the other children.

Then I said, 'Why did you specifically choose that area to present the plan?'

She said, 'To be away from the other children.'

So I pointed out it was not only quite cold sitting on the concrete steps but it was actually a traffic area. To-morrow, when I'm reading her plan, I'll have to be very aware as to where she is actually locating it...

To some extent, Irene was surprised by the student teacher's insensitivity to the physical context in which the activity took place. Irene began to consider the personal attributes of the student teacher, revealing her underlying concern for evidence of a caring relation in the student teacher/child interaction. She was concerned that the student teacher did not display respectfulness, responsiveness or empathy:

But it's not only content... I have noticed that the children are not really going to her. There isn't any real contact with the children, unless it is activity based...

What Irene is identifying here is the effect on children of non-responsive adult behaviour. Research has demonstrated that there is a link between such behaviour and lower levels of adult/child attachment and poor peer/peer relationships between children (Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990). Irene was concerned that there was no evidence of reciprocity. She explores her concern further:

There seems to be a real barrier between her and the children. It's as if 'I'm the teacher and you're the children and I'm giving you the information. I'm not sharing with you or extending.'

There does not seem to be a lot of respect for the children. She doesn't have the typical non-verbals... It's NOT comfortable.

Irene was trying to work through, in her own mind, the reasons why she felt so concerned about the student teacher. There was a tension here - a sense of disequilibrium as she wrestled with her own sensitivity towards the situation. As cooperating teacher, Irene felt personally responsible for the student teacher and was faced with a potential carer (who,

incidentally, had had some previous experience in child care) who exhibited non-responsive caregiving behaviours. She needed to find ways of expressing her concerns within the limitations of the university's assessment criteria and the relationship she had with the student teacher.

Irene's concerns were with the non-responsive, restrictive and controlling behaviour of the student teacher and how this relates to feelings of guilt in young children. In considering the power which adults exert over children, Leavitt makes a distinction between 'developmental' and 'extractive power'. Extractive power 'treats children as property or things to be managed, directed, dominated and controlled' as was found in the ways in which the student teacher managed children (Leavitt, 1994, pp.76-77). Such controlling behaviour is destructive for young children, whereas developmental power which emphasises interdependence, individuality and reciprocity acknowledges children as developing persons (Leavitt, 1994, pp.41-42).

Irene took responsibility for the decisions she made about how best to support the student teacher. While feeling the need to spend time with the student teacher so that the student teacher could meet her requirements Irene was also aware of other demands on her time. However, underlying her decision to spend that time with the student teacher was her concern about the implications of the student teacher's work for the children.

Responsiveness and cooperating teaching

The nature of responsiveness has been discussed within the context of a knowledge of young children's development. An underlying premise on which all the cooperating teachers worked was that responsiveness was critical within adult/child relationships and therefore must be evident within student teacher/child relationships. Set within an ethic of caring, student teacher responsiveness to children, to the preschool environment and to cooperating teachers themselves was a characteristic that pervaded the thoughts of all the cooperating teachers.

Cooperating teacher responsiveness, within the context of teaching and student teacher supervision as now understood within the parameters of this study, reflects the nature of connections between the experiences and interests of the student teachers and images held

by cooperating teachers. The connections are embedded within cooperating teachers' understandings about the knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions required of early childhood professionals and within the processes in which they engage in order to realise these understandings. In being responsive to student teachers, cooperating teachers in the study were not only aware of the student teachers' behaviours but they expressed concern about those behaviours which they considered to be morally questionable and not in the best interests of the children. Additionally, the cooperating teachers were committed to act in relation to student teachers to ensure that the development of children for whom they were responsible was not compromised.

Irene related her concerns within the extract which was presented in the previous section in this chapter. Julie also expressed the emotional quality of her concerns in her comments about having a student teacher for a practicum towards the end of a child's year at preschool:

> *(The student teacher's skills)... were not showing any development... the children were displaying inappropriate behaviour... they had reverted back to where they were at the beginning of the year... and now it was almost time for them to go on to school... I've lost four weeks with the children... We've developed the student teacher but we haven't developed the children at all. I really don't know whether I would take another student teacher on at this time of the year again.*
> (Julie: 46A: 23/11/92: pp.20-23)

While Julie cared for the student teacher, there was little evidence of responsiveness evident in the student teacher's behaviour. Like other cooperating teachers in the study, Julie had provided the student teacher with feedback on her work. She had supported her in her work with the children; she had given her opportunities to take initiative and had dealt with situations where she perceived the student teacher's behaviour to be inappropriate. Julie had endeavoured to supply opportunities for the student teacher to provide her own insights into and reflect upon her work but Julie was disappointed at the limited contribution that the student teacher made to discussions.

Although they surfaced in different ways, aspects of caring were central to the cooperating teachers' concerns about student teacher/child relationships and the focus of their own work

with student teachers. All of the themed stories, which were written from the cooperating teachers' field texts, encompassed elements of caring. The incidents that they reported and which gave rise to extensive examination by the cooperating teachers of ways in which they might work with the student teachers all showed that the cooperating teachers themselves cared about those student teachers. Not only did they care about the student teachers' professional development and what the student teachers did with the children but they also cared about the student teachers as people.

The balance in relationships between the cooperating teachers and the student teachers was to some extent tentative, and the cooperating teachers tried not to upset this balance. Irene and Julie both spoke of not wanting to *be horrible* to student teachers in the ways in which they attempted to guide the student teachers towards successful outcomes. Because of the limited duration of the practicum, there was often limited time in which to see evidence of improvement in student teacher functioning.

Engagement in caring for student teachers was evident in the receptiveness, respectfulness and empathy displayed by Irene in her willingness to find ways in which to foster student teachers' learning. Irene had a real commitment to making her understandings known to the student teacher where she identified in the student teacher, personal/professional qualities which she valued in adult relationships with young children. As with Julie, she too sought a responsiveness from the student teacher which may have not always been forthcoming. Both Irene's and Julie's responsiveness had a personal involvement which drew on their feelings towards the student teachers with whom they worked and was revealed in the narrative accounts of their experiences. Their personal practical knowledge was indeed 'an emotional, moral and aesthetic knowledge' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991c, p.130).

CONCLUDING COMMENT

This chapter has drawn extensively on the texts of Julie, Irene and Matthew as representative of the concerns of all five cooperating teachers. These concerns may have surfaced through different situations. The texts selected from these cooperating teachers

were best able to articulate those concerns which underpinned the tensions that were identified.

Tensions surfaced largely because the images the cooperating teachers held of the quality of student teacher/child interactions and of the attitudes these conveyed were not met. Either the student teachers' behaviour was interpreted by the cooperating teachers as not representative of what was expected or what was expected by the cooperating teachers was not identified as being valued by the university. The next chapter highlights issues arising from the study and includes a further discussion of some of these tensions experienced by the cooperating teachers. It also considers the usefulness of the study and implications for early childhood teacher education and for further research in the area.

CHAPTER 9

DISCUSSION OF ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The perspectives highlighted in the previous chapter drew attention to the importance placed by the cooperating teachers on relationships. While the primary focus was on student teacher relationships with children the cooperating teachers were also concerned about the relationships between themselves and the student teachers and between themselves and the university. Arising from the nature of these relationships and, from concerns expressed by the cooperating teachers there are a number of important issues which have emerged from this study. They are important because they have implications for the practicum within early childhood teacher education. The issues arise from the discrepancy between those student teacher attributes valued by cooperating teachers and student teacher competencies expected by the universities; the nature of the early childhood setting which is the practicum context and university expectations of student teachers within that context; and, the cooperating teachers' views of the nature of cooperating teaching as being more than undertaking the roles and functions identified by the university.

There are four sections in this chapter. The first section begins by identifying and discussing assumptions underlying six key issues arising from the concerns of the cooperating teachers in this study. Following the focus on these issues, the two subsequent sections in the chapter discuss the methodology and provide a summary of the implications of the study and of directions for further research. The final section discusses ways in which the study makes a contribution to the field of early childhood.

SECTION 1: ISSUES EMERGING FROM THE STUDY

As indicated above, there are six major issues which have been highlighted in this study. The issues focus on the importance of student teacher style; the attitudes of student teachers towards and found within the practicum context; a lack of accountability by the universities of the nature of the practicum context; the nature of student teacher learning through

practical experience; the universities' understandings of the nature of cooperating teachers' work; and, in particular, the extent to which the cooperating teacher cooperates and/or collaborates with the university in matters pertaining to the practicum curriculum and student teacher assessment. Not only are these the concerns of cooperating teachers in this study but the literature on the practicum also identifies many of these areas as requiring attention.

Within the discussion are two matters which appear as underlying assumptions and therefore require clarification at this point. The first is that the discussion is informed by related literature and my own interpretations based on knowledge and experience within early childhood education. As revealed in the literature review, since no other study that addressed the lived experience of early childhood teachers was found, the interpretative literature that informs this discussion must, of necessity, be drawn from related fields such as teacher thinking (Beattie, 1995b; Clandinin et al., 1993; Cole & Knowles, 1993b), the work of cooperating teachers in school-based settings (Johnston, 1994; Killian & McIntyre, 1986, Koerner, 1992) and the nature of teaching and learning in early childhood education (Doherty-Derkowski, 1995). What is highlighted, therefore, is the need for more extensive research which would specifically target (within an early childhood context) the issues that have been raised and not only explore the perceptions of early childhood cooperating teachers but more carefully investigate the interrelatedness between those perceptions and the professional development of student teachers. These needs will be discussed further as each of six major areas of concern are addressed.

The second matter is the extent to which the cooperating teachers focused on concerns rather than the pleasures gained through being a cooperating teacher. There are at least three possible explanations for what may be perceived to be the cooperating teachers' preoccupation with their concerns. The first is that, when observing student teachers, what the cooperating teachers saw did not often reflect the images they held of a developing early childhood professional and therefore the tensions that existed between what may have been an ideal (portrayed in their images) and what actually occurred resulted in their concern. Often within the conversations held with the cooperating teachers they reported on what may be considered to be a 'critical incident' which Tripp (1993, 1994) would argue was of sufficient magnitude to create a problem or a change in the cooperating teacher's routine

behaviour. That is, the cooperating teachers experienced some tension which caused them to take some action or, at least, to think about or reconsider their ideas or opinions about the way in which a student teacher acted or behaved. Where a student teacher readily fitted into the practices adopted within the preschool, was sufficiently confident and competent to take the initiative and to request opportunities to try out new things with the support of the cooperating teacher, or where they just faded into the background and were almost overlooked by the cooperating teacher, tensions were not evident. What Schon suggests is that we can recognise and describe deviations from the norm much more clearly than it is possible to describe the norm itself (Schon, 1987). The norm did not cause a tension. When tensions were evident there appeared to be greater insight into the underlying assumptions that supported the cooperating teachers' images.

There were tensions revealed in the themed stories as the cooperating teachers concepts of *awareness*, *being in tune*, and *having practical sense*. Awareness may be linked to the sensitivity of a caring relationship (Noddings, 1984) but it also has elements of reflection in that for student teachers to *be aware* they must be prepared to construct their own understandings from what occurs in the processes of telling/listening and modelling/imitating (Schon, 1987). As Irene explained, they need to act with a *purposefulness* rather than take an automatic approach to copying. For Julie there appeared to be little attention given by the student teacher to her suggestions and expressed concerns.

The responses by student teachers raised the cooperating teachers' concerns about student teachers who were not engaging in practices they considered to be necessary in working with young children. The tensions appear to be indicative of what can be described as the 'pulls and tugs' (Yonemura, 1991, p.404) found within the feelings or the affective states associated with the personal aspect of cooperating teacher's personal practical knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986). Cooperating teachers have an applied knowledge acquired though their own professional development and accumulated experiences. Such knowledge has moral, emotional and cognitive dimensions (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991c). When there are tensions there may be challenges to any of these dimensions which cause a disequilibrium within the images the cooperating teachers hold of practice or within the relational aspects of these dimensions. To explain this further, while theoretical knowledge is perceived by the cooperating teachers to be acquired at the university, practical

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knowledge is applied and situational in the sense of knowing these children and this context. Personal knowledge is the baggage people bring with them in terms of self understandings and experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991c).

Where these knowledge bases are applied in tandem then a cooperating teacher and the student teacher could be said to both function in a similar way to what Matthew described as a 'practically applied developmentally functional level'. That is, cooperating teachers function within the ecology of the practicum taking into account the functional level of the student teacher, their own knowledge of the children and the situation. They make judgements about how to act in facilitating change in student teacher behaviour towards the images that they hold. Where a trusting and supportive relationship exists between a cooperating teacher and a competent/confident student teacher who functions at what has been identified as Matthew's third level of functioning the dynamic spiral of a problem solving approach to shared understanding between student teacher and cooperating teacher exists (Chapter Six).

Another explanation of the tensions which have been identified in relation to the cooperating teachers is that they are responding to the conscious subjective aspect of their own experience (Noddings, 1984). As expressed clearly by Elaine, there were beliefs and values which she upheld in her work with children and these influenced her actions. One example here is *giving the children the dignity of their own name* (Elaine, 13A: 24/7/92: p.6, l.32). Elaine used this as a metaphor for concern with the development of self esteem in children.

Cooperating teachers in the study had a sense that they knew what was appropriate behaviour. They knew the children and something about each child's background. They had an understanding of the relationships within the organisational climate of the individual preschool within which they worked. These factors placed them in an advantaged position over university supervisors and over the student teachers. They are, therefore, a key resource for the student teachers and are aware of this. When the student teacher ignores the need to be contextually aware both of the adults and children and of the existing organisational climate into which the student is placed (almost as a visitor), then by virtue of their presence there will be some impact on the ecological functioning of the preschool.

Where there are few challenges to the expectations which cooperating teachers hold of student teachers it may be suggested that the practicum is a time in which socialisation or enculturation of the student teacher is supported (Zeichner, 1980). While much of the research on teacher socialisation has been considered to have negative connotations Feiman-Nemser & Floden (1986) argue that the brevity of student teaching and/or the positive aspects of student teachers adopting the beliefs, attitudes and values of exemplary teachers should result in teacher socialisation being viewed more favourably. What has to be acknowledged within early childhood education is that staff and children need to live within harmonious working relationships (McLean, 1991). Such a view sees the preschool as an ecology of relationships (Bowers & Flinders, 1990). Therefore, as Julie pointed out, although staff can be quite diverse as individuals they need to work collaboratively as a staff team in meeting requirements for each day's functioning. They also need to hold common expectations of children and to provide consistency in their interactions with them. It is when these common expectations concerning children were violated by student teachers that the cooperating teachers became most concerned. They then raised their concerns about the student teacher's personal/professional qualities. One of the initial concerns about qualities in student teacher behaviour was identified by Kate as style and it is aspects of style that were considered in some detail in Chapter Five and Chapter Eight. The discussion now addresses the qualities which cooperating teachers sought in student teachers and focuses on two issues arising out of their concerns about these qualities.

PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES SOUGHT IN STUDENT TEACHERS

The practicum documents, which were intended to serve as a resource for cooperating teachers as well as for student teachers, identified a range of tasks the student teachers were required to undertake during the practicum and criteria they were required to meet in achieving a satisfactory grade. The documents also indicated what the university perceived to be the responsibilities of the student teacher, cooperating teacher and university supervisor within the practicum. Since there was a range of requirements it was somewhat unexpected that the cooperating teachers should place such emphasis on student teachers' style.

Of particular concern to the cooperating teachers was the way in which children may respond emotionally to adult behaviour. Style, as perceived by the cooperating teachers, represented behaviours which conveyed to children those attitudes which had the potential to foster in children desirable feelings and dispositions. Adults need not only to be sensitive to children's interests but to respond to children in a way that takes the children's experiences and interests and moves the children towards a greater sense of understanding or achievement of new skills as indicative of growth (Beattie, 1995b; Leavitt, 1994; Noddings, 1992). Cooperating teachers sought growing evidence of student teachers being able to act thinkingly, act knowingly and engage sensitively with children.

To act thinkingly is to take a considered approach which is contextual and relational. Matthew referred to the ability to *think-on-one's-feet* (Matthew, 44B: 17/11/92: c.60). Such thinking has an immediacy to it and can include spontaneous ways of responding. It is focused and is contextually oriented. As previously indicated, such action appears to reflect what Schon describes as 'reflection-in-action' in which the student teacher 'makes... new sense of uncertain unique or conflicting situations in practice... (through making)... reasoned... connections between... general knowledge and particular cases (Schon, 1987, p.39).

On the other hand, while there is a close association between acting thinkingly and knowingly, a distinction can be drawn. To act knowingly is to be more purposefully oriented. As discussed in Chapter Six, Irene considered that to act purposefully involved knowing about and understanding the context, being able to draw on a knowledge base which can be informed by theory (what Matthew considered to be 'the basics', and learnt within university) and to apply this in a practical sense (Irene, TS1: 2/7/92). It would not be possible to teach this kind of knowing within a university context for it has to be worked out experientially over time within the context to which it is applied. The concern for time is a factor which will be addressed again later in this chapter.

In acting knowingly there is both a purposefulness and a concern here for what the experience means for the child. It draws on cumulative knowledge about the child and about what is of interest to this child at this point in time. Irene spoke of acting purposefully in her concern that student teachers should be able to 'read' the children and engage with them

in meaningful ways. Dewey would suggest that such purposefulness requires observation, knowledge and judgement (Dewey, 1938). However, while observation, knowledge and judgement are part of acting thinkingly, Irene considered that purposefulness also required that the adult consider the potential outcome for the child of any action that they took.

To engage sensitively with children is to take account of the child's dispositions and feelings and therefore the moral overtones conveyed through those behaviours indicative of style. Adults are in a powerful relationship with children as children interpret meaning from the gestures, posture and tones of voice of the adult and respond emotionally to those behaviours (Hansen, 1993b; Leavitt, 1994). Irene, for example, was very concerned about the controlling attitude of a student teacher in the way in which she managed the children's 'silly' behaviour when it appeared that the children just did not know what the student teacher expected of them.

Two of the six key issues arising from the cooperating teachers' concerns will now be addressed. The first issue is the importance of student teachers' style and the second is the attitudes of student teachers towards the nature of the practicum context.

ISSUE 1: The importance of student teachers' style

What has been demonstrated in this study is the importance which cooperating teachers placed on a particular aspect of style and that is student teacher responsiveness. Such student teacher behaviour can be directly related to an acceptance of a child-centred curriculum where the focus is on being child-responsive and on having respect for others within a harmonious relationship (Halliwell, 1991, 1992; McLean, 1991). The importance of responsiveness has already been discussed in Chapter Eight. There it was noted that Wangmann (1995) reported research findings that showed a clear relationship between responsive caregiving and the development of social competence and intellectual skills in young children (Doherty-Derkowski, 1995). Evidence (which became available only as this study was drawing to a close), drawn from research findings in the United States and England caps the importance assigned by the cooperating teachers to the ways in which student teachers relate to children (Doherty-Derkowski, 1995).

There are at least four considerations here that need to be addressed in relation to style and

the cooperating teachers' role. One is how style may be determined and the second is why the cooperating teacher focused so extensively on style and gave little attention to such things as the student teacher's curriculum knowledge. The third is how style may be resourced and the fourth discusses the potential that the extent to which style may be resourced has for the development of style.

i. Determining style

Style is only partially addressed within the student teacher assessment documents in sections focusing on 'relations with children' (Macquarie University, 1992b; UWS Macarthur, 1992b; UWS Nepean, 1992b; University of Newcastle, 1992b; 1992c). However, interpretation of style is difficult. There is a need to fully appreciate what some of the keywords appearing within those documents actually mean in terms of what cooperating teachers may look for in student teacher behaviour and why these behaviours are important. For example, 'conveying enthusiasm' (Macquarie University, 1992b; UWS Nepean, 1992b) reveals little of the internal forces of self that are associated with engrossment, empathy and what Noddings describes as 'motivational displacement' (Noddings, 1992, p.16). Such behaviour reflects what the cooperating teachers identified in the photographs as behaviours indicative of style. Yet there is little clarification within the university assessment documents which enables the cooperating teachers to glean the underlying meaning of that behaviour from the assessment criteria. The key to such behaviour is its receptivity - a receptiveness that not only renders the person responsive to the changing needs of the child but respects that child for what he or she is.

Responsiveness alludes to the dynamic of change and adaptation that is required of the one being responsive (i.e., the teacher), and reflects a critical aspect of the early childhood curriculum. Respect and responsiveness develop out of a process of collaboration with the child (Page, 1994). It is suggested that, in being responsive, the adult needs to address a combination of knowing what is age-appropriate, what is appropriate for this child at this particular time, and what is appropriate in this particular situation (Doherty-Derkowski, 1995). It is this dynamic that challenges the developing student teacher.

Irene and Matthew both became concerned where student teachers' attitudes conveyed a sense of teaching as being that of telling or imparting knowledge to children. Such a view

requires little adaptation of preplanned experience and does little to acknowledge the teacher as being a dynamic thinking person. They were concerned that the didactic approach devalued the children's contribution within a learning environment. In taking a broader view:

> Style... turns out to be not so much an individually determined product as a dialogic movement between the teacher, the students, the curriculum, the knowledge produced in exchange, and the discursive practices that make pedagogy intelligible. (Britzman, 1991, p.232)

If style encapsulates a dialogic movement within relationships then there are at least four facets of this relationship which can be drawn from the work of Noddings (1984). First, relationships require time in which to develop. Second, for adults to quickly develop a trusting relationship with a young child there is a need not only to have some knowledge about and experience with young children but to be able to act with a spontaneity and responsiveness to the child's state of being. Third, to be as 'one-caring' requires engrossment in and motivational displacement towards the ways in which others act and think (Noddings, 1984). Fourth, as a moral agent, the adult models appropriate behaviours for the child.

There are a number of implications here which require further consideration. The first concerns how readily student teachers may be able to establish relationships with children. If student teachers are expected to seek out initial information from the cooperating teacher that would enable them to quickly establish a collaborative approach to the practicum. Longer periods in the practicum would permit relationships to be established over time. However, before either of these procedures is adopted it would be important to establish whether most cooperating teachers place such an emphasis on style and why they perceive it to be important when student teaching practicum opportunities are often limited because of time and funding.

ii. The emphasis placed on style

Style reflected a concern for student teacher confidence in being able to work in relationships with children and adults including parents and other community members. In order to develop a trusting relationship with another it is important to have trust and confidence in oneself and have some understanding of the values and beliefs that one holds.

Irene considered that confidence can be developed but she was unsure about the extent to which practicum experiences could impact on style.

The length of time assigned for student teacher practicum was not identified as being of a particular concern to the cooperating teachers; however, it can readily be appreciated that brief practicum periods make it difficult for relationships to be established between cooperating teachers and student teachers and between student teachers and children. Where Matthew and Irene had a number of student teachers and were generally responsible for them for only two weeks each it could be seen that greater flexibility in their work with student teachers occurred when there were longer periods of contact time. While knowledge about children in general may be drawn from theoretical knowledge, knowledge about individual children and how they respond can only be gained within a context. For example, Irene helped a student teacher in planning to take a group experience by resourcing with her how she might react to differing responses that the children may make within a planned group activity. Student teachers may often need the guidance and expertise of the cooperating teachers to acquaint them with particular knowledge about individual children's behaviour.

Surprisingly, what the cooperating teachers did not emphasise was the student teachers' knowledge of curriculum areas such as literacy numeracy and language arts. Yet, in my experience, comments are often made by cooperating teachers that one of the advantages of having student teachers is that they bring with them new ideas and resources. It was not clear how strongly the cooperating teachers believed that such knowledge formed part of what Julie and Matthew referred to 'the basics', which are acquired at the university and therefore would be assessed within that context. However, the cooperating teachers did expect that the student teachers would choose appropriate activities and they usually checked the student teachers' planning before they implemented activities with the children. If style is considered part of teaching in early childhood then consideration needs to be given as to how the development of style may be fostered.

iii. Resourcing an awareness of style
It may be assumed that responsiveness is addressed within university coursework because responsiveness is identified within accreditation criteria and the child-responsive curriculum

(Halliwell, 1991; NCAC, 1993). What is unclear, however, is the extent to which student teachers may be encouraged to view themselves as being responsive. Case studies and works of a biographical and phenomenological nature such as that of McLean (1991) and Leavitt (1994) therefore provide an excellent resource. An alternative is for student teachers to closely scrutinise what early childhood teachers identify as roles of caregivers and teachers (for example, Fleet & Clyde, 1993) and undertake a hermeneutic reading of such texts. While these resources may be available the question arises as to whether it is possible to facilitate the development of aspects of style identified in Table 8.1 in Chapter Eight.

iv. The potential for the development of style

If style is so highly valued the question arises as to whether it can be taught or whether it may be viewed as an innate quality. The qualities indicative of style may be qualities which motivate individuals to choose early childhood education as a profession. Irene considered that *nurturing qualities* (Irene, 38B: 30/11/92: c.300) indicative of style were part of one's *natural ability* (Irene, 50A: 3/12/92: c.90), indicative of personality and developed early in life. Therefore, it could be assumed that while there may be core elements such as the need to display responsiveness, each person places their own imprint on how this can be achieved. One of the problems with this view is that if aspects of style were to be specifically identified in student teacher assessment criteria then it may be difficult to accommodate individual differences. However, attempts have been made to do this as in the Christchurch College of Educations' Associate Teacher Handbook (1994). The degree to which such precision has been able to achieve its desired outcome is unknown, but it does assume that aspects of style can at least be identified and enhanced. What is clear from the literature is that teaching exists within a social context which is influenced by the complex social relations between adults and children, the organisational climate of the preschool and the larger social community and therefore teaching style becomes subject to social negotiation in which there is cultural complexity (Britzman, 1991; Jorde Bloom et al., 1991).

Given this view, Britzman argues that personal autonomy and the myth that teachers are self-made are exaggerations of reality (Britzman, 1991). The social context of early childhood education therefore needs to be considered as a context which takes account of research and informed understanding about how young children learn and the role of the

adult in that learning, and applies this in practical ways.

If responsiveness is valued, student teachers require opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills which have the potential to enable them to act responsively. Micro teaching (Long, 1994; Turney, Eltis, Hatton, Owens, Towler, Wright, Cairns & Williams, 1983) is one (although somewhat artificial) way for student teachers to observe their own responsiveness to children. While time consuming and labour intensive (if staff are to be available to engage with the student teacher in reflections on the experience), videotaping and subsequent discussion do provide a less threatening forum for student teachers to observe themselves in action (Tisher & Klinzing, 1992). It can, therefore, be a valuable resource particularly where student teachers have difficulty in gaining a perception of themselves within a teaching context. Through self-observation and focused discussion microteaching can produce an identification of skills that need to be further developed in order that the student teacher functions more effectively in relationships with children.

Part of the development of style is taking a biographical perspective and appreciation of what has contributed to the ways in which one acts with children. Again Britzman suggests that there may be positive outcomes for student teachers in understanding the 'contradictory dynamics of their own biography' (Britzman, 1991, p.233). She argues that such understanding has the capacity to empower student teachers to move beyond what may appear to be natural or routine and to review the attitudes they convey to children. An important issue is that of student teacher attitudes.

ISSUE 2: Attitudes of student teachers within the practicum context

Cooperating teachers were very aware of how the student teacher's presence impacted on both children and staff within the preschool. Living-in-relationship has ethical and moral overtones and responsibilities, yet many student teachers acted as visitors who came with their own personal baggage and were unable to share in the hospitality that was offered to them. Julie, Irene and Kate all expressed a desire for student teachers to become part of the staff team but this was often difficult given a range of particular factors which had the potential to impact on that level of relationship.

There was a concern by cooperating teachers where student teachers appeared not to have

a real commitment to or accept responsibility for their own professional development. Sometimes the student teachers appeared to the cooperating teachers to be preoccupied with meeting university requirements or their own personal commitments to part-time work. In these situations, where student teachers themselves appeared to lack motivation, it either became frustrating to the cooperating teacher (as was the case with Julie) or as with Matthew, there was a feeling that only routine procedures were met and little personal involvement took place. In the latter case, cooperating teacher impact on student teacher development could be negligible. What appeared to be of greater concern was the attitude toward children that the student teachers conveyed through their behaviour. The discussion now focuses on implications of the concern for style in relation to key aspects of the practicum.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONCERN FOR STYLE.

If style is to be addressed as an important outcome of this study then there needs to be further collaborative research undertaken to clearly establish the relationship between cooperating teachers' and student teachers' perspectives on style and the enhancement of children's development. Such a collaborative approach should involve practising early childhood teachers, student teachers and researchers in understanding and interpreting the tacitness of the early childhood teachers' personal practical knowledge. Given that style is represented within the moral, emotional and cognitive dimensions of personal knowledge there are implications for the professional development of student teachers, for the practicum curriculum and for cooperating teachers.

Implications for the professional development of student teachers

It cannot be argued that aspects of the professional development of the student teacher are exclusively the domain of either the university or the field experience component of the teacher education programme. Since links can be made between style and personal practical knowledge, Day et al. (1990) have some useful propositions concerning the development of teachers' personal practical knowledge which may be worthy of consideration. They address personal beliefs and values and focus on motivation and reflection. What appears to be critical is that student teachers take responsibility for their own learning.

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Student teachers need to have opportunities to explore their beliefs and values, their knowledge, and their understandings of learning and of teaching. During the practicum student teachers need opportunities to discuss with cooperating teachers the approaches and understandings that underpin the cooperating teacher's practices as well as their own. This level of discussion and personal exposure may require a level of self-confidence not necessarily possessed by many student teachers. A more collaborative and negotiated approach to the practicum may well assist in providing a climate more conducive to such discussion.

Opportunities need to be provided for more creative approaches to enabling student teachers to have valuable learning experiences. If the establishment of relationships with both adults and children is important then student teachers need to be equipped with strategies that will enable them to develop effective relationships. If knowledge about the context, and about cooperating teachers' values and beliefs is important, then student teachers need to be helped to find ways of eliciting this knowledge and dealing with situations where they recognise that there are difference between how they see themselves and the expectations of cooperating teachers. There is a need to enable student teachers to develop a sensitivity towards and an understanding of strategies which have the potential to harmonise self-other relationships as an effective team member.

Since there is often difficulty in finding a sufficient number of practicum sites for student teacher placement a programme needs to be considered whereby student teachers present a portfolio of successful experiences with children before they become eligible to undertake a substantial practicum. The experiences may be gained through babysitting or volunteer work but should involve student teachers in finding out about young children and the ways in which they themselves relate to them. Such a portfolio may include not only a description of the type of experience in which they engaged but some indication of how they saw themselves in the relationship with children and how children responded to them. With the potential that there would be fewer student teachers to place, the university could then be more selective of the cooperating teachers with whom they placed the student teachers. One of the problems associated with this proposal is a reduced number of graduating early childhood teachers; however, there are areas other than teaching in which early childhood graduates may gain employment and this may be an alternative track. The other problem is

that there are currently insufficient early childhood teachers to fill employment vacancies, and the reduced numbers would further diminish the supply.

Given the focus within this study on the nature and quality of adult/child relationships, further consideration needs to be given to ways in which to address induction and mentoring of student teachers within undergraduate teacher education programmes. If relationships are so important then ways need to be found for student teachers to appreciate their importance and for communications skills to be clearly identified in university documentation. There is a need to ensure that the student teacher is enabled to make a link between interpersonal communication theory and their own relationships with young children.

Implications for the practicum curriculum

As explained in the literature review chapter, the practicum curriculum can be conceived of as the sequence of learning experiences in which the student teacher is to be involved during the practicum (Turney et al., 1982a). Given the cooperating teachers' concerns with relationships and the particular emphasis they placed on the ethic of caring, there is certainly a need for a review of the practicum curriculum. Universities need to address both their curriculum documents and their student assessment documents to ensure that they contain a clear indication of the competencies student teachers need to display which are indicative of style.

A curriculum which is oriented towards the caring which is conceived of within social relationships needs to be addressed. Student teachers would need to have opportunities to establish and review their relationships not only with children but also with the cooperating teacher and other adults in the setting. They need time and opportunities to reveal and consider those practices which have influenced their images of themselves and of teaching. Student teachers may need time and the availability of a mentor to assist them in these processes (Williams, 1994).

It is argued that the three major ways in which the ethical ideal may be nurtured are through dialogue, practice and confirmation (Noddings, 1984). While the practicum curriculum may establish the practices in which student teachers are to engage, considerable attention must

be given to the student teachers themselves and their development as teachers of young children. Consideration therefore needs to be given to the links between what the cooperating teachers have depicted as style and the knowledge and discipline areas which form the core of university coursework.

Another of the difficulties with current practicum curricula is that when the practicum curriculum is task oriented it reflects an activities-based approach. That approach, when transferred to student teachers' work with children, received considerable criticism by the cooperating teachers. Matthew suggested that the ideal would be for student teachers to spend an initial period not only observing and interacting with the children but interpreting their understandings of those observations. In this way they would come to know the context and would also have concrete examples as a basis for discussion. These examples would provide a focus for the identification of practicum goals. Clear, jointly established goals would overcome the difficulty of differing expectations of the university and the cooperating teacher and would provide a focus for support for the cooperating teacher.

Implications for cooperating teachers

A considerable degree of responsibility is assigned to cooperating teachers if they are to work with student teachers in a collaborative approach to planning. The cooperating teachers in this study wanted to be successful in their role and for some, to have a failing student teacher was seen as a reflection on their ability. What appears to be a key in the process of empowering the student teacher is what Wood (1991) describes as asking the right questions at the right time. In the present study Julie, found that she had great difficulty in drawing responses from the student teacher to her questions. It is in the guidance of cooperating teachers in handling difficult situations that the university supervisors can act in a resource/support role if they are equipped to do this.

While style focuses largely on student teacher/child relationships concern about student teacher functioning within the broader context of the practicum was also expressed by the cooperating teachers. Those concerns relate to the practicum as a context in which student teacher learning occurs.

THE PRACTICUM CONTEXT

Questions need to be asked about the purpose of the practicum and what could be expected to be achieved within a four week (or less) block practicum. In the current climate, assumptions about the powerfulness of the practicum need to be questioned. For example, research is required into the extent to which the practicum appears to make a lasting change in student teacher behaviour and the extent to which the cooperating teacher has the potential to influence change. Elaine was aware that the child care centre where her student teacher was employed, had different expectations of the children from those she shared with the children for whom she was responsible. She did however, expect that the student teacher would respect her values and expectations of the children and adopt similar practices while a student teacher undertaking practicum experiences with the children in her care. The student teacher was therefore also expected to make an effort to become part of the staff team as a responsible adult working with young children. Tensions occur where the needs, expectations and personal disposition of a student teacher are incompatible with the ethos or culture of the preschool established by the staff team (Jorde Bloom et al., 1991). Issues three and four reflect the cooperating teachers' concerns about the sensitivity with which student teachers acted within the relational aspects of the practicum context and the lack of accountability taken by the universities of that context.

ISSUE 3: Taking account of the practicum context

While the cooperating teachers in the study held expectations that student teachers adopt practices which were complementary to those of the cooperating teacher they did not expect the student teacher to clone them. What was expected was that the student teacher would act with the sensitivity of a team member and display the reciprocity and responsibility that that entails. To act in such ways requires the ability to interpret and reflect upon the thinking and intentions that drive expert practice (Ben-Peretz & Rumney, 1991, Kane, 1994). For Irene in particular, tensions arose where a student teacher imitated her way of preparing for the transition of children from one activity to another. Irene preferred that the student teacher work out her own personal style for achieving the same outcome. There was a tension between fitting in to the degree of imitating and working within relationships of shared expectations and values.

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i. Cooperating teacher/student teacher relationships

Tensions arose through not knowing the student teacher and yet needing a sufficiently open relationship with them to be able to work together so that university requirements could be met within a context which was managed by the cooperating teacher. Irene's comfort level most often reflected the degree of confidence she felt in her own beliefs, values and ways of working and the extent to which these were challenged. It is suggested that where cooperating teachers do not know or have a good relationship with student teachers they tend to be more prescriptive (Koehler, 1984). Being prescriptive, or (as Julie experienced it) being **directive** reinforces a didactic approach to teaching and learning which is contrary to a more open constructivist approach. It reflects what Matthew described as the *tick-the-box syndrome* in which identified tasks can be checked off as completed. Such an approach requires less emotional involvement of the cooperating teacher. Under such circumstances it could be argued that student teachers' preoccupation with tasks may be more affective rather than cognitive because their concern is with learning the mores of the their hosts, the cooperating teachers (McNally et al., 1994). Such a view, however, runs contrary to both Julie's and Irene's experiences of student teachers who were simply unaware and seemingly insensitive to the context.

As revealed in Chapter Four, Julie struggled with her concern that the student teacher held views of teaching as working in prescribed ways with a set curriculum rather than the child-oriented approach which Julie had adopted. Irene too was frustrated where a student teacher appeared to view herself as what Britzman identified as a 'social controller' (Britzman, 1991, p.48). One of the difficulties was that there was little expectation on the part of the student teachers or the cooperating teachers that a discussion of approaches to teaching would occur.

If the university's programme is supporting the development of reflective student teachers then those student teachers need reflective cooperating teachers who are able not only to examine their own practices but also to support the student teachers in examining, dissecting and changing their own thinking about practice (Olson & Carter, 1989; McNally et al., 1994). It also takes time for talking and reflection to occur rather than the 'quick-fix' solutions indicative of more technical approach to supervision (Boydell, 1986; Yonemura, 1991; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). If, as Julie suggested, personal relationships need to be

established first before there is a willingness in the student teacher to participate in disclosures of a more personal nature then time becomes a key factor in establishing a climate in which such discussions between cooperating teacher and student teacher could readily occur. Underpinning the establishment of a trusting relationship, may be the perception that the student teacher has of the relationship with the cooperating teacher. If the cooperating teacher is seen to be in authority and therefore more powerful within the practicum setting, then a hierarchical relationship such as that considered by Elaine (Chapter Seven) becomes evident.

Rather than operating within controlled environments it has been found that, within reason, student teachers appreciate opportunities for risk taking (Johnston, 1994). Julie reported on how important it had been to her as a student teacher to be able to take risks and feel what being a teacher was like. However, of the twenty-eight student teachers undertaking practicum with the five cooperating teachers in this study it was only the more confident student teacher undertaking her practicum with Kate who was prepared to engage in an element of risk taking. Kate readily supported the student teacher in extending herself beyond what was expected of her within the practicum guidelines.

The opportunities to engage in risk taking were largely linked to the cooperating teacher's concerns about the appropriateness of student teachers' behaviour with children. When things did not happen as the cooperating teachers expected, then they were challenged by the tension of valuing personal relationships and having to provide feedback to the student teacher which may be negative and personal. The confidence of the cooperating teachers themselves appeared to show in the ways in which negative feedback was managed.

In summary, at least three things must happen in order that positive cooperating teacher/ student teacher relationships be developed. There needs to be adequate time, an approach that is collaborative and reflective of a team relationship, and a willingness in both the student teacher and the cooperating teacher to examine their own practices. The question arises as to what extent the university supervisor has a role to play within contextually bound relationships. Certainly, Irene found that it could be one of impartiality, but this seldom occurred.

ii. Understandings by the university/university supervisors of the context

Differing perspectives on the nature of the cooperating teacher's role highlight one of the problems of the practicum identified by Eltis (1987). As the orientation of the cooperating teachers was always toward the education and care of the children for whom they had primary responsibility, tensions arose when the expectations of the university supervisor and/or of the student teacher did not sit comfortably with the preschool context. It was the cooperating teacher rather than the university supervisor who brought an understanding of the context to the application of university requirements into practice and interpreted the student teacher's work within the context. Since university supervisor visits were infrequent and of limited duration it was difficult for university supervisors to do little more than address the mechanics of student teachers' meeting university practicum requirements. There was little opportunity to foster collaboration and reciprocity between cooperating teachers and university supervisors for discussion of shared beliefs and contextual knowledge.

The cooperating teachers looked to the universities for resource support and as participants in an informal discussion about the student teacher's work. Sometimes the university supervisor was available to support the cooperating teachers where concerns were identified. At other times there was not a university supervisor available or they appeared unable to support the cooperating teacher's views.

The differing contextual knowledge bases from which the cooperating teacher and the university supervisors worked contributed to the tensions cooperating teachers felt with university supervisors. Where there was limited understanding by university supervisors of either the practicum curriculum and/or the nature of the preschool environment (largely due to their infrequent visits) Irene, Matthew and Julie considered that some university supervisors could be of little assistance to either themselves or to the student teachers. Irene raised a concern that some university supervisors were recruited by the university for the specific purpose of supervision and therefore were not aware of the nature of the coursework which would inform the student teachers' practices and the rationale behind some of the practicum requirements.

Issues of the practicum curriculum and appreciation by university personnel of the nature

of the preschool context, issues of authority and responsibility have been raised by the cooperating teachers and within the early childhood literature (Davies & Pollnitz, 1994; Fleer and Waniganayake, 1994; Lambert, 1992). It is the nature of those links that was of concern to the cooperating teachers in the study. The whole issue of the value to the cooperating teachers (and to the student teachers) of the current arrangements concerning the role of university personnel within the practicum was raised by Julie, Irene and Matthew. What is stressed here is that teacher development in early childhood should be cognisant of the current call for greater collaboration between universities and field placement personnel (Preston & Kennedy, 1995) but should address its own unique qualities.

In the school sector there is still a concern that supervision has not moved beyond the apprenticeship model in spite of several attempts (Cameron & Wilson, 1993; QBTR, 1994b; Yarrow, 1992). Questions have also been raised in relation to these issues as they pertain to early childhood teacher education. The solutions, however, are evasive (Fleer & Waniganayake, 1994). One of the characteristics of community preschools is that they act as autonomous organisations. Because they are small, autonomous, team based units and usually have no more than two trained teachers they often accept the placement of only one student teacher at a time. Any effort to work collaboratively with university personnel visiting preschools on a regular basis is not cost effective given the number of student teachers to be placed across a wide geographic area. Limitations on staffing and funding would make direct cooperating teacher/university collaboration, as provided within the school system, difficult. Alternatives need to be found. While personnel is one issue, the practicum curriculum is another which needs to be addressed.

iii. The practicum curriculum and the nature of the preschool context

Cooperating teachers criticised instances where the practicum curriculum documents and their accompanying student assessment documents did not reflect the preschool context. Discrepancies were found between the type of setting in which the student teacher was placed (i.e., preschool) and the age range of children about which student teachers were expected to demonstrate an understanding. Cooperating teachers commented on the lack of emphasis placed by the university assessment criteria on the nature of student teacher/child interactions and those qualities required within professional practices. As

indicated earlier, aspects of style which were highly valued by the cooperating teachers and would not necessarily be identified or assessed within university coursework were not easily identified in the student assessment criteria. A concern of some of the cooperating teachers was that they had responsibility for the student teachers but little authority to either negotiate the practicum curriculum or the criteria upon which the student teachers were assessed. The fact that as teacher educators, university personnel are considered to have a store of academic knowledge and have authority over student teacher practicum, may well shape the approach that student teachers take to undertaking practicum task. On the other hand, the cooperating teachers focused on the learning that can potentially occur through student teacher involvement in the practicum.

ISSUE 4: Learning through practical experience

The key players in the practicum may be considered to be not only the university, the cooperating teachers and the student teachers, but also the children and staff within the context. While this study did not seek the views of either the student teachers or university personnel it revealed the tensions experienced by the cooperating teachers when their expectations of student teachers were not reflected in those of individual student teachers or a particular university.

Cooperating teachers most often provided informal feedback to student teachers. However, the ideal that 'practice teaching... enable(s) student teachers to construct and modify their knowledge and skills and personal/professional theories' (Spodek & Saracho, 1990, p.39) was not realised. One way to bridge the gap between theory and experience is to question and examine, for experience is seen to be educative only with reflection (Dewey, 1938; Jones & Godfrey, 1993; Richardson, 1990; Schon, 1987; Wood, 1991). Collaborative approaches to such reflection are one of the ways in which the link can be made (Cochran-Smith, 1991). It is through collaboration that the responsive, constructivist and experiential nature of the cooperating teacher's work may be addressed (Yarrow, 1992). While the extent to which the cooperating teachers in this study engaged in student teacher teaching varied, the notion of teaching was always present, but it is the approaches to that teaching and student teacher learning that need to be addressed. There is some uncertainty as to whether the universities viewed the cooperating teachers in this study as teacher educators.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE UNIVERSITY

The perspectives that are presented here, while being only those of the cooperating teachers, do highlight the need to inquire further into the way in which the practicum curriculum is determined and into the roles of university personnel.

Clarifying the purpose of the practicum curriculum

The purpose of the practicum needs further clarification. The study raised the issues of care and education and the nature of teaching in early childhood. These issues were embedded within what may be considered to be the hidden curriculum of the practicum. It was anticipated that student teachers may have come to the practicum expecting to address the university requirements set out in practicum documents; however, they would find that the cooperating teachers in this study were more concerned with student teacher enactment of personal professional knowledge through their relationships with children. If what was reported by these five cooperating teachers is representative of the broader field of early childhood education then there is a need to further research both our understanding of teaching in early childhood and ways to tap student teachers' understandings of what teaching in early childhood involves. These issues have implications not only for the practicum curriculum but also for approaches taken in teacher education course work and expectations of university personnel involved with the practicum.

University personnel

Greater collaboration between cooperating teachers and personnel responsible for the development of university early childhood teacher education is certainly warranted. In particular, the criticism levelled at university practicum supervisors of their inability to appreciate the contexts in which student teachers are required to be part suggests that there is a need to rethink the role of the university supervisors. The cooperating teachers looked to these people as a resource, yet those identified in this study tended not to be resourceful. There was little time in which they could develop those relationships which would enable them to act as resource persons and little time for them to come to know and understand the context in which they could be resourceful. On one occasion where a university indicated that university supervisors would not be visiting Matthew was relieved because he considered that there was a 'greater oneness of purpose' between himself and the student

teacher where they did not also have to accommodate the university supervisor (J2: 26/10/92: p.10). It has already been demonstrated that 'supportive, trusting, mentoring, partnerships between adult learners and supervisors can be established within internship programmes' (Davies & Pollnitz, 1994, p.22).

The question is then raised as to who should act as university liaison personnel and whether or not they are required to act as supervisors of student teachers in the practicum. Of particular interest is whether university personnel have a role to play in student teacher development within the context of the practicum setting where the establishment of a caring relation is critical. University personnel may be better placed as resource people who can resource the needs of the cooperating teachers and actually provide a direct link in this way between practitioners and the university. As it would be more difficult to resource a preschool where there is often only one student teacher at a given time, models other than school-based supervisory models need to be investigated. One model may be to resource/support early childhood areas within small geographic regions or to use technology for more regular communication with cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers need to be invited to express their needs rather than the university identifying what it sees to be the problem; in many instances cooperating teachers felt that their work with student teachers was devalued. There is, therefore, a role for university supervisors but within a different context from the more traditional liaison visits and direct observation of student teachers. That role may be linked to one of professional development of both cooperating teachers and student teachers in order that cooperating teachers more clearly come to know and understand their involvement in the professional education of adult learners (Sinclair Gaffey & Dobbins, 1995).

COOPERATING TEACHING

Both student teachers and cooperating teachers can be challenged within the practicum by differing expectations and differing philosophies of practice. Cooperating teachers did more than undertake a supervisory model of supervision as surveillance and the provision of feedback. Their role extended far beyond engaging in procedural strategies and roles of a clinical supervision model where teaching is conceived to occur during structured lesson

time (Acheson & Gall, 1992; Turney et al., 1982b). As has been suggested elsewhere (Niemeyer & Moon, 1987; Shulman, 1987) the cooperating teachers in this study drew on the intuition and reasoning that was informed by their own professional/personal practical knowledge and engaged in reflection, introspection and a search for understanding rather than applied routine practices. The universities' understandings and appreciation of the nature of cooperating teachers' work and the extent to which there are jointly planned efforts of collaboration form issues five and six.

ISSUE 5: Understanding the work of cooperating teachers

The cooperating teachers' responsibilities encompassed many aspects of day-to-day living within the preschool. Where there were time constraints (such as the length of the practicum, student teacher unwillingness to remain at the preschool to discuss their work after the children had left for the day, or other demands being placed on the cooperating teachers) the cooperating teachers undertook the more routine tasks of checking student teacher planning and observing and giving feedback on planned group experiences. While this enabled student teachers to complete university requirements and to receive feedback on their planning and the implementation of those plans, such an approach reflected little of the relational aspects of professional life or of the artistry identified in Chapter Four.

A major concern here is that student teachers are receiving conflicting messages. On the one hand they are expected to be responsive within their relationships with children and to act within a child-responsive curriculum, and on the other, the university provides a structured set of requirements for the student teachers to meet. The cooperating teachers' view of teaching was that there was not a set of rules or recipes that could be applied, yet, because of pressures of time and constraints of the practicum curriculum they were encouraged to act as if there were. The *quick fix* about which Matthew spoke was indicative of the cooperating teacher taking responsibility in trying to solve a problem rather than assigning that responsibility to the student teacher. Again, time is a critical factor. If cooperating teachers are to engage in 'intelligent action' (Schon, 1987, p.25) during contextually oriented feedback then there needs to be opportunity and an expectation that this will occur.

i. Responsiveness within the artistry of cooperating teaching.

Teaching in early childhood extends throughout the day. Cooperating teachers worked with

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student teachers throughout that time. What was particularly evident in Julie's work was the need to create a balance between the establishment of rapport and trust within her relationship with the student teacher and the perceived powerfulness of the cooperating teacher role. Such powerfulness is upheld by the language in the university documentation which describes the role, and in the criteria identified in student teacher assessment documents. It remains unclear how much the practicum, as it now exists, influences student teachers' professional development.

ii. The context of cooperating teaching

The cooperating teachers accepted student teachers in addition to their regular responsibilities. While cooperating teachers viewed the practicum as a valuable learning experience for the student teachers, there was variation in the extent to which it was considered that the student teachers were the ones who had responsibility for ensuring that they met university requirements. Julie, for example, felt a responsibility for ensuring that she understood what the university required of the student teacher as she considered that it reflected on her ability as a cooperating teacher. Irene assigned that responsibility to the student teacher but had her own expectations of what should occur within the preschool where she worked.

The issue of who takes and accepts responsibility is closely associated with views on adults as learners. Matthew considered that, as a cooperating teacher, he was not a student teacher's 'minder' but student teachers have responsibility for their own learning. Understanding about adult learning and learning from experience would suggest that the opportunities provided by cooperating teachers to use the concrete experiences of student teachers in the practicum as a basis for discussion, analysis and reflection are invaluable as a context for student teacher learning (Boud, 1993; Veale, 1989). It could be argued that the problems used in problem based learning do not have to be constructed through case study examples, they exist within the context of the practicum. Cooperating teachers become personally involved in these problems because of the responsibility they have towards the children.

iii. Emotional involvement of the cooperating teacher and satisfaction within the role

All the cooperating teachers in the study were concerned about the personal characteristics

which were indicative of the attitudes of student teachers. Because reference was made to aspects of student teacher personality, there was an emotional involvement in the cooperating teachers' work with student teachers. Julie and Irene, for example, used words such as ...'feeling angry', 'needing to be nice', 'feeling guilty', feeling 'frustrated, torn' and 'uncomfortable', to express how they felt. Matthew, on the other hand, appeared to act in a more detached way in his engagement with the student teachers.

Sometimes cooperating teachers had, and indicated that they needed, time to think about how they would manage a particular situation, at other times they had to act almost immediately. Cooperating teachers drew on their own personal and professional experiences to make judgements about how best to deal with tensions. They also took into account their understandings of the student teacher's ability to manage criticism. Julie, for example, was concerned that the student with whom she worked might become emotionally upset by critical comments (Julie, 39B: 2/11/92: pp.12-13). Julie wanted to be *a friend* to the student teacher and she believed that friends are *open* and have a shared understanding. Julie wanted to be supportive for *it does not have to be horrible for (the student teacher)...* (Julie, 41B: 13/11/92: p.5, l.20). Yet, as has been indicated in an earlier chapter, the student teacher was not always responsive to Julie's suggestions. It may be said that Julie **cared for** the student teacher but was not in a caring **relationship with** her (Noddings, 1984).

In contrast with Julie who had only one student teacher for four weeks during the period of the study, Irene had thirteen students during a seven month period. Although Irene was quite direct in her approach with each of the student teachers she was particularly supportive of those student teachers who exhibited qualities conducive to caring relationships with children yet lacked confidence within that relationship. Irene considered it important that a student teacher recognise that confidence was a personal quality on which the student teacher needed to work. Irene therefore made the decision to raise the issue in a direct way with the student teacher, commenting on her lack of confidence. Irene anticipated that once it was drawn to her attention the student teacher would accept responsibility for changing her behaviour. However, Irene was concerned about how the student teacher would react to the ways in which she expressed her concern. She was motivated by a desire to contribute to the student teacher's professional development. Satisfaction with her role came in feeling that she had made a difference in changing the

student teacher's behaviour.

The degree of emotional involvement certainly varied between cooperating teachers and within individual cooperating teacher/student teacher relationships. However, the sense of responsibility towards the student teacher and the ways in which the cooperating teachers engaged with them suggests that what the cooperating teachers do is more than 'cooperate' with the university.

ISSUE 6: 'Cooperating teacher': a misnomer

The question of who owns the practicum suggests that authority and therefore power resides in the university as owner of the programme of which the practicum is a part. There can be a powerfulness within a caring relation where powerfulness is concerned not with control but with the carer promoting the wellbeing of the cared for. The cooperating teacher's relationship with student teacher was a supportive one for Elaine and for other cooperating teachers who sought to protect the student teacher from any of the idiosyncrasies of the 'flying visitor' (identified in Chapter Seven). Cooperating teachers strongly felt a responsibility for student teachers within the context of the preschool and in providing opportunities for student teachers to meet university requirements but they did not feel they had authority to insist that student teachers meet particular requests made by the university within the practicum curriculum or to insist on attendance outside preschool hours for the purposes of discussing student teachers' work with them.

The cooperating teachers, however, appeared to be working at arm's length from the university. They were called cooperating teachers and yet it could hardly be said that they cooperated with the university in determining the practicum curriculum. Greater recognition would be given to the role if cooperating teachers were considered as 'Field Based Teacher Educators' (Sinclair Gaffey & Dobbins, 1995).

CONCLUDING COMMENT

The six key issues that have been raised have focused on three areas. These are: the personal practical knowledge of the student teachers and how this knowledge is reflected

in student teacher interactions with children; student teacher learning within the context of the practicum; and teaching student teachers. While the complexities of teaching both in relation to children and student teachers are appreciated, a lack of coherence has been evident between the ideal found in the literature and in the cooperating teacher's images of practice and the reality of day-to-day experiences, and between the perceptions the cooperating teachers held of their role and of early childhood practice and those conveyed by the university.

Attention needs to be given to gaining some consensus between cooperating teachers' understandings of practice and those promoted by the university. Having reached a clearer understanding then there is a need to review how more effective practices can be achieved to enhance student teacher development through practical experiences. Attention would also need to be given to a view of student teachers as adult learners.

There is now a considerable body of research that provides understanding of young children's learning and the quality indicators that support that learning (Bredekamp, 1987; Howes, Hamilton & Matheson, 1994; NAEYC, 1984; NCAC, 1993; Ochiltree, 1994; Wangmann, 1995). The next step is to investigate more closely not only the nature of adult/child relationships but how adults can develop the knowledge, attitudes, skills and dispositions that have been identified as essential for early childhood practitioners and the role of experience within this development.

There are already suggestions that a more self-directed learning approach and associated problem-based learning are options for further investigation (Boud, 1993; Olson, 1995; Simpson, 1994). The value of these approaches is that they assign the responsibility of learning to the student teacher, within the context of concrete experiences. If the practicum curriculum can be negotiated between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher then there is a basis from which learning through experience can be more focused. Where the curriculum can enable 'problems' to be identified and addressed then it can serve as a basis for engagement in metacognitive processes of inquiry and reflection. Such an approach acknowledges the dynamic and multidimensional nature of teaching and of cooperating teaching.

Negotiation and collaboration between cooperating teacher and student teacher is not a new proposal but it does require that cooperating teachers and the university take a different perspective on the practicum to the one currently in place (Lambert, 1992). If the role of the university supervisor has in fact, a low status within the university and the cooperating teachers are critical of the qualities of university supervisors then that role needs revisiting (Koehler, 1984). An alternative is to engage (through secondment) the field consultants who already exist within the larger early childhood organisations and local government areas, to act as resource/support persons to cooperating teachers. These consultants could be engaged by the university on a part-time basis to participate as tutors in undergraduate courses directly associated with the practicum and to organise and participate in regionally based collaborative support groups with cooperating teachers (Clandinin, 1993).

Early childhood settings are scattered over wide geographical areas and often one student teacher is assigned to one setting. It is therefore, difficult to establish the kind of partnerships which are currently being advocated between universities and school settings (Sinclair Gaffey & Dobbins, 1995). There is a need to find ways in which to cluster early childhood cooperating teachers together to inquire into their own roles and practices and to act as a support group during the practicum. The suggestions made above would initially enable clustering to occur on the basis of action-based research groups responsible for inquiring into aspects of the practicum that are of concern to them. From this data base clearer understandings of the practicum could be gained from those who are directly involved within it. The groups could then act as support groups. The assumption is that those involved would be sufficiently motivated to be part of the group and that the benefits to them would be in terms of their own learning and development of those professional skills required in working with other adults.

In taking these ideas forward, the next section in this chapter addresses the ways in which this study can make a contribution to the field of early childhood education. While the focus is on the practicum, it can already be appreciated that the issues that have arisen go beyond the practicum to the qualities perceived to be indicative of early childhood professional themselves.

SECTION 2: THE STUDY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Like many other forms of research, the strengths of this study lie not only in its potential to gain insight into the nature of cooperating teaching within an existing knowledge base but also in the multiple ways in which the investigation was undertaken. By focusing on lived experience, on reflections of that experience and on the sharing of experiences across cooperating teachers, the reality of day-to-day experience is revealed. However, the study provides more than this for the reflections of the cooperating teachers revealed insights into their values and beliefs about teaching in early childhood. Through multiple viewings of field text data the study has made more explicit what has been implied by the concepts of child 'care'. The major contributions have therefore been in understanding what university documentation considers to be the supervisory practices of cooperating teachers; providing insights into ways in which collaboration can be fostered; identifying the extent to which cooperating teachers see their prime responsibility as being towards children; and raising issues concerning the value placed on the practicum.

The study makes a contribution to understandings of 'supervisory' practices by identifying cooperating teaching as an alternative view to a more formal concept of supervision as watching over or surveillance (Stones, 1984). It may be a first step in understanding the supervisory practices of cooperating teachers and furthering the collaborative efforts between universities and early childhood cooperating teachers.

UNDERSTANDING SUPERVISORY PRACTICES

As stated in the literature review, the decision to investigate what went on in the minds of cooperating teachers was intended as a means by which a more realistic understanding of the early childhood cooperating teacher's role and responsibilities could be identified. At the school-based level of teacher education, various supervision models and styles have been promoted (Cameron & Wilson, 1993; QBTR, 1994a; Zimpher & Howey, 1987) and calls made for supervisor training (QBTR, 1994a; Yarrow, 1992; Turney et al., 1982a). Within early childhood education it has been found that there are various supervisory styles

that cooperating teachers employ within the more formal conferencing arrangements (Fleet, 1993). Little work appears to have been undertaken concerning the nature and quality of the more informal and incidental aspects of feedback which reflects the importance given to relationships and, the concept of 'interactional socialisation' (Fleet, 1993, p.376).

Since early childhood teacher education prepares teachers for the early years of schooling as well as for services providing for the care and education of children of below school age, concerns regarding school-based teacher education have also been the concerns of early childhood education. One of the models of supervision that has been adopted in early childhood teacher education is the clinical supervision model. However, as indicated in the Literature Review, there have been criticism of that model. One of the concerns was that change in the nature of cooperating teaching is unlikely to occur unless cooperating teachers are actively involved in exploring the issues (Crawford & Deer, 1993). In Chapter Four of this thesis, Julie's story reconstruction demonstrated how frustrated she became where there were differing expectations between herself and the university supervisor. Julie desired a collaborative approach to student teacher supervision and when this was not forthcoming her reaction was to not accept student teachers at that time of the year again.

From my own personal experience, university supervisors have been critical of cooperating teachers who have not met the expectations of the university or who have not been willing to recommend that a student teacher should not receive a passing grade in the practicum. There are at least two reasons for these discrepancies. The first is the limited regard that some of the cooperating teachers in this study had for the relevance of the qualities indicated by the assessment criteria established by the university. The second and more subtle reason is the lack of confidence that cooperating teachers have in being sufficiently cognisant of current theories to which student teachers may be exposed in their coursework. The highlighting of this orientation of cooperating teachers is one of the contributions that this study makes and is related to Issue 3 which has been discussed earlier in this chapter.

FOSTERING COLLABORATION

The second major contribution of this study is related to partnerships between the

universities, schools and field based teacher educators (Sinclair Gaffey & Dobbins, 1995). Of particular concern is the opportunity for not only consultation but collaboration between universities and cooperating teachers within early childhood services (Edwards, 1993; Marland, 1993). There is criticism suggesting that current practicum frameworks within teacher education have been developed to meet the needs of higher education rather than having a school or field based focus (QBTR, 1994a). While the frameworks are determined by universities they have limited control over the processes involved in cooperating teaching other than their request of cooperating teachers to follow specific supervisory practices. At the time this study was conducted, the dialogue between universities and cooperating teachers had largely been directed towards gaining responses from the field to course review documents and towards **informing** the cooperating teachers about university expectations. There had been little ongoing consultation regarding aspects of practicum such as the practicum curriculum and student teacher assessment criteria. As this study draws to a close important links are being made between understandings of young children's development and teacher/caregiver behaviour (Doherty-Derkowski, 1995; Wangmann, 1995). Those links need to be carried through to consideration of the university's expectations of student teachers.

This study confirms the importance of personal relationships that develop between student teacher and cooperating teachers as found in a review of 'learning-to-teach-studies' (Kagan, 1992) and the findings of a recent study undertaken in New Zealand investigating at the professional needs of associate (i.e., cooperating) teachers (Faire, 1994). The preschool context itself already reflects many aspects of collegiality and collaboration with its emphasis on processes associated with interactive learning and a team approach to organisational processes. In viewing early childhood contexts as learning communities in which the establishment of desirable relationships is acknowledged, issues of responsiveness are supported (Davies & Pollnitz, 1994; Doherty-Derkowski, 1995; Hollingsworth, 1994; Kagan, 1992; Wangmann, 1995).

The targeting of behaviours indicative of aspects of style leads to the third contribution made by the study. It is the concern regarding those behaviours considered to have an impact on the development of dispositions and feelings in young children.

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In addition to the contributions already mentioned, this study is substantive because of the potential impact of the issues raised within it on the lives of children. The issues give recognition to and provide clarification of what cooperating teachers value not only in the development of student teachers but also in the professional early childhood educator. The importance of responsiveness within a caring relationships was so strongly presented within the cooperating teachers' conversations that is has become a focal point within the study.

Given that the practicum has been recognised as an integral part of teacher education then the issues raised by the cooperating teachers warrant careful consideration because their relevance to the lives of young children cannot be ignored. The extent to which the behaviour of student teachers has an impact on young children is unknown. If the practicum does have an impact on the nature and quality of future teachers then attention to these matters is warranted (Turney et al., 1982a). What is not clear, however, is the extent to which short periods of practicum (no matter what the context), have an impact on the developing early childhood professional.

VALUING THE PRACTICUM

In going beyond the direct relational aspects of the study, the material which has been presented reveals something of a hidden curriculum within the practicum. The hidden curriculum may be considered to be found in the roles, attitudes and expectations held by the cooperating teachers, which influence what occurs within the practicum (Lovat & Smith, 1995). Cooperating teachers emphasised student teacher/child relationships and an ethic of caring. However, while coursework may address teacher/child interactions the opportunities to actually engage with children and involve oneself in action and reflection on that action require a living, dynamic context. The cooperating teachers valued student teachers who were able to enact cognitive knowledge through a sense of care for self and for others. This is a major issue which has arisen in the study and in recent comments in the literature (Bowers & Flinders, 1990; Greenberg, 1992; Howes, Matheson & Hamilton,

1994; Leavitt, 1994; Wood, 1994). Cooperating teachers have a major contribution to make to the establishment of caring relations within responsive communities.

If the way teachers teach depends on who they are then it is essential for student teachers to have opportunities to discover their own personal and professional biography and visions through field experiences (Kagan, 1992; Wallace & Louden, 1994). In those field based contexts, not only do cooperating teachers need to demonstrate a responsiveness, but student teachers need to be aware of the value placed on responsiveness. To be successful in such endeavours cooperating teachers require both the support of university personnel from within the teacher education programmes and opportunities to develop shared understandings with the student teachers.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

The study also has implications for cooperating teachers both in appreciating what currently appears to be a dissonance between their expectations and those of the university and in providing implications for the university wishing to facilitate change. The question arises as to whether the universities are out of step with practices and expectations in the field where what early childhood teachers do is located contextually within the nature of education and care of young children (Kagan & Thornburg, 1995; Kagan, 1992).

Alternatively, it may be considered that what the cooperating teachers do is out of step with recent developments which are promoted through the university. However, there does not appear to be evidence in the study that the cooperating teachers' approaches to early education oppose those currently being promoted in the literature.

The character of the preschool environment itself is impacted upon by parents and community views which in turn are influenced by political, socio-economic and industrial contexts and values. Currently, knowledge and understanding about young children's learning support approaches to the care and education of young children which are reflected in developmentally appropriate practices and a concern for the development of children's social competence (Bredekamp, 1987; Howes, Matheson & Hamilton, 1994).

Child-centred approaches to early education are constructivist, humanistic and developmental, and within this, there is greater emphasis on an integrated curriculum rather than one segregated into readily identifiable areas of study. This approach is in contrast with school education where the identification of key learning areas may suggest a segregated curriculum. There is a need to be cognisant of the relationship between early childhood education and school education. University supervisors can provide a more direct contact with new ideas and curriculum developments being promoted at the university and therefore can serve as liaison personnel between the university and the practitioner in the field.

SECTION 3: SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The concerns of the cooperating teachers and the issues that have been drawn from those concerns have highlighted through this exploratory study a number of areas requiring further investigation. They include clarification of the importance of style as a dimension within those characteristics considered to be indicative of early childhood professionals, and matters to do with the practicum and the ways in which it enhances student teacher learning. Once the value of the practicum is established, questions need to be asked about how student teachers may be assisted in developing new understandings from those practical experiences that will enhance their learning. When considering the practicum, close attention needs therefore to be paid to the roles of those involved and to the way in which practicum experiences may be evaluated.

The area of collaboration and collegiality needs more careful attention in order to understand more adequately the relationships between the personnel involved in the practicum. It would appear that a focus on the processes involved in the organisation, implementation and evaluation of the practicum needs to involve each of the key personnel in the practicum: student teachers, cooperating teachers and university personnel, in exploring practicum issues and alternatives to existing practices. A strong research base is needed upon which best practice can be established. If it is possible to establish dimensions of quality within early childhood programmes for young children then it should be possible to determine quality dimensions within the practicum process. Programmes where

cooperating teachers are engaged in collaborative research can provide a beginning to more meaningful insights into cooperating teaching and serve as an informed base for the field experience programme with teacher education.

Since this has been an exploratory study, it appears to raise more questions than have been answered; however, it has been shown that teachers themselves can provide valuable insights into the professional knowledge, skills and dispositions considered appropriate for student teachers to develop. Teachers have an important role to play in future research of this nature. The other aspect of this study that warrants attention is the methodology that has been used to gain insights into the images held by cooperating teachers and to represent their voices in the issues that the study has raised.

The experiences of these teachers are made available to be shared with other cooperating teachers who may otherwise feel isolated in their role and/or find value in hearing the perspectives of others. Closely aligned to this is a second aspect of the study worthy of consideration, namely its acknowledgment of the voices of cooperating teachers as worthy of being heard by university personnel in early childhood teacher education. In promoting the voices of the cooperating teachers the study highlights the complexities of their work both as teachers of young children and as teacher educators.

Although speaking about classroom teachers, Halliwell's words can equally well apply to cooperating teachers:

> Too many (cooperating) teachers feel guilty, defensive, angry and stressed because their experiences do not fit the tales of outsiders (i.e., the university's perception of their role)... It is time we began to give much more serious attention to the knowledge of practitioners, and to developing theories of practice which (cooperating) teachers can recognise as reflecting something of the complexities and ambiguities of their work. (Halliwell, 1991, p.146)

Another contribution made by the study is that the views of cooperating teachers are available for scrutiny by others. In particular, student teachers now have access to the views of significant others in the practicum. This has the potential to challenge and enhance student teachers' understandings both of themselves and of self/other relationships. These are an important aspect of professional early childhood teachers' understandings. It has already been possible to share one of the cooperating teacher's stories with a group of

Second Year student teachers prior to their commencement of a block practicum. These student teachers have already requested that copies be made for them of working documents reflecting issues that a cooperating teacher's story has raised for them. The usefulness of this exercise in moving student teachers' perspectives from self-within-the-practicum to self-as-part-of-a-wider-community has not yet been assessed. The final section in this chapter now discusses a major contribution that the study has made in exploring a methodology which has been able to provide insights into the reality of cooperating teaching.

SECTION 4: REFLECTIONS ON METHODOLOGY

At the time of commencing this study, research into lived experience was beginning to gain wider acceptance as researchers moved beyond a debate focusing on the use of qualitative versus quantitative research methodology. With my own experience in organising and supervising practicum experiences behind me and inspired by the work of Belenky et al. (1986), Van Manen (1990), and Clandinin (1985) on valuing and giving voice to what is experienced and an address given by Eliot Eisner (1993), drawing on alternative paradigms of representation, I sought ways in which cooperating teachers' voices could be heard. The use of narrative had particular appeal because it afforded opportunities to gain insights into the values, beliefs and attitudes of the storytellers, that is, the cooperating teachers.

Researchers have become increasingly interested in exploring teachers' feelings, purposes, images, aspirations and personal meanings associated with teaching (Beattie, 1995b; Cole & Knowles, 1993b; Hollingsworth, 1994). In seeking to gain insights into these aspects of cooperating teachers' practical knowledge (Clandinin, 1985; Connelly & Clandinin, 1986) cooperating teachers' stories have provided a way of studying their experiences and beliefs. Interpretation and understanding became possible by using a narrative approach to impose some order on the data. Within that ordering the temporal, developmental, emotional, personal and factual aspects of the data could be addressed. In addition, the personal dimensions of being a cooperating teacher also revealed the moral and philosophical underpinnings of the cooperating teacher's work (Carter, 1993).

The powerfulness of story has been evident both in the sharing of themed stories across cooperating teachers and in presentations of aspects of this study at conferences. It was found that cooperating teachers were able to engage in more in-depth reflections on their work as they revisited and responded to their own themed stories and those of the other cooperating teachers. In reviewing their understandings of reasons behind concerns they were able to provide further insights into their practices and into the values and beliefs which coloured these practices. In particular, Julie and Irene were challenged not only by the student teachers for whom they felt responsible but by new insights they gained as they reflected on and discussed what being a cooperating teacher meant to them. In their stories and in the continuing stories of the experiences of the other cooperating teachers, a somewhat unanticipated focus on style emerged.

NARRATIVE AS A RESEARCH PARADIGM

In this study I have on many occasions used the words *story* and *narrative* interchangeably when referring to narrative accounts, whether they represented the cooperating teachers' telling of their experiences, themed stories, or the synthesis and analysis found in Julie's story reconstruction. All of these accounts provided a rich knowledge base from which support was gained for the study's credibility. While storying was an easy concept to convey to the cooperating teachers, it is possible to make a distinction between story as the 'phenomena' and 'narrative' as inquiry into the phenomena (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). For example, a cooperating teacher might tell a story about a particular student teacher/child incident which had been observed, and this may subsequently form a part of the cooperating teacher's narrative of the experience, or the interpretations may subsequently be elaborated upon within a themed story. The cooperating teachers often first told of an incident, then gave a context in which that incident occurred, and by drawing on their own experiences, provided a broader context for their interpretation of the central theme or point of the story. In this way, they told stories within their narratives of experience. As researcher, I interpreted the cooperating teachers' accounts as I pulled together central themes from a number of conversations which I held with those teachers. There are, therefore, researcher stories as well as cooperating teachers' stories. Stories may also be nested within stories.

A **story** then, may be anecdotal in that it focuses on events that are emplotted in some logical sequence. On the other hand, **narrative** reflects a linguistic form in which the plot enables human experience to be given meaning and expression (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1995). Narrative is said to be not only 'the organising principle of experiences and actions but of the self who experiences and acts' (Beattie, 1995a, p.60). It can therefore pull together a number of stories into an interpretative account. We can therefore listen to teachers' stories of their experiences of teaching and learning and write narratives of what it means to teach and to learn (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). It is in the telling or writing of experiences that the tale is organised in some form of logical sequence so as to gain some understanding of that lived experience.

Narrative analysis synthesises or configures events into an explanation of how something came to be as it is (Polkinghorne, 1995). Both narrative analysis and analysis of narratives was undertaken within this study. Analysis of narratives moves from stories to common elements whereas narrative analysis moves from elements to stories. The organising of cooperating teacher's texts within the themed stories became an important contributing factor in the exploration of the concept of style and in the development of understanding of how strongly style was related to the concept of caring. Such explorations were particularly insightful in enabling the nature of responsiveness to be exposed and so open a 'window on the mind' (Cortazzi, 1993).

As a way of interpreting the 'situated action' (Polkinghorne, 1995, p.5) found within narrative inquiry, Polkinghorne provides a useful analysis drawn from Bruner's (1985) identification of two types of cognition, 'narrative cognition' and 'paradigmatic cognition'. Narrative cognition is a way of knowing which is directed towards understanding human action. It is evident where there is a weaving or patterning of events which are then synthesised or configured within a plot. The process involves the configuration of a series of anecdotal descriptions into a unified whole. Such weaving and synthesising is evident in Julie's narrative reconstruction (Chapter Four).

Paradigmatic cognition is a logical/scientific mode of knowing in which elements are recognised as being members of a category. The data are examined for common themes or ideas and like items are grouped and coded. Particular instances within the data are

classified as belonging to a category and each of these has its own set of attributes (that is, paradigmatic thought brings order to experience). The data is assigned conceptual labels and these provide the linkages between and among categories. When applied in its strictest form it is represented in the systematic set of procedures used by Strauss & Corbin (1990) in an inductively devised grounded theory analysis.

Polkinghorne (1995) contrasts a narrative way of knowing or 'narrative cognition' with 'paradigmatic cognition'. A narrative way of knowing enables descriptive anecdotes of experience to be tightened and ordered into stories of experience. These stories can serve as a focus for the development of understanding. The encapsulation of experience in narrative, therefore, serves as a basis for exploration of meaning and the development of new understanding.

As an example, in writing Elaine's themed story I struggled to understand what she really meant by 'experience'. The solution came to me when I was able to capture a child's interpretation of a construction he was making. He had labelled his construction as 'a web'. It was not like the image of a web that came to my mind. I realised that my perceptions come from knowledge and experience in a world that he did not yet know. It was this episode that provided me with a way of entering into the meaning of Elaine's concern with experience. The following display presented in Figure 9.1 demonstrates how imagery of text and illustration conveys, through a descriptive anecdote of experience, a link between the concept of experience and the sense of knowing and meaning associated with it. It is the narrative account within a meaningful context that has enabled the embodied and enacted nature of experience to be expressed.

Figure 9.1

Narratives of experience

'Narrative is the organising principle of experiences and actions and of the self who experiences and acts'
(Beattie, 1995, p.60).

When I entered the room, I noticed that James was busily pushing together star and straw-like construction pieces on a mobile he was making. He worked on it for some time, then he announced, 'It's a web'.

I had not recognised what he was making. For me, webs are well-formed symmetrical and contained, yet fragile structures. Fairy webs can glisten in the early morning sunshine; sticky webs tangle on your face if you dare to brush by them. Webs can entrap small unwary creatures. Sometimes, webs support their maker who can be seen in the early morning dew, still at work repairing the damage caused by nightime marauders.

James' web is less organized, more open and less constrained by outer dimensions. Some straws are linked to others, some are clustered forming a larger star shape with 'ideas' running off in various directions. Straw-like pieces stagger precariously in balance. While some remain in limbo, others firmly turn back on themselves.

I had not imagined a web to be quite like what James had made. But then James was four years old. This was his view of the world he knows. My experiences had led me to different understandings. Experience is like that. It does different things to the imagination.
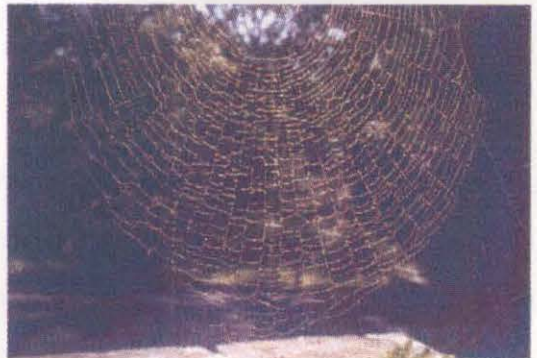
Paradigmatic cognition, on the other hand, works with categories or concepts in the analysis of narratives. As indicated in Chapter Three these 'units of meaning' are derived from 'sensitising agents'. In developing an understanding of concepts such as 'awareness' and 'care', a different way of knowing to that of lived experience becomes evident. Sets of common attributes were identified through a paradigmatic approach in which an understanding of the concept was both mined and enlarged. A sense of the artistry involved in the illumination of processes through the use of ecological metaphors was provided through the storied experiences of themed stories.

There has been a blend of genres throughout the reporting of data in this study; a searching to find ways in which to express the nature of the lived experiences of the cooperating teachers. As with experience itself, the flow of narrative accounts appears to be sensitive to the contexts within which experiences occur, the nature of the experiences and the language of practice available to the cooperating teachers who reported on those experiences. Not all of the cooperating teachers were readily able to explore and express the tacitness of their personal practical knowledge.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNIQUENESS OF THE STUDY'S METHODOLOGY

One of the differences between this study and others on the cooperating teacher's role within the practicum is that this study takes a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach. It looks at the lives of cooperating teachers as they are embedded within the culture of early childhood education and the broader culture of human development. It takes an ecological perspective through a strong focus on the importance of relationships. What is important is the extent to which the study has portrayed the reality of the lived experiences of the cooperating teachers.

There is a powerfulness in the ways in which narrative conveys the biographical elements of such experience. However, experience has a tacitness; it is personal and contextual. There were, therefore, many missed opportunities to engage in even greater reflection on those experiences and the meaning that they held for the 'protagonists' (Polkinghorne,

1995). In storying and restorying, one of the major concerns that I had was that I controlled the themes of the stories. What was represented, therefore, may have overlooked and not included other themes which may be found in the data. The ideal would have been for there to be greater collaboration, however, the reality of the cooperating teachers' work was that there was little time for that.

There were also a number of other issues to be addressed and acknowledged as contributing to the nature of the study. Those of particular importance were **establishing rapport** with the cooperating teachers, the **writing and sharing** of cooperating teachers' stories, and the **time and timing** of collection of field text data.

Establishing rapport with cooperating teachers

As has already been mentioned, knowing or establishing rapport with the cooperating teachers facilitated the development of a trusting relationship. The cooperating teachers needed to be confident that they could be critical and judgemental without there being any repercussions for them. They were, in fact, able to feel sufficiently confident in the interpretations of research data to agree to their first names rather than a pseudonym being used in the study.

An aspect of this kind of research, which reflects elements of ethnography, is the importance given to enabling the researcher to engage in 'shared meaning' (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p.39). The value of understanding what goes on within the person reflects what Matthew described as *getting inside* (Matthew, TS3: 9/7/92). The importance of relationships between the researcher and the study participants cannot be overestimated in a study such as this. It was evident, for example, that in one instance where I was initially perceived as someone in authority it was difficult to establish a collaborative approach to the explorations of concerns with the cooperating teacher. It was obvious that this style of data generation would be seen to challenge the professional status of some cooperating teachers. Any suggestion for collaboration in order to further investigate aspects of the practicum would need to rely on volunteer participants, if a trusting, cooperative and open relationship was required in order to gain insights into the personal aspects of practical knowledge.

The writing and sharing of stories was one strategy used in this study. Such an approach is essential if cooperating teachers are not to be simply regarded as silent partners in the practicum experience and in any inquiry about the practicum (Koerner, 1992).

Writing and sharing of stories

The writing and sharing of stories proved to be a worthwhile activity although, as researcher, I was initially apprehensive about the extent to which my own understandings and biases may have provided interpretations that were not representative of the cooperating teachers' understandings. However, this should not have been a concern because as the study proceeded, the cooperating teachers openly commented on issues arising in the themed stories and the story reconstructions and frequently added insightful comments to them.

Ideally, stories (as descriptive summaries of conversational data) could have been written more frequently but if this had happened the cooperating teachers might have felt burdened by having to make more frequent responses. As it was, one of the cooperating teachers was less willing to make analytical comment on the story written from her data, preferring just to be supportive. She simply responded, 'Oh! What a wonderful story!' There was certainly a need to refine interview techniques and counselling skills to move beyond a generic response as was the case in this instance, and probe behind some of the cooperating teachers' frustrations with the practicum.

I was always cognisant of ways in which my presence might impact on what the student teachers did or on the demands made on the cooperating teachers. While I had negotiated the times when I would be present, being an outsider (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) meant that my presence could not totally be ignored. Therefore, the arrangements for visiting the preschools, while largely defined by the practicum dates, also needed to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate unforseen circumstances.

Time and timing

Time and the feasibility of visiting a number of preschools on a daily basis during block practicum periods where universities often undertook practicum at similar times in the year made the logistics of managing visits to more than three preschools in any one week almost

impossible. Where this did occur there was little time to review audiotape conversations with the cooperating teacher in preparation for the following week's visits. There were, therefore, some limits to the extent to which emerging concepts could be further explored before new events themselves added other dimensions warranting further investigation. It was necessary to accept that this was the nature of the lived experience of researching lived experiences as part of a naturalistic study. If life was like that within the organisational climate of the preschool then the researcher needed to both accommodate and reflect that reality in the study.

Because the cooperating teachers were involved with children throughout the day, the time for conversations with the cooperating teachers was limited to sharing their lunchtime when they would normally have been eating lunch with the children. This situation was not always conducive to talking about personal issues which may have been set aside for another occasion. However, it did represent how the day normally occurred for the cooperating teachers and for preschool staff in general for, as Matthew described it, their communications did occur *on-the-run*. There were occasions when some of the cooperating teachers appeared to be aware that other staff and/or student teachers were concerned about what was being discussed because open communication was most often encouraged as part of team building. It is not, therefore, considered that the arrangements made for engaging in extended conversations with the cooperating teachers made any difference to the outcomes of the study. As researcher my concern was with establishing positive and trusting relationships with the cooperating teachers. Irene and Julie in particular took steps both to inform the student teacher of my research and to provide opportunities for me to share my classroom observations with them. They dealt with any concerns other staff or student teachers may have had about my presence. A trusting relationship was important for me to be able to effectively interpret their understandings into themed stories. This meant that, as researcher, the use of a research journal to record my impressions and understandings became important. It aided in the process of thinking through the ways in which I would approach particular situations, but on review it contained few additional insights into the nature of cooperating teaching as expressed by the cooperating teachers themselves.

Collaboration with the cooperating teachers

There was not the intention nor did the study set out to undertake true collaboration with the cooperating teachers. For true collaboration to occur it would have been necessary to work with the cooperating teachers in making decisions about how the whole process of data collection and analysis would occur. Time constraints and availability of the cooperating teachers led to a proposal being put forward for the cooperating teachers' acceptance rather than a collaborative approach to the research. This is not to suggest that the cooperating teachers' views on approaches were not considered. It was Kate, for example, who introduced the idea of using photographs to prompt recall of student teacher/cooperating teacher interactions. Where there were many interactions during the day she was finding it difficult to recall what was going on in her mind at different times. This suggestion led to the use of photographs in the study to assist in clarification of the concept of style. The cooperating teachers also discussed the use of tape recorders to document their thoughts but, as indicated earlier, that was rejected as it was considered to be out of character with the continual involvement with children that cooperating teachers expected to model for student teachers.

Other ways need to be considered as to how to gain information about what goes on in the minds of cooperating teachers. One of the narrative researcher's purposes is writing for a wider audience so that readers can raise questions about their own practices, and engage in reflection, storying and restorying (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989). Cooperating teachers themselves need to be involved in such deliberations so that they have some ownership of the techniques that are used. For examples, journalling was considered as an option but it is difficult to go into a preschool as a researcher and expect busy cooperating teachers to keep a journal which may be perceived as being for you rather than for their own professional development. The alternative is for cooperating teachers themselves to be co-researchers.

Co-researching and narrative inquiry have been strongly supported in the literature where teacher education is viewed as 'reconstruction' (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994). Within such an approach experience serves as the basis for further learning (Dewey, 1938). Opportunities need to be sought for researching with cooperating teachers the nature of their practices and their role within teacher education.

CONCLUSION

For the cooperating teachers in this study the practicum occupied a space in the everyday life of their being an early childhood teacher. They readily accepted responsibility for the student teachers within their professional role as early childhood educators, responsible for the education and care of young children. Responsibility for student teachers, however, extended far beyond undertaking those activities identified in the more structured supervisory models or showing a concern that student teachers should meet the practicum requirements established by the university. The cooperating teachers in this study were also sensitive to the attitudes and dispositions of student teachers as developing professionals and how the student teachers' presence may impact on the children within their care.

It was the images that the cooperating teachers in this study held of student teachers as developing professionals, themselves as cooperating teachers and of their relationships with the universities that largely guided their practices. The content of these images was largely the cooperating teachers' perceptions of the qualities indicative of early childhood professionals. Such qualities were most often displayed through what may be considered to be the ecology of relationships within the early childhood context and were strongly related to a sense of responsiveness. In focusing on responsiveness, the cooperating teachers addressed critical indicators of quality care, yet the same degree of emphasis on caring relationships was not evident in the universities' practicum curriculum or the criteria within the student teacher assessment documents. Nor were university supervisors in a position to appreciate the aspects of caring relationships and responsiveness within the practicum contexts on their brief visits to student teachers during the practicum.

In this study, the cooperating teachers did not view themselves as having a voice in relation to the technical aspects of the practicum. Universities place student teachers with cooperating teachers for the practicum, establish practicum guidelines and set the criteria for student teacher assessment. That is, at the surface level, it is the university that has authority over the practicum. However, within the practicum setting, the cooperating teachers' voices were powerful. They spoke in harmony and their conversations of practice revealed the tone and temper of their voices, the flow and cadence within their images, and the discrepancies between those images and the realities of practice. Their voice was one

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of concern for the personal/professional qualities displayed by student teachers during interactions with children and adults within the practicum context.

Throughout this study the cooperating teachers, as field based teacher educators, have spoken with one voice. They have raised issues concerning the personal/professional characteristics valued in developing early childhood professionals, the practicum curricula and the lack of common understanding of these between themselves, the student teachers and the universities. It was the ways in which these issues were expressed that largely occupied the minds of the cooperating teachers in this study as they engaged in the artistry of cooperating teaching. There was little evidence, however, that the universities valued the ecological nature of the early childhood cooperating teachers' work.

The study has highlighted the importance of relationships and, in particular, the opportunities that student teachers should have to establish relationships during the practicum. If the establishment of relationships is to be facilitated, then attention needs to be given to providing reasonable blocks of time for the practicum, establishing a less controlling and more flexible and collaborative approach to the determination of the practicum, and reviewing the criteria upon which student teachers are assessed during the practicum. Attention also needs to be given to the role of university supervisors or alternative resource/support personnel who can work with the cooperating teachers in their role as field based teacher educators.

In giving voice to the cooperating teachers, this study has raised many issues concerning the practicum within the professional preparation of early childhood teachers. If the practicum is an important context for student teacher experience and experiences serve an important basis for learning; and, if there are core dispositional behaviours that are required in student teachers, then there is a need for universities to address the nature, purpose and function of the practicum within early childhood education and the important role that cooperating teachers play within preservice teacher education.

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