

A CASE STUDY OF THE EVALUATION  
PROCESS OF A POSITIVE ACTION  
ACCESS TRAINING SCHEME

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to determine the problems which arose when carrying out a largely non-directive qualitative evaluation process of a non-traditional ACCESS training scheme for women. The evaluation process was designed to include a formative and summative evaluation. The formative evaluation was to include self-reports from the participants of the course which were to be analysed as the course progressed. The summative evaluation was to include the self-reports and was to be supplemented with reports on the participants development as assessed by the life skills and work skills tutors. An additional section of the summative evaluation was to determine whether the objectives and projected outcomes were achieved. The evaluation study exposed three major areas of concern: the basic design; especially data collection and analysis, the question of how the evaluation can best benefit the participants of the programme, and the importance of establishing a non-hierarchical relationship between the evaluator and the participants. The problems during the evaluation arose out of basic design faults, lack of time available to carrying out the evaluation process, and lack of material collected from the tutors on the course. Although the evaluation process broke down the ensuing case study on the problems experienced has proved to be a valuable topic for discussion. Through the analysis of the evaluation process a number of important issues have been

raised which could be valuable as a guideline for other qualitative evaluators when they are designing a qualitative evaluation process.

APPENDICES

- Appendix I           Section 28. Human Rights Commission.
- Appendix II          Non-Traditional Training for Women Under  
Access.
- Appendix III         Policy Principals and the Process of  
ACCESS.
- Appendix IV          C.W.E.T. Proposal for Training.
- Appendix V          Plan of Training Modules.

## 1.0 Introduction

The Canterbury Women's Employment Trust (C.W.E.T.) Cabinet Making & Joinery for Women Course is a positive action training programme which is established in terms of Section 28, of the Human Rights Commission, (see appendix I). Positive action training is intended to enable women to develop work skills, which they would not normally acquire, to broaden their employment opportunities. The general aim is to provide a secure environment in which the women can gain skills without confronting problems of sexual harassment usually associated with work in non-traditional areas.

Regional Employment and ACCESS Councils (R.E.A.C.) approve courses which have at least 30% non-traditional training in designated occupations for positive action status, (see appendix II). As the programme is an ACCESS Training Scheme it is required to meet the positive outcomes of placement objectives and enhanced work readiness objectives as stated by ACCESS. (see appendix III). C.W.E.T. has detailed additional requirements for measuring success of the course which include measures of individual progress, (see appendix IV).

The Cabinet Making & Joinery for Women Course was to take place on five days a week for six months, from March 16th to October 2nd 1987, with a two week break between the first and second term. The trainees would spend four days a week on the work skills component which consisted of seven modules ranging from Tool Sharpening to aspects of commercial furniture making, (see appendix V).

On completion of the course it was intended that the trainees' work would be judged by the tutor and two outside judges. If their work met the required standard they would be awarded a Certificate of Proficiency for each module. Those trainees with certificates for all modules would be awarded a Diploma of Attainment from the tutor and a Certificate of Attainment from C.W.E.T. which is the award all ACCESS trainees receive on completion of their course.

The remaining day per week would be devoted to life skills which will aim to develop the women's self esteem and confidence and will be specifically designed to meet the needs of the women on the course. The general aim is to develop the women's personal skills as established by the objectives of the training proposal, (see appendix IV).

The course was advertised in local papers and flyers advertising the course were distributed through the Women's Group network and other community organisations nationwide. C.W.E.T. arranged for all the women who were interested in the course to be involved in a group meeting which would serve as a selection process for the course. At this meeting there were eight women who were prospective trainees, the C.W.E.T. co-ordinators, the work skills tutor and myself as a representative of the Trust.

To begin with, the co-ordinators explained the nature of the course and then the work skills tutor outlined the areas of skill he would be teaching. Each of the prospective trainees were then asked to talk about her background, her interest in the area of woodwork, and the



reasons why she wished to join the course. My only participation in the meeting was to explain about the evaluation process I was to implement.

After the women had left the meeting, the co-ordinators, the skills tutor, and I discussed who to enrol on the course. There were six places and we wanted to choose women who had some woodworking experience as the skills that were being taught would be easier to learn with some prior knowledge. In addition, we wanted women who we felt would benefit from the programme, those who were interested in pursuing a career in that trade area, and a group of women who we thought might work well together. However, we were careful not to choose a group which would be too homogeneous because we wanted the women to represent a reasonably diverse group of the population. Once again I did not take an active part in the meeting.

We chose six women who we felt would be most suitable for the course. However, those we decided on were not the final group as three of the women chosen declined our offer. The course began with three of the original group who were joined by three more during the first two weeks. This final group was atypical of the trainees on the other training courses run by C.W.E.T. The average age was higher: only one woman was under twenty and there were two who were over thirty. In addition, only two had limited work experience, which is not the case in the other courses. However, all were unemployed at the commencement of the programme.

## 2.0 Literature Review

It is a difficult task to outline the purpose of an evaluation. Theorists like Gephart, cited in Patton (1985), claim it is not possible to define the meaning of evaluation concisely. There are numerous types of evaluations which serve a variety of purposes. While accepting that evaluations are diverse Cronbach, cited in Payne & McMorris 1975, maintains there are factors which are common to most. These are:

1. Process studies
2. What is taking place
3. Proficiency and or attitudes
4. Changes in observed student behaviour
5. Follow-up studies on student destinations.

According to Ruddock (1981), the scope of evaluations can range from positivist fact-finding to interpretative evaluations. However, this is not the place to describe the different kinds of studies in detail, it is clear from the literature that different types of evaluations serve different purposes. However what is relevant to this discussion is how to first determine the requirements of the evaluation and then to decide which type of evaluation process will be best suited.

For the present evaluation, C.W.E.T. wished to address the issues of individual responses to the course and determine if the needs of the participant were being met. This required access to detailed information from the women on their experiences of the course.

C.W.E.T. also wished the evaluation to address the

overall success of the course. Hence the evaluation report was also to include assessment material from the tutors to determine how effective their programme was at teaching specific skills.

In addition the group responsible for the continued funding of the course also required an evaluation report. R.E.A.C., which is the funding body, is committed to measuring the success of the course by determining the extent to which the course outcomes and objects were met.

The first requirement, a record on the self perception of the trainees' progress is compatible with a qualitative evaluation, which according to Patton (1980), accepts as legitimate material gathered through naturalistic inquiry and hence reflects the reality of the participants' experiences. By using a qualitative design the evaluator acknowledges the evaluation process as value-laden and validates the recording of personal interactions as a measure of course effectiveness. The nature of this process attempts to serve as a reminder that the participants on the course are individuals whose individuality should not be forgotten in the evaluation process.

The last two requirements, the need for an overall assessment of the course and determining the extent to which the course met its objectives and outcomes could be met by the requirements of behavioural objectives as outlined by Tobias (unpublished). He writes:

Behavioural Objectives specify the behaviour to be exhibited by learners after completing a unit of

learning. They contain three components:

1. The relevant conditions under which a person is expected to perform;
2. The behaviour which the person is expected to perform; and
3. A description of the criteria by which the behaviour will be judged acceptable or unacceptable, successful or unsuccessful.

Here, it is necessary to note that while R.E.A.C. do not specify specific behavioural objectives they do require the training body to specify objectives the course is attempting to reach. The success of the course is determined by how well these objectives are met.

The three different requirements of the evaluation necessitate the need to carry out an evaluation which must meet both formative and summative evaluation requirements. According to Tobias (unpublished)

"Formative evaluation involves the collecting and sharing of information on an on-going basis while the programme is in operation in order to improve the programme."

He continues that:

"Summative evaluation involves collecting and sharing information on the total impact or effectiveness of the programme."

The formative evaluation requirements are established by the course being evaluated from a wholistic viewpoint taking into account the personal experiences of the participants as legitimate material for analysis. The information gathered could be used in an attempt to improve the course while it was in progress. The summative requirements uses the participants personal account in conjunction with the life and work skills tutor reports on

assessment to determine whether the course was teaching the skills to an acceptable level of attainment. The summative section would also include the measurement of whether the course met the objectives and outcomes. The final report would combine the triangulation of data from, the personal responses of the individuals, the report from the tutors, and the follow up study on the outcomes of the trainees, to be presented as a full formative and summative evaluation.

There is an important point regarding the summative section which needs to be addressed. Cronbach (1975) states that when the outcome of the evaluation is to determine success of the overall effectiveness of the course the evaluation should concentrate on specific aspects of the course. This will enable the evaluator to determine which sections are working well and which ones would benefit from restructuring. The results of the analysis from the different sections could then be combined with a final overview to present a report on the effectiveness of the whole course.

According to Patton (1980), the methodology of qualitative evaluations enables the researcher to present a wholistic view of the course and the participants. Green (1985) writes that this overview is being represented by people's personal responses which are now being accepted as valid data,

"... the generation of raw data as words is increasingly common in program evaluations studies, reflecting the recent, widespread acceptance of qualitative methods ..." pp12.

Data collection methods available for qualitative

evaluations range from open-ended questionnaires to interviews and from self report to participant observation. According to Patton (1980), it is these qualitative data collection methods which enable the evaluator to respond to the type of information received from the individuals' own experience.

However, as the data collection process is open to people's responses on an individual level there are difficulties which the evaluator must be aware of. According to Greene (1985) the process, which involves the use of words as data, is more bulky than numbers but she adds that the problems can be overcome. The words can be analysed through the use of grids and other devices. Although the process may not be as streamlined as quantitative analysis, the possibilities of gathering a rich data base of information are greatly enhanced. The increase in the amount of time and effort required for the analysis of qualitative data can be offset by the quality of the material received.

As the qualitative evaluation legitimises the use of words as data the problem of gaining valid data must be addressed. Ruddock (1981) warns of the discrepancy between information from self-report and reports of observed behaviour by tutors and others. However, Harre and Secord cited in Ruddock (1985,) put forward the notion that in order to treat people as human beings one needs to accept the authenticity of their statements. In addition, there is no evidence which shows conclusively that one method of

obtaining data is more valid than the other.

Guba, cited in Patton (1980), maintains that data analysis should take place as an ongoing process throughout the evaluation which enables the evaluator to discover patterns that emerge in the data which can then become the focus of inquiry. However, he continues that the evaluator needs to ensure the changes in response to the programme should operate on a constantly changing basis throughout the study to ensure the evaluator stays in touch with any new patterns the data may expose. This flexibility will enable the evaluator to determine the success of any changes that have taken place during the programme as a result of problems which have been exposed through the evaluation process.

The nature of the evaluators' involvement while studying a programme should also operate on a changing continuum. Patton (1980) states that participation of the evaluator may range from full participation to observer participation and during a study may continually move between these two positions. He claims there are no rules of inquiry which the researcher can apply but the evaluator needs to be able to sense when to respond to the changing aspects of the programme. This kind of knowledge can only be developed through the experience of carrying out evaluation studies and using the experience gained from one evaluation to another.

However, there are some factors relating to participation that the researcher can consider before commencing the evaluation. According to Patton (1980), the

evaluator may have difficulty participating in some groups. If the group is a close knit unit or if one of the aims of the course is for a group to develop as a unit the presence of the evaluator may be a disturbing influence.

Patton (1980) claims that the nature of the programme under evaluation will offer guidelines on how the researcher should interact in the evaluation. While professional people may well expect the evaluator to have a clearly visible role, participants on a work training scheme may well resent such intrusive behaviour. Conversely, interaction patterns which would be appropriate with a work training scheme may be viewed with suspicion by a professional person.

A further constraint on the participation pattern of the evaluator is the availability of the person to be involved in the programme. While professional evaluators may have the time and resources to be as fully involved as required there could be problems when the evaluator has only limited time available to devote to the evaluation. One professional, Joyce Keller, cited in Patton (1980), who was involved in an evaluation as a part-time observer had this to say.

"The experience had been a new one for me, that of part-time observer. Quite frankly, this mode of evaluation probably will never be a favourite one. On the other hand, it provided a picture that no "snapshot" evaluation method could have accomplished as interactions changed over time and in a situation where the participant observer role was clearly not appropriate." pp179.

The role of the voluntary researcher which may mean that the evaluator has very limited time to spend gathering



data could create a problem which is even greater than when a professional only has limited access. The volunteer may also have the problem of lack of resources with which to contend. The amount of time the researcher has available and the amount of resources is a problem which requires more attention within the literature on qualitative evaluations.

The most effective evaluation is one which is designed to respond to the nature of the programme under evaluation. A part of this strategy is to address the issue of suitability of the evaluator. Patton (1980) maintains that social class differences between the evaluator and the participant could also constrain the participation of the evaluator. If a middle class person is evaluating a working class programme the participants may not be willing to cooperate with the evaluator. In addition, if the evaluator is a male working with women participants the information gathered may be quite different than if a woman was carrying out the evaluation. Hence, the person carrying out the evaluation will not only affect the participation of the evaluator but will also affect the type of data that will be received. While it is not possible to match the evaluator completely with the reference group of the course it is important to match the evaluator on as many aspects of race, gender, and class as possible.

Once the type of evaluation and the people who will be involved are decided, the method of entry becomes a vital

factor in the evaluation design. Johnson, cited in Patton (1980), maintains that entry into the programme is of major importance as if there is no entry there is no evaluation. Further to this, the method of entry can also affect the way the participants respond to the research and the type of information that is received.

Patton (1980) outlines three methods of entry; reciprocity, known sponsor, and infiltration approaches. Reciprocity, he suggests, involves a mutual exchange of benefit between the evaluator and the participants. The evaluator needs to offer something in exchange for co-operation in the process. With the known sponsor approach entry may be gained through the course organisers but he warns this may result in the evaluator being regarded with suspicion. The third approach he mentions is entry by "saintly submissiveness" which makes the participants feel guilty enough to cooperate or as a "spineless boob" who wouldn't possibly hurt anyone. However, the evaluator must be aware that cooperation gained by this type of entry will affect the type of information gained.

Patton (1980) warns that there is no universally accepted method of gaining entry to an evaluation. He writes:

"The nature of the evaluation, the nature of the program, and the observer's skills will affect entree." pp173.

Patton (1980) claims that it should be remembered that whichever method of entry is used, the first negotiation is with the administrators of the course and the decision of method of entry should be discussed with them. I believe

it is possible to extend this negotiation process to include consultation with the participants of the course as well, the extra time taken could prove profitable for the final evaluation report.

If the participants in the course under evaluation were consulted during the design stage of the evaluation this negotiation could be used as part of the strategy for gaining entry into the evaluation. The ideas and information contributed by the participants could be a useful contribution to decision-making on which aspects were important to evaluate and how they should be evaluated. Further, consultation of this nature may enable participants to perceive the evaluation as a tool for them to use to improve the course.

Issues relating to the role of the respondents in an evaluation are becoming increasingly important in the development of a means by which we, as researchers, develop methods of inquiry which provide an authentic account of the experiences of the participants. However, as we move from the evaluation where the process is directed by evaluator we must question whether we are replacing overt mechanisms of control with covert ones. To ensure this does not happen we need to specifically address the means of interaction between the researcher and the researched paying particular attention to the issue of power and powerlessness.

To begin with, Mairie Mies, cited in Gloria Bowles and Renate Duelli-Klein (1983), claims that if research is to

benefit those people being researched then the researcher must remove herself from a position of power over the people she is working with. While this may not be completely possible when the researcher is carrying out an evaluation, the role of the evaluator and the respondent still needs to be addressed.

Marie Mies cited in Gloria Bowles and Renate Duelli-Klein (1983) writes,

"The verticle relationship between researcher and 'research object', the view from above must be replaced by the view from below." pp123

An evaluator who works from a position above the people with whom she is working may find it difficult to obtain data which represents the real experiences of the respondents. The data collected will reflect the nature of the interaction between the powerless respondent and the powerful evaluator. For a naturalistic, inquiry this type of information would be of no use. If the research is to reflect the experiences of the people involved it is important to ensure the people are able to freely relate their experiences without being subjected to a relationship where they are overtly responding to a person who is in the position of being an expert.

With an increasing awareness of the need to produce an evaluation which reproduces authentic information, qualitative methods of collecting and analysing the data are expanding. As the practical application of the evaluation strategies are used in combination with the personal requirements of the participants of the course there is a growing commitment that the evaluation process

be used to benefit not only the organisers of the programme but also the people in the course under evaluation.

### 3.0 The Design of the Evaluation Study

C.W.E.T. first decided to commission the evaluation of their Joinery and Cabinet Making Course for Women because the course was quite different to the other courses they administer. The course was designed to teach a high level of craft skills whereas the skills normally taught by C.W.E.T. training schemes are basic introductory skills which girls usually miss out on but boys generally gain as they grow through childhood. In addition C.W.E.T. wished to determine whether the course was designed to meet the needs and expectations of the women involved. As stated in the literature review, (2.10) the requirements of the course evaluation were as follows:

1. The information gathered should be used to determine problem areas in the course and to attend to them in the duration of the course.
2. It should seek to determine the overall effectiveness of the course.
3. To present R.E.A.C. with an evaluation report at the end of the course.

Firstly, C.W.E.T. required a formative evaluation report in order to respond to specific problems which developed during the course. This information was to be supplied by the women on the course, on both an individual and group basis.

Secondly, C.W.E.T. required a summative evaluation report in order to measure the overall effectiveness of the

course. Information gained from the women would supplement reports from the work skills and the life skills tutors the assessment of the trainees' skills.

Thirdly, the funding body required a summative evaluation report to determine the degree to which the course met the stated objectives - and outcomes. The objectives and outcomes are established by the training organisation as a-priori requirements which must be met at the completion of the course. Any decisions for further funding will be based upon the effectiveness of the course at meeting these requirements. A follow-up contact with the women, one month after the termination of the course, would address the issues of trainees "enhanced work readiness and their destination on leaving the course".

Although the evaluation of the life and work skills could have been undertaken by another evaluator it was decided that, to ensure continuity of information, one person should complete the entire study. Information gained from the trainees personal input could then be used for both the formative and summative sections of the evaluation. It was also felt that having only one person collecting information would be less intrusive and would ensure there would be no duplication of data collection.

The design of the evaluation study was developed in consultation between one of the C.W.E.T. co-ordinators and myself, as the evaluator.

### 3.1 Methodology

The major concern of the ACCESS training schemes as required by R.E.A.C., is the meeting of objectives which the training organisation determines when preparing the course proposal (see appendix III). Training providers are required to prepare an evaluation report on trainees' destinations on termination of each person's involvement in the course. As stated in the design of the evaluation study section, (3.0), C.W.E.T. wished to carry out a formative and summative evaluative inquiry to determine whether the course fulfills the ideology of positive action training for women. Hence, the evaluation was designed to determine how the individual women experienced the course, what aspects could be changed to best suit the requirements of the trainees, as well as determining whether the course met the objectives and outcomes stated in the training proposal.

The major emphasis of the evaluation was the formative function of determining which changes should take place while the course was in progress. To achieve this it was decided to use a self-report method to record the trainees individual experiences of the course. Each trainee was supplied with a note book to act as a diary if she wished to record events, thoughts, and feelings as they occurred. Once every two or three weeks they were to be asked to make a written submission, from the diary or their memory, of their experiences since the last evaluation day. This information was to provide an account of their perceptions of their personal progress through the course and to

determine what particular difficulties they were experiencing.

Group development would be recorded by 3 to 4 group discussions spaced throughout the course. These discussions would be taped and the information used in conjunction of the individual self-report.

The trainees would not be given any structured questions to answer, for either the individual or group reports. For their individual reports they would be asked to make comments which reflected their own personal perceptions on their progress through the course. They would also be requested to include in their submissions any negative or problematic issues they were troubled by. The instructions for their group discussions were equally unstructured, but relating to how they were developing as a group and to highlight any issues they thought to be relevant to their involvement in a group situation.

It was planned that the evaluation of the life skills component of the course would include a pre and post assessment by the tutor in consultation with each woman, to determine the degree to which the trainee was confident about her qualities as defined on the personal Skills measurement sheet (see appendix IV). The degree to which the trainee and the tutor recorded any improvement would be used to determine how successful the life skills days were. This information would be used to assess the overall effectiveness of the course and where relevant, the information would be used to supplement the women's



responses during the collection of their personal submissions. The collection of life-skills material would not be my responsibility. It was considered that the tutor was the only suitable person to carry out this process. However, the information would be made available for inclusion in the evaluation report.

The evaluation of work skills would include determining whether the training objectives of the tutor were met. Each trainee would have an assessment on every module of the training course. The degree to which the trainees learnt the skills would be used to determine the effectiveness of the training programme. However, as above, information was to be available at the end of the course for inclusion in the final report.

The analysis of the data supplied by the individual and group recording methods would occur throughout the entire study. As problems within the course arose it was envisaged that they would be relayed through to the coordinators of C.W.E.T. who would instigate any changes that might be desirable or necessary. As all information would be verbal in nature the material collected would be arranged into a matrix and then analysed to determine the trends and responses for both the women as individuals and the group as a whole.

It was recognised that data analysis could be biased by my interpretation. As a safe-guard I undertook to report back to the participants on my analysis before I approached C.W.E.T. to report problems and request changes to be made. This would enable the trainees to validate or

correct my interpretation wherever it was required.

### 3.2 Constraints

The design of the method of collecting data from the participants, was left largely unstructured. There were instructions as to what was required rather than any directed questions. While I was aware this may not yield specific problems with the course I was making an attempt to allow the participants the freedom to write about what they felt was important about their experiences. It was expected that a number of constraints within the design would have varying degrees of effect on the evaluation process and hence the overall effectiveness of the evaluation.

There were a number of specific issues which concerned me as an evaluator. These included; bias in the evaluation, the role of the evaluator, the nature of the course, benefit for the trainees, and availability of time to be devoted to the evaluation process.

#### 3.2.1. Bias in the evaluation

It is widely accepted that research cannot be value free and especially, as Valentine (1982) states, when a human observer reports on another humans' behaviour. She states that the observation is reflective and this has an effect on the results of the observation. Further, Ruddock (1981) claims that an evaluation of attitudes and skills is based upon a system which is value laden. Hence, when

carrying out evaluative research it is important to acknowledge that everyone involved has a set of values which will affect their experience of the evaluation. It is also important to understand that the final evaluation report can never present the absolute truth as the reality of the course will be an ever changing phenomenon for the people involved.

However, the greatest potential for distortion lies in the interpretation of the information gained. The analysis of the data and the shape of the final report will be largely determined by the interpretation of the writer, who will present one particular construction of reality. However, it is important for the evaluator to ensure the interpretation is as authentic as possible. The major resource the writer has during the analysis and writing stage is the participants in the programme being evaluated. In an attempt to remove the biases the writer needs to consult with the participants after any analysis has been made to ensure the interpretation is correct. This is important from the first analysis to the final information for the written report.

There is, however, a problem associated with back checking of information. Greene (1985) warns of the risk of distortion of memory when carrying out this process. When going back to the respondent to validate the information it is possible that the perspective of the person may have changed. While the evaluator will have a record of what was written or said the person may be adamant that they meant something else. However, although

the evaluator may have little control over any changes of perspectives it is important to be aware of the constraint of change of views while still being prepared to carry out the cross checking process.

### 3.2.2. Role of the evaluator

I envisaged that my dual role both as a member of the organisation running the course, and as an evaluator would create difficulties. My membership of the Trust might mean that the evaluation would be seen as a reflection of its views.

As I was requesting the women to record the problems they were having with the course as well as other experiences they might feel at risk from victimisation if they divulged any information which was critical of the organisation or tutors. While I was aware my dual role would compromise the evaluation process I felt that there were also advantages with my involvement in C.W.E.T. My position as volunteer Trust member could provide me with valuable insight into the aims and objectives of the course as perceived by the organisation. In addition, my involvement with the organising body would mean I would receive a higher degree of co-operation from them than might normally be expected.

### 3.2.3 Nature of the course

As indicated in the C.W.E.T. Proposal for Training (see appendix IV) the course was targeted towards unemployed

women who were wishing to gain non-traditional woodworking skills. Work training schemes C.W.E.T. usually runs attract a diverse range of people who are in the course for a range of reasons. However, as this course was offering training in fine craft skills it was anticipated that the group of people who would be attracted to the course would be different from our usual trainees. It was difficult to assess, in advance, the type of women who would apply to go on the course but I was aware that their expectations would be quite different than we might normally expect. While I could not know how that difference would affect the running of the course and hence the evaluation I was at least prepared mentally for a variety of diverse responses.

#### 3.2.4 Benefit for the trainees

The methods employed in the evaluation required a major input from the trainees, not only in terms of time but also in terms of emotional investment. While there would be little tangible benefit for the trainees I felt the evaluation might offer them some personal rewards. Although a straightforward evaluation process would not have required much effort often the people involved are often treated as objects in the research and their unique contributions are often ignored. By requesting that they record their experiences in their own manner without the constraints of directive boundaries I hoped that they would feel that their personal contribution was being recognised and validated. In this way I argued that the evaluation would be a means of empowering the women at a personal

level, one of the major aims of the life-skills day, and that this might benefit them in other areas of their lives. In addition, as the evaluation was to serve a largely formative purpose, the trainees would hopefully benefit from any changes that would be made to the course as a result of the information passed on from the evaluation.

### 3.2.5 Availability of time for the evaluation process

The data collection for the evaluation and the cross checking of any data analysis was to take place on the trainees' life skills day. This day was the least structured and the aims appeared to be congruent with the major aims of the formative section of the evaluation. However, the trainees' time was limited as life skills included a large component of physical activities. As the time available was restricted by their other activities the evaluation collection dates would need to be structured around their availability. While this would mean that I would have no control over the data collection dates it was still the most effective time of gathering the information.

I was also aware of the restrictions on my availability. When the course began I was not only a full time student but I was also in full time paid employment. While my paid employment would finish quite soon into the evaluation process my studies would continue for the year. However, I had designed an evaluation process with data collection methods that could be carried out in my absence.

I could enlist the services of the life skills tutor to collect the information for me if necessary.

#### 4.0 Focus of this Report

My original intention was to evaluate The Joinery and Cabinet Making Course for Women run by C.W.E.T. and to include a minor section on the problems which I experienced while carrying out the evaluation. However, because of a number of problems ranging from the limitations of my participation in the process to the lack of material from the tutors it was not possible for me to complete the evaluation in the original form I detailed in the methodology section, (see 3.1). As the evaluation process broke down I decided to take the opportunity to concentrate on the problems I experienced as an evaluator.

The major emphasis of the case study concentrates on the broad three issues discussed in the literature review, (2.0); methods of data collection and analysis, how the information can best be used, and the nature of an equitable relationship between evaluator and participants on the programme being evaluated.

#### 5.0 Issues and Problems encountered

A number of different types of problems surfaced during the evaluation of the Joinery and Cabinet Making Course for Women. While some problems were a direct result of the evaluation design other were a result of the administration process and still others were due to external factors and hence beyond the control of the

evaluator. In discussing the problems and resultant solutions it becomes clear that while it is possible to control for some factors when designing an evaluation study other factors will impinge on the evaluation process and may adversely affect even a tightly controlled evaluation.

The problems which arose during the evaluation process were related to a number of factors. Some basic flaws affected the whole evaluation process in the design of the evaluation. Difficulties also arose as a result of the method of entry into the evaluation. In addition the data collection process was not successful and this failure had an adverse effect on the process of data analysis. The issue of power and powerlessness raised questions regarding the role of the evaluator in the evaluation process. The role of the trainees is a further issue of control and highlights the question of how the participants of an evaluation can receive some benefit from the process.

Of the solutions offered, a number are related to effective evaluation design and a number to the interactions between the evaluator and the course participants. However, within the scope of this report, there is no way of determining whether the suggested solutions would be successful and it is likely that they may create other problems which will need to be solved through further research. In addition, other solutions rely upon the responses of the participants which can never be fully pre-determined by the evaluator. Further, a number of the problems and resultant suggested solutions



are specific to this evaluation design. Despite these limitations the solutions offered could prove valuable as insights into effective means of administering qualitative naturalistic evaluation processes.

However, while it is beneficial to develop theoretical and methodological guidelines I do not think it is possible nor desirable to establish a rigid set of rules by which evaluators can plan the best possible evaluation. The variety of the programmes to be evaluated, the different requirements of the evaluation, the diverse nature of the participants on a programme, and other issues will ensure that each evaluation design is unique.

### 5.1 Design

The evaluation was designed with the aim of allowing each participant the freedom to write about which of her experiences she felt were most important and to record this in her own words, as outlined in methodology section, (3.1). However, the trainees felt unsure about what sort of information I required and repeatedly asked me to explain the requirements. Although this was anticipated to some extent I wished to administer the process as a means of determining for myself the limitations of a non-directed evaluation.

According to Shulamit Reinharz, cited in Gloria Bowles and Renate Duelli-Klein (1983), it is vital for the researcher to be able to learn through the process of research. Knowledge gained from the reality of the experience can then be added to one's existing repertoire

enhancing the researcher's understanding of research methodology and practice.

Although the women were unsure about how to respond to the non-directive instructions I gave them and often asked me what it was I wanted, once they began their submissions they were able to produce valuable records. One trainee even commented that it was not possible to complete a short evaluation once the process began.

The women's uncertainty about the evaluation process was also reflected in the difficulties they had responding to the group as well as the individual evaluation. At one point during the discussion we had about the evaluation process they expressed concern that they were simply repeating the information by giving two types of evaluation. However, the information they supplied in their final two group evaluation sessions was quite different from their previous individual submissions. Once again they had expressed concern at how they would carry out the evaluation and yet were able to make the distinction quite clearly.

It is possible that the women were unsure of their own capabilities in a non-directed research programme and hence were hesitant about making a commitment to beginning the process. An alternative possibility is that they were unable to understand what the requirements of the evaluation were but wished to co-operate so began making the submissions and were able to complete what I wanted.

Although the women were able to carry out their tasks

well once they began it is vital to acknowledge their discomfort with the process and to develop ways of countering their negative feelings. I would be reluctant to over react to the difficulty of coping in a strange situation by designing an evaluation which supplied them with structured questions. Shulamit Reinharz, cited in Gloria Bowles & Renate Duelli-Klein (1983), maintains that the "... open-ended and relatively unstructured question .." pp81 encourages the respondents to present the reality of their own experiences in their own words. As this was one of the aims of evaluation it would be important to retain the essence of this requirement.

Hence, in response to the problem of how to alter the questioning process it would be appropriate to have, as questions, a list of issues which were relevant to the evaluation but still leave them largely non-directive. They might be structured to include questions which ask; how do you feel about particular aspects of the course? These might relate to the relevance of the work skills and life skills, the amount of time gaining work skills, the ability of the tutors, and in the case of a positive action course, do you feel your tutor is sympathetic to ensuring the course is a safe comfortable place to learn non-traditional skills etc.

In response to the confusion between the individual and group processes the list of relevant issues to be discussed would be quite different. Group questions would address issues of group development; the problems of developing group cohesion with strangers, the wish to work

as an individual, are decisions made by consensus or majority vote, etc.

I would also organise time for a meeting or meetings to discuss the evaluation to ensure the trainees were able to understand the process and what was expected of them. There should be a meeting at the outset of the course and at any time during the course if the participants required one. Discussion at the meetings should address the reasons behind the evaluation process. If the evaluation was a formative one, the way in which the evaluator and the process can be of use to the participants should be outlined and discussed. This would then lead the discussion to address the needs and interests of the participants and how the evaluation process could best suit their requirements as well as those of the organisers, tutors etc.

## 5.2 Entry

Following from the problems caused by the basic design factors, the method of entry into the evaluation process warrants discussion. As I was a member of C.W.E.T. it was possible for me to implement the evaluation as part of my academic requirements for the year. While my association with C.W.E.T. enabled me to gain the trainees' co-operation at the beginning of the evaluation it caused difficulties when I was trying to gain their trust. My association with the training organisation meant I was not perceived as a safe person to disclose personal concerns to. On a group

evaluation day the trainees recorded: "didn't feel comfortable about Linda's involvement in research, the Trust, and Job search."

While I would not wish to make too many changes to the basic design of the evaluation I would change my method of entry into the evaluation. As I was a member of C.W.E.T. I gained entry through the "known sponsor" approach as cited in Patton (1980) in the literature review, (2.0). While it may be necessary to approach the evaluation through the group organising the course under evaluation, as suggested by Patton, being too closely connected with the organisers had a negative effect on the amount and type of information I was able to collect. I feel the trainees would have been more at ease with my presence as an evaluator had I not been a member of C.W.E.T.

Conversely, it would be inappropriate for the evaluator to become too close to the participants when evaluating a programme. If the organisers felt that the evaluator identified too closely with the participants on the course they might have the same feelings of unease that the women had when I was a member of C.W.E.T.

Joyce Keller, cited in Patton (1980), writes that in order to maintain her impartiality and encourage both groups to feel free to discuss confidential matters with her, she refused to have any social contact with the members of the group who were on the programme she was evaluating. However, as Patton (1980) states, time spent in the environment and time spent developing social contact with the people involved in the evaluation is an integral

part of the evaluators data collection and analysis and can be used to provide extra information for the evaluation.

I agree that it would not be necessary to be as impartial as to have no social contact with the groups in the evaluation but it is difficult to detail any specific guidelines which could assist an evaluator with making a decision on how involved or uninvolved to be. I feel the evaluator would need to use personal judgement on such matters and this could only be learned through trial and error. However it might be advisable for the new evaluator to retain the position of Joyce Keller and have no social contact at all for the first evaluation. Then gradually, the evaluator may be able to have more contact as she or he becomes more experienced. However, it must be remembered, that too little social contact may adversely affect the process of the evaluation as well as too much.

Even when the evaluator is not connected to the organising body it is still necessary to gain the trust and respect of the respondents of the evaluation. For an indepth evaluation like the one I was attempting, developing trust is particularly vital. Shulamit Reinharz, cited in Gloria Bowles & Renate Duelli Klein (1983), advises the researcher to allow the participants to ask you questions about what sort of person you are before the research begins and at any time during the evaluation. This could make up part of the entry process as an additional method of ensuring the respondents were comfortable with the evaluation process.

As an evaluator, another method of gaining co-operation and trust during the entry phase would be to involve the course participants in the evaluation design. As discussed in the literature review, (2.0), Patton (1981) states that the evaluator should consult with the organising body when designing the evaluation but as I put forward, the process could be extended to involve the participants of the course as well. While this would mean the evaluation could not be finalised before the course began this problem could be outweighed by the nature of the suggestions and enhanced co-operation of the participants. This strategy could supplement a formative evaluation by attempting to ensure the needs and interests of the participants were taken into account during the evaluation design and hence the evaluation study itself.

### 5.3 Data collection and analysis

While effective entry into the evaluation is important, the participants' response during the collection of data phase is vital for the success of the evaluation. The solutions proposed for a more successful entry may be beneficial in solving a number of data collection problems but there are a number of problems which the evaluator can address from a data collection aspect. There were three data collection areas which had a major effect on the evaluation process. The first factor is related to the availability of the participants and the evaluator to carry out the evaluation. The second was the effect of the data collection methods which were used. The third issue is

control over other forms of information which is to be used in the evaluation.

### 5.3.1 Time availability for the study

There are three main issues which warrant discussion in relation to the availability of time to carry out the evaluation. The first is whether the participants have time within the course. The second is the amount of time the evaluator has to devote to the evaluation. The third point is whether the organisers etc. of the course perceive that the results of the evaluation warrant the time involved in an ongoing evaluation study.

Firstly, while I was aware that lack of time for participation in the evaluation study would be problematical I did not realise how much it would affect the process. The women on the course often did not have time to prepare their submissions and one day wrote them half way between their rock climbing and absailing venture.

One major problem caused by the lack of the time the women had to complete their submissions was the loss of control over whether data collection would take place at any specific point during the course. As the submissions were made when the women had time to complete them, the evaluation report can not include which specific areas of the course caused tension and which areas were found to be suitable. While this may not be problematic for the formative section of the evaluation it is problematic when attempting to prepare the summative report. As discussed



in the literature section (2.0), Cronbach (1975) claims that each section of a course should be evaluated in order to be able to prepare a report which would address which particular areas need attention. To ensure a full summative evaluation report can be prepared data collection points should coincide with planned changes within the course.

At this point, the willingness of the participants to devote time to the evaluation study also warrants discussion. The ongoing evaluation I designed required a large commitment, on the part of the participants which they were not always prepared to make. When the present evaluation was commissioned, because of both my inexperience as an evaluator and the Trusts' newness to carrying out an evaluation, we did not realise the extent of the requirements of this type of evaluation. I feel that had we done so we would have designed a less intensive study and been better able to ensure that the evaluation would have been less arduous for the participants.

The second issue, the availability of the evaluator is a factor which can also adversely affect an evaluation. I found my lack of time to spend with the women was a problem. When I was present on their evaluation days at the beginning of the course the women responded well to my requests. However, once their life skills day was changed to a Friday and I was unable to attend to collect the material they were less positive in their response to the evaluation process. Even though there were other factors affecting the womens' withdrawal of co-operation I feel

strongly that my absence was also a contributing factor.

Although the data collection method was designed to be able to proceed without my presence it was very difficult to successfully arrange. The lack of time available for all concerned with the course meant it was generally necessary for me to be present to request the women make their submissions. However even when I was available there were several times when the women and I talked about the course and the evaluation but they were not prepared to formally complete the evaluation process.

Although the data collection method did not easily proceed in my absence it was my lack of time to spend on the evaluation process which caused the major problem. I found that the formative evaluation of this course would require me to be present more often than once a month or less. Even when I was available to collect the information on the right day it became obvious that I needed to spend more time than I had allotted or was able to spend. I needed time to get to know the women and to let them get to know me.

In addition, I needed to be able to return to the women and discuss my interpretation of their information. As discussed in the constraints section (3.2.1), any analysis of other peoples' personal information needs to be cross checked to ensure the bias of the interpretator has not distorted the information supplied. However, there was little time to collect the information in and so there was no time for me to validate my interpretation. When I

realised I did not have enough time available I made a decision to forgo the formative nature of the evaluation and to concentrate on completing the summative report.

The availability of the participants and the evaluator to carry out the evaluation leads to the third issue of the need to establish the importance and validity of undertaking the study. The problem of availability for all concerned in the evaluation study may be solved if the organisers of the course were to structure the evaluation into the timetable of the programme. However, it needs to be understood that the evaluation would replace another aspect of the programme which could be included using the time the evaluation process takes up. The organisers and evaluator need to be clear that the effects of the evaluation would be beneficial before making a decision to include the evaluation as a formal part of the programme.

At this point I wish to add that although I did not continue with the formative evaluation the members of the course formed a deputation and approached C.W.E.T. with a number of difficulties they were having with the course. The Trust responded to their requests by detailing the women from C.W.E.T. who had been responsible for the organisation and running of the training programme to take on a conciliatory role between the trainees and the tutor in order to address the problems which were occurring. Even though I could not be present and the formal evaluation could not take place, the Trust still carried out an informal process whereby the participants on the course raised problematic issues. The Trust discussed the

different ways of solving the problems and took action to remedy the concern where it was applicable.

### 5.3.2 Methods of collecting data

The method of data collection will have an impact on the kind of information the evaluator receives. There are a number of different qualitative methods, each method has its advantages and disadvantages and will produce different types of information.

As discussed in the methodology section, (3.1), the evaluation was designed to be administered without providing specific questions to guide the trainees responses. While I was aware that the absence of direction would affect the information provided I was hoping there would be a positive as well as problematic effect. I knew that the women might find it difficult to present the information without a framework upon which to base their writings, but felt this problem would be outweighed by the richness of information gained by enabling them freedom of expression.

However, the women were required to make their submission from a retrospective viewpoint and this raises doubts about the reliability of what they reported. In an attempt to overcome this difficulty and to assist with recall I supplied each woman with a notebook which could act as a diary, (see 3.1).

Whatever method of data collection is used there is no way of determining whether the information given is an

authentic reflection of the respondents' feelings. As stated in the literature review, (2.0), Hare' & Secord, cited in Ruddock (1985) claim one needs to accept the validity of people's self-reports. While Ruddock (1981) argues that self-report often contradicts other information he does not supply evidence to indicate which method is the most accurate. Hence, as the evaluation was designed to reflect how the women perceived their own progress, self-report would be the most appropriate method to use for this information.

In the beginning, the information the women gave was very general and they did not supply any details of how they were feeling personally. When talking about this, one of the women said she only felt comfortable supplying limited details. However, as the evaluation progressed, the women began to be more personal in the type of information they revealed. Once the women were prepared to supply more detailed personal information they reacted negatively to the methods that had been established for recording the material.

As a response to their concern I was willing to negotiate the method of recording data. This move is recommended by Fetterman (1984) who advises that the decision on how to record the data should be made in discussion with the participants to determine which method they feel most comfortable with. Although I was not in a position at the beginning of the evaluation process to address issues of data collection I felt discussion at this stage was vital to the rest of the evaluation.

While the women generally accepted the means of recording the individual submissions a number of them were concerned about the method for recording their group discussions. As indicated in methodology, (3.1), the group meetings were to be taped but they felt that as the information they were giving was more personal than at the beginning they wanted to change the method of recording that information.

After a discussion on how best to record the information they decided that I should take notes of the main concerns they raised. To ensure I had accurately recorded their points I was to read out my notes at the end of the meeting and the women would change anything I had misinterpreted. In addition, due to loyalty to the members of the group, they decided that no group evaluation would take place without all members being present.

Although the new arrangements for group recording were well thought out the collection of group material still proved to be problematical. Shortly after the decisions were made the life skills day changed to a day which I usually had to spend at University. This meant that I could not be present to record their group discussions. In addition, owing to the stressful nature of the course it was unusual for all the women to be present on that day. However, although I was absent, the group did co-operate with the evaluation requirements and prepared two written group submissions during the last part of the course. Apart from these notes the only other group information I

gained was a recording of a discussion held at the beginning of the course when only four members were present.

### 5.3.3 Control of supplementary forms of data collection

As well as difficulties experienced with the collection of information from the trainees a third data collection problem was the lack of assessment material which was to be supplied by the tutors, which adversely affected the summative evaluation report. There was no adequate record of the women's work skills and only one record was taken of their personal skills development, and this was not made available for the evaluation report. As there is no material available from the tutors on observed changes of the trainees' behaviour the only material available about their progress is the women's own self report on their perceptions of the course. In addition, because there is a lack of details from specific points during the course, (see 5.3.1), it is not possible to present a report which fully determined the success of the course as a whole.

The organisers of the course should normally be responsible for ensuring that the tutors complete the assessments for the course. However, if the information is necessary for the successful completion of the evaluation process it may also be necessary for the evaluator to play a role in ensuring that the information is received by maintaining personal contact with the tutors. Further, the co-operation of the tutors is vital if they are to

implement changes to aspects of the course which have been identified as problematic. Hence, as a part of this strategy, it would be advisable for the evaluator to include the tutors in the discussions with the course organisers and participants which take place to organise and design the evaluation. At this point the tutors could have input on their requirements and needs from the evaluation, which if taken into account, is likely to increase the chances of gaining the tutors co-operation.

#### 5.4 Power and authority

The issue of power and authority and how it will affect the way the evaluator and participants on a programme being evaluated carry out their respective roles is the final issue to be discussed. While planning the evaluation I was aware that my position as evaluator would have an effect on the women on the course and my evaluation design was an attempt to create a process with which I could help empower the women involved. In an attempt to reduce my personal authority and increase the women's control I left the evaluation process largely unstructured.

However, while leaving the evaluation process largely unstructured I was removing myself from a position where I had the authority to ensure that they understood what was required of them and where I could ensure that the process went ahead. Further, because of the compulsory nature of the evaluation the participants on the course were able to have no real control either. My renunciation of power and



authority meant I was no longer able to ensure the evaluation was continued and yet the women did not have the power to completely withdraw from the process. As a result, both the women and I were in a situation in which neither of us could take control of the process.

#### 5.4.1 Role of evaluator

In my attempt to empower the women I had relinquished my power and authority and had jeopardised my role as evaluator. My brief meant that I was required to administer an evaluation process which would indicate to C.W.E.T. the necessary changes which should take place during the course. In addition, I was also to present a written report which would cover an indepth view of the course they were organising. Hence it was necessary for me to be able to ensure that the processes which were necessary for successful completion of the requirements were carried out.

At the beginning, because of my connections to C.W.E.T., I was able to ensure that the process began smoothly. However, as the course progressed and the women became more assertive as a group they began to perceive the evaluation as an extra burden on an already stressful course. At one point, following my withdrawal from the formative evaluation, (see 5.3.1.), they withdrew their co-operation and said that they were unwilling to make any submissions at that time. While they gave some of their reason as being the difficulties of their training placed on them they also expressed doubts about the usefulness of

continuing with this type of evaluation study.

It was obvious that they found it difficult to make that stand, the meeting was emotionally demanding for us all. I sensed their frustration because although I had given them control of their process I was still making demands on their energy and time. I also felt a sense of frustration because I needed to supplement the meagre amount of information I had been able to collect on the course and yet I was not in a position to negotiate for their co-operation.

In my attempt to relinquish my power and authority I had placed myself in a powerless position. Susan Stanford, cited in Margo Culley and Catherine Portguges (1985), writes about this phenomenon in relationship to the feminist classroom. She writes:

"In our sensitivity to the psychology of oppression in our students' lives, we have often denied ourselves the authority we seek to nurture in our students."  
pp207.

While Susan is commenting on her position as a feminist lecturer she is referring to the same ideals I was aspiring to in the evaluation. I now realise that while it would be possible to relinquish all power and authority in some research, difficulties arise when there is a specific task to attend to.

In addition, although they did not say so, I felt that had I been visible as a 'professional' carrying out a piece of 'evaluation research' they would have been more comfortable with the process. Other researchers have also reported this phenomenon. Shulamit Reinhartz, cited in

Gloria Bowles and Renate Duelli-Klein (1983), reported that when she attempted to carry out research which was non-hierarchical the people involved wanted her to be a 'real researcher' and to take an authoritative position.

However, it is also possible that the women's tension and conflict reflected their resistance to the idea of the evaluation taking place at all. Although the group reported that they wished there had been more monitoring of the course they did not perceive the evaluation as being part of that process. This lack of understanding was no doubt due to my inability to clearly outline the boundaries, purpose, and benefit of the evaluation. In future, by being present and supplying more information on the process than I did during the present evaluation, I would ensure that I was perceived as more directly connected to the role of monitoring the course.

My dual role as a member of the group organising the course as well as carrying out the evaluation became an issue of concern when the course began to become very stressful for the women. My connection with C.W.E.T. was a threat to the women's confidentiality and while I do not believe that they thought I would knowingly repeat their confidences they said they thought I might accidentally repeat what they had said.

Having a dual role as evaluator of a course run by an organisation of which I am a member is a mistake I will not repeat. Although it was an advantage to have the full co-operation of the organising body, the trainees' response to

my association with the Trust was a negative one. In the type of evaluation I was attempting it is the relationship with the participants, not the organisers, which is of prime importance.

#### 5.4.2 Role of participants

When considering the issues of power and authority the role of the participants is closely linked with that of the evaluator. As already stated, my intention was to ensure that the role of the trainees as participants on the course and as women, be acknowledged by and validated in the research process. Giving them the freedom to write about their experiences without any specific guidelines was an attempt to empower them. However, while I gave them this opportunity I was also requiring that they comply with the requirements of the evaluation. I had given them freedom to choose but only within the boundaries of the evaluation of which I had set the terms of reference.

Perhaps when the participants of a programme are required to comply with the process of evaluation the major question which should be addressed is, how can they best benefit from the evaluation? While I had hoped that the trainees might benefit from being involved in the process it was clear from their responses to the process that the women's investments gave them very little return. Their verbal and written comments clearly indicated that the evaluation was disturbing for them, they reported that it was a very emotional process which felt unsafe and uncomfortable and took up too much time. They stated that

having to recall their experiences brought up too many problematical issues related to the course and it ruined some of their life skills days.

While a number of the participants' concerns appeared related to the nature of the problems they were experiencing on the course, their negative responses were also directed against some aspects of the evaluation. One way to address some of those concerns is to ensure they clearly understand their role in the evaluation. In addition if the purpose of the evaluation and the benefits are clearly outlined this could prevent the participants becoming confused and unsure of how and why they should contribute to the research.

#### 6.0 Summary

The evaluation was designed with the idea of enabling the women to have a measure of control over some factors of the process. I wanted the women involved in the course to be able to tell of their experiences in their own way without being constrained by directions from "the expert". The ideals behind the evaluation design were theoretically sound but were somewhat distorted during the practical application of the process. The following is a short summary of the major issues which arose out of my experience of carrying out the evaluation.

To begin with, it is vital that the reasons for commissioning the evaluation are outlined, clearly understood, and that the reasons justify the time and

effort required to carry out the study. Once it has been established that an evaluation should take place it is necessary that the organisers, tutors, and participants of the programme are consulted by the evaluator to negotiate the terms of the evaluation. During these preliminary consultations the requirements of the evaluation, the roles of the different people, the amount of time required to complete the study, how the results can be of benefit to all concerned etc., can be discussed.

At this point, along with the needs and expectations of all those concerned the philosophical commitment of the evaluator should be outlined. If the evaluator is committed to ensuring the participants on the course have some degree of autonomy and control over sections of the evaluation it may be necessary to hold a number of meetings to enable the participants to negotiate their requirements and expectations. These meetings can also be used to enable the participants to get to know the evaluator better and for the evaluator to develop a sense of trust and rapport with the participants.

A further use of the preliminary and consequent meetings should be to determine the method of recording information with which the participants find most comfortable and which is also satisfactory for the evaluator. It is also important for both parties, the evaluator and participants, to be open to negotiate any changes which may need to take place if the chosen collection methods prove unsatisfactory.

One point worth considering is the wisdom of an

indepth evaluation being carried out by a member of the group organising the course. I found my connections with C.W.E.T. adversely affected the study. In any future evaluations I was to administer I would be more closely linked to the group completing the evaluation than with the course organisers. However, I would still retain a degree of neutrality by ensuring I was not too involved with either group.

One area that concerned me was that the women on the course appeared unsure about how to respond to the unstructured evaluation I was attempting to carry out. However, while they were unsure of what to do they were able to write detailed submissions on how they were experiencing the course, which was what I was aiming for. Even though they wanted clear directions from me as evaluator I feel that they would have reacted against the evaluation if I had taken too much control. I believe that writing questions related to how the women felt about specific aspects of the course, (see 5.1), would provide them with enough guidelines to enable them to feel secure about completing their submissions. I would be reluctant to provide them with too much direction because it may have the effect of stifling their freedom to write about their individual experiences.

However, although I would not supply many more directive questions, I would ensure that they were fully briefed on the expectations and benefits of the evaluation process. It is probable that with clearer details on the

reasoning behind the evaluation the participants may be more willing to co-operate in the process. I believe if the participants were involved in establishing the criteria for the evaluation process they would be able to ensure the evaluation was relevant to their needs. In addition, the discussion could provide them with insight as to how they might best benefit from the evaluation.

In my attempt to give up my power and authority I placed myself in a position where I was unable to ensure the evaluation was completed. In the future I would not hand over the management of the evaluation but would retain authority to ensure I could carry out my role as evaluator. While my attempt to give up my power was designed to help empower the women they were still confined by the requirements to respond to the existing framework of the evaluation. By requiring them to participate in the evaluation I was taking away their freedom of choice. Any freedom of how to respond within the framework of the evaluation is necessarily limited with the requirement that they take part in the process.

The dilemma faced by the evaluator who is required to carry out an evaluation and yet wishes to ensure that the participants have some freedom and control over the process could be addressed by ensuring the participants were involved in the preliminary stages of the evaluation, as discussed above. In this way, the evaluator could retain the power to carry out the evaluation but still ensure that the participants were able to include in the evaluation issues which were important to them and hence enable them



to retain some of their autonomy within the compulsory process.

The final issue which requires discussion when developing effective evaluation design is the amount of time which is available to complete the process. One method of ensuring there will be enough time to carry out the evaluation is to include the study in the requirements of the course. However, it should be remembered that the time taken to complete the evaluation process of data collection and analysis will displace another aspect which could be included in the programme.

Further, the availability of the evaluator is an issue which warrants consideration. My position as a student involved in full-time postgraduate study severely limited the time I could spend on the process. My restricted availability had an adverse effect on the evaluation, especially the formative section. The regular presence of the evaluator is a necessary component of a successful evaluation. If the evaluator wishes to gain in-depth information from the participants it is important to be present to build up a rapport with the people involved. The evaluator also needs to be present when there is a natural change in some aspect of the course in order to determine which sections need modification and which are already well structured. In addition, the evaluator should have the time to cross check with the participants any analysis of their information. This will ensure that the interpretation given by the evaluator is as authentic as

possible. Without time to complete this process the evaluator takes the risk of including too much bias in the report and hence not fairly representing the participants thoughts and feelings.

In conclusion, I have attempted to describe some of the key issues and problems of evaluating one ACCESS Training Scheme and to prescribe a number of strategies for overcoming these inconsistencies. My discussion has largely centred on issues which relate to my philosophical commitment to the qualitative evaluation process and to ensuring the participants on the course being evaluated have as much autonomy as possible within the framework of a compulsory evaluation study.

My original aim was to design a qualitative evaluation study which was an empowering process for the participants of the course. Due to my relative inexperience as an evaluator I was not able to achieve my expectations. Conversely, the evaluation study was a stressful experience for the participants, partly due to problems they encountered with the course but also because of the requirements of the evaluation.

However, through the breakdown of the evaluation process I have developed a number of recommendations which could prove useful for other evaluators attempting to carry out a non-hierarchical qualitative evaluation. Although the recommendations are basically sound a number of them will no doubt create further problems for the evaluator and

hence need to be continually refined with further research in order to establish them as sound qualitative evaluation practices.

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- 28. Commission may approve special programmes—**
- (1) The Commission may, upon such conditions as it thinks fit and subject to revocation or suspension at any time, approve in writing any special plan or programme submitted to it by any person if it considers that—
- (a) The plan or programme will assist or advance . . . persons or groups of persons, being in each case persons of a particular sex or marital status; and
  - (b) Those persons or groups need or may reasonably be supposed to need assistance or advancement in order to achieve an equal place with other members of the community.

- (2) Anything done or omitted which would otherwise constitute a breach of this Part of this Act shall not constitute such a breach if it is done or omitted in good faith for the purpose of a plan or programme approved for the time being under subsection (1) of this section.

In subs. (1) (a) the word "particular" was omitted, where shown by points of omission, by s. 9 of the Human Rights Commission Amendment Act 1983.

## NON-TRADITIONAL TRAINING FOR WOMEN UNDER ACCESS

Listed are the types of training courses which qualify as non-traditional skills training for women.

1. Orientation courses, which are concerned with general skills such as familiarisation with the workshop environment and hands on experience. These courses usually also involve life skills components such as assertiveness, job search, oral and written communication, etc.
2. Introduction to trades courses, which teach specific skills. These courses may involve life skills components, but generally to a lesser degree than in orientation courses.
3. Other training courses which have a non-traditional component which makes up 30% or more of the course, eg a work experience component in a non-traditional area.

## PART 1

A. POLICY PRINCIPLES1. The Purpose of ACCESS

The purpose of ACCESS is to assist people who are at a disadvantage in the labour market to acquire skills which will increase their chances of finding employment. The shape of training will be dictated by the needs of the trainees. Regional Employment and Access Councils (REACs) will act on behalf of the trainees to buy suitable training places and to ensure the training is effective.

ACCESS is not the answer to unemployment. What it will do is:

- (a) try to ensure that people at most risk of long term unemployment can obtain and keep jobs (thus avoiding a pool of long-term unemployed); and
- (b) recognise that many traditional unskilled and semi-skilled jobs are in decline and that there is a general need for upskilling particularly for those already at a disadvantage in the labour market.

2. Key Goals

ACCESS has been developed to meet the needs of people identified as being at a disadvantage in the labour market. Its broad goal is to improve the prospects of disadvantaged individuals and groups in the labour market. Within this overall goal, the Government has identified a number of more specific goals:

- (a) to ease individuals' entry or re-entry into the labour market by enabling them to acquire vocational skills;
- (b) to enhance individuals' ability to enter, or re-enter the work force by promoting the acquisition of skills necessary for working life, for example: functional literacy and numeracy, the ability to co-operate with others, and the ability to manage their own lives in relation to employment;
- (c) to provide a skill base for further vocational development which will enhance the long run employment and earnings potential of trainees.

3. Key Features(a) Emphasis on Outcomes

This means that the focus is on the achievements of trainees, rather than the process of how the training is given. For example, when a REAC considers a training proposal, the first question it will ask is

"what are the outcomes for the trainees?". When this question has been answered the REAC can consider in general terms the method of producing those outcomes.

The performance of training providers will be assessed not by their methods but by the quality of the outcomes for the trainees.

### The Outcomes Sought

The success of the ACCESS initiative will be measured by whether people within the target group are assisted to compete more effectively in the labour market, and ultimately by whether they move into unsubsidised employment. The success of the programme will therefore be measured against:

- (i) The extent to which ACCESS training is made available to those in the target group, that is, to those at a disadvantage in the labour market;
- (ii) The extent to which the training produces the following positive outcomes for the trainees:
  - enhanced readiness to undertake further training towards employment, or to be referred to employment i.e. enhanced work readiness;
  - undertaking additional education (including return to school) or training towards employment;
  - obtaining and keeping employment in the short and longer terms.

The inclusion of "enhanced work readiness" as a positive outcome for trainees recognises that there are many people in the target group who cannot be expected to be ready for employment after a single training course and that outcomes are affected by the state of the labour market. Trainees may require a period of time in which to develop personal, social and general work skills if they are to attain the competencies and motivation needed to seek further training or employment.

At the time a training course is approved, the REAC and the training provider should agree upon standards and evaluation criteria for the attainment of specific skills and competencies which can be deemed to represent "enhanced work readiness". For example enhanced job readiness in a trainee with a background of serious unemployment could be indicated by features such as attendance, punctuality, or the development of appropriate relationships to supervisors and to colleagues.



## THE PROCESS OF ACCESS

An example of how the ACCESS process functions, could be as follows:

1. A potential Training Provider decides that their organisation would be suitable for training job seekers in basic receptionist skills. They perhaps have experience, and/or resources, and/or employer needs, or a particular target group whose needs would be best met by training in this area. A framework of trainee numbers, type of course, the total cost of the course and its length are noted.
2. Discussions are held with the nearest office of the Employment and Vocational Guidance Service (E & VGS), who confirm that there are a number of job seekers who would benefit from training in this area, and that the course proposal, including costs, appears reasonable. The E & VGS also advises that further details will be required by the REAC in the area of course content.
3. The potential Provider finalises the proposal and includes the necessary objectives and means of measuring these for the course. These are:

(a) Placement Objective:

that a minimum 40% of trainees will be placed into employment within 1 month of the completion of the course;

(b) Enhanced Work Readiness Objective:

that 80% of the trainees will achieve the following standards regarding specific receptionist skills (tests will be completed during the last week of the course, and certified by the Training Provider):

- (i) able to type a minimum 40 wpm in the course of a 10 minute test;
- (ii) have a maximum 5 typing, spacing or layout errors per test;
- (iii) be able to demonstrate a minimum 8 good listening behaviours in test interview with trainer as client;
- (iv) ask minimum ratio 3:1 open to closed questions in same test interview;
- (v) process 10 calls through PABX system:
  - to correct extensions;
  - following set answering format; greeting, self-introduction, request for specifics of enquiry;

(ii)

- (vi) presentation at test interview rating a minimum 5 out of 10 (marking by two invited employers who will mark on a scale of 1 to 10);
- (vii) be able to state all 5 points necessary on any couriered mail. These are:
  - address going to;
  - phone of place addressed to;
  - your address;
  - your phone;
  - state overnight or couriered.

In summary therefore, the objectives set for the course would be:

- (a) that 40% of the trainees are placed within a month of the courses completion;
- (b) that 80% of trainees achieve the minimum standards set out in the specific skills listed (i) to (vii) above.

The achievement by 80% of the trainees of these minimum standards would mean the course has achieved its 'enhanced work readiness objective'.

## TRAINING PROGRAMME CANTERBURY WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT TRUST.

CABINET MAKING AND JOINERY COURSE FOR WOMEN1. a) Availability of Trainees

The Trust is currently running a Woodwork course for Women in Cabinetmaking and Joinery under the Training Assistance Programme. For this course we had 25% more applicants than positions available (ie 6). The programme was approved as two, three month modules which could progressively increase the trainee skills over the six month period. The present trainees have all expressed a desire to continue for the full length of this programme. In addition we have a waiting list of three women. One of these women wishes to come from the North Island to participate in this course as there is presently no other courses of this nature available elsewhere in New Zealand. Our experience with positive action programmes has been that as the courses become more widely known the demand rises dramatically. This comes not only as a result of advertising but also from the wide networks available to the Canterbury Women's Employment Trust and from the "spreading of the word" from satisfied trainees.

1. b) Employment Prospects

The trainees will be able to obtain full-time, part-time or self-employment (where applicable) in the following fields:

1. Cabinetmaking and joinery.
2. Kitchen Component manufacturing.
3. Cabinetmaking and joinery machining.
4. Door, window and staircase joinery.
5. Fine furniture making.
6. Chair manufacturing.
7. Furniture polishing.
8. Furniture carving.
9. Veneering and inlay work.
10. Graphic arts and Design (Woodworking areas).
11. Timber retailing.
12. Sawmilling of quality timber.

To achieve some of these employment prospects the trainees will need to undertake further training.

If a trainee wished to pursue an apprenticeship the training acquired on this course could be accredited to that apprenticeship if the relevant apprenticeship boards approved.

## 2. Training Objectives

The objectives of the training programme as a whole are:

- To develop the beginnings of skill training in the areas outlined in the diploma.
- To develop skills in job search, written job applications, and interview techniques.
- To help trainees make realistic assessment of their interest in woodworking as a career.
- To develop the interpersonal and social skills necessary to maintain employment.
- To raise the confidence of women seeking employment in non-traditional areas, and to see non-traditional work as a viable alternative.

### Practical Objectives

1. That trainees gain the Diploma in Commercial Furniture gaining skills in the following areas:

- Maintenance and care of tools and Fine Tuning of those tools.
- An introduction to the history of fine furniture making, carving and sculpture.
- Scale drawing, sketching, template making, models and full size mock-ups.
- Making a dovetailed box with detailed addition.
- Jointing techniques and finishing.
- Different construction methods.
- Making a "commercial" piece of work.
- Making a second "commercial" piece of work.
- Working from a design to the finished product.

The method of evaluation will be an assessment of trainees skills by the skills tutor and also assessment of their development of technical skills throughout the course by the tutor measured against the Diploma.

## 2. Job Search skills

That the trainees gain the following specific Job Search skills to a standard to enable them to function effectively in job seeking:

### Ability to:

- use telephone
- use Labour Department Job Search services
- interpret newspaper jobs advertising
- write a curriculum vitae
- complete job application forms or informal application letters
- present confidently at job interviews.

The method of evaluation of these skills will be an assessment by demonstration of job search skills to the life skills tutor.

## 3. Personal skills

That the Trainee achieves improvement in the following skills:

- Punctuality
- communication skills
- self motivation
- relate to a wide range of people
- accept supervision and criticisms

The evaluation of these skills will be by assessment of the personal development of the trainees through the use of a written questionnaire (see appendix 1) completed by the trainees at the beginning of the course. This questionnaire will be evaluated throughout the course by both the life skills tutor and the skills tutor in conjunction with the trainees.

## 4. Confidence Skills

That the trainees gain greater confidence in seeking further training and employment in a non-traditional work area. These skills are developed through participation in the whole course and are expressed through attaining the following objectives:

- confidence in handling the tools of the trade.
- understanding of technical principles of the industry.
- assertiveness and self-reliance.
- ability to work as the only female in an all male environment.
- readiness to undertake further training either on or off the job.

2. b) Outcomes

We expect that our measurements of pre-course and post-course skills level will indicate that our trainees will have significant progress with regard to:

- a. 90% of trainees will show enhanced job readiness (attitude, motivation, confidence, and a willingness to do further training).
- b. 50% of trainees will undertake further training.
- c. 50% of trainees will gain employment.

APPENDIX 1

Personal Skills Measurement - Sample

- personal initiative 0 - - - - - 7
- personal confidence with trainer  
(ability to communicate) 0 - - - - - 7
- personal confidence with work team  
(ability to communicate and listen) 0 - - - - - 7
- assertiveness 0 - - - - - 7  
(eg. am I able to ask for what I  
want/Say 'no' to what I do not want)
- telephone skills 0 - - - - - 7
- attitude towards the job 0 - - - - - 7  
(eg. do I put away gear that I've  
used/cleaning etc.)
- clarity about what I would like to  
do for a job. 0 - - - - - 7  
(Is this really what I like to do?)
- Motivation 0 - - - - - 7  
(Is it important for me to arrive  
on time?)
- Interest in others/helpfulness 0 - - - - - 7  
(how do I feel about working  
co-operatively?)
- do 'new' experiences 'scare' me? 0 - - - - - 7  
(ie: non-traditional work)

COURSE:

TOOL SHARPENING

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Maintenance and care of all hand tools and sharpening stones which brings together fine tuning of your personal tools. All cutting and scraping instruments are hoped to be covered.

CONTENTS:

- Hollow grinding
- Selection of tools
- Correct method of using tools
- Selection of grinding and sharpening stones
- Tuning plane bodies for easier action
- Honing to correct angles
- Buffing as a final sharpening aid
- Sharpening of cabinet scrapers
- Sharpening gouges (carving and joinery)
- Discussion of sharpening hand saws, tenon, dovetail etc.

Students should bring their own tools and stones.  
i.e. Chisels (Cabinetmaking) required for first class.

Water sharpening stones and cabinet scrapers can be purchased at the College.

Included in this course is a specialist who will cover saw sharpening, techniques only.

First session will cover selection of tools, plus what is ment by hollow ground, showing its' advantages.

\* \* \* \*



COURSE:

THE ART OF DOVETAILING

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

To create a dovetail jointed unit, with attention to detail. This course focus's on the construction, setting out and planing, using hand tools only.

Size of frame is approximately 250mm x 65mm x 100mm.

Cost of materials is extra - sanding papers, oils and timber.

CONTENTS:

- Discussion of project and design
- Working drawings
- Selection of timber and tools
- Setting out of dovetails
- Planing to finish sizes
- Finishing, oils, waxes, polyurethane etc.
- Sharing the finished item with another person

SUGGESTED TOOLS REQUIRED:

Students should bring their own tools.

Chisels - 6mm, 12mm and 25mm	Scribing knife
Dovetail saw	Hand plane
Mallet	Single pin gauge
Set Square	300mm rule or folding rule
Adjustable bevel	Coping saw or fret saw
Pencil 6H	

N.B.

It is essential that the student have sharp tools

\* PRE-REQUISITE TO HAVE ATTENDED "TOOL SHARPENING COURSE"

COURSE:

STAGE I and STAGE II

INTRODUCTION TO SOLID TIMBER FURNITURE MAKING

(Simple stool or cabinet with open shelves and one or two drawers)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Includes layout, with full size drawings.

The first of three courses designed to teach students to be familiar with working with solid wood.

Allowing for movement and distortion within construction.

Covering traditional jointing methods, dovetailing, mortice and tenon.

CONTENTS:

- Visit to sawmill (observation of Log milling)
- Selection of solid timber/from trees to cut boards
- Stacking and seasoning of timber
- setting up and layout of workshop
- Selection of hand tools, machinery purchase and workshop equipment.
- Making a simple cabinet/stool/coffee table

Time must be allowed for work to be carried on at home between lectures.

Materials are an extra cost.

\* \* \* \*

COURSE:

X

STAGE III and STAGE IV

INTERMEDIATE SOLID FURNITURE MAKING

(Chair construction - ergonomics)

This course is a continuation of the above.

N.B. PRE-REQUISITE TO HAVE ATTENDED "TOOL SHARPENING COURSE"

\* \* \* \*

COURSE:

EXPLORING THE MANY USES OF A ROUTER

One of the most versatile electric portable hand tools.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Showing many aspects of this versatile electric portable hand tool, incorporating maintenance, setting to templates, holding jigs.

CONTENTS:

- Making Jigs
- Care of machine
- Sliding dovetail
- Selection of different makes
- Morticing
- Grooving
- Circles

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED:

- Ear Muffs
- Square
- Hard Pencil 5H
- Steel Rule

\* \* \*