

**Weaving the threads of  
education for sustainability  
and  
outdoor education.**

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## **Abstract:**

Sustainability has become a buzz word of our time, although our developed world community is still coming to terms with what the word really means. Universities and polytechnics in Aotearoa New Zealand will have to change in many ways before sustainability can be considered to occupy a meaningful place in the tertiary education sector. However the change process that sees an organisation moving towards sustainability is complex, and agency for change can be considered on many different levels including the individual identities of staff and students, the identity of managers, and the programme and wider organisational identities constructed by the communities that comprise them.

This qualitative research explores education for sustainability within the context of outdoor education using the Bachelor of Adventure Recreation and Outdoor Education (BRecEd) at the Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT) (the programme into which the author teaches) as a case study. Participatory action research forms the overarching methodology for a multiple method approach to data collection. The research leans heavily on the lived experiences of staff and students within the programme, is woven with my own reflections, and incorporates many examples of students' work. The weaving together of these experiences grounds the research and helps bring theory to life.

The research reveals the complexity of change towards more sustainable ways of practising outdoor education in an organisational setting. It explores the tensions that are encountered and mechanisms that have allowed for staff and students to engage in education for sustainability in a more meaningful way. The key themes of the research explore the intersection of identity construction processes and change agency, and it is argued these processes are inseparable for those concerned with organisational change towards sustainability.

*“Pity the human race  
for its delusion of permanence”*

*Author unknown*

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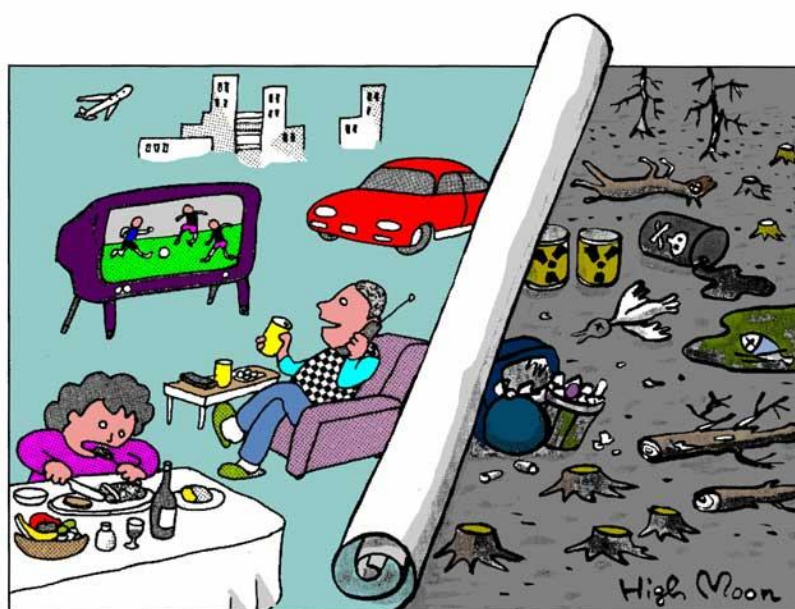
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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Our planet is entering a phase of rapid change that scientists attribute to the accumulated impacts of human existence. Quite simply, there are too many of us, and in the developed world we use more of the earth's resources than we should. These driving forces are causing inequity in the distribution of wealth, the globalisation of consumer culture, widespread habitat destruction, the mass extinction of species, and climate change. These fundamental problems are tearing at the fabric of life, but as academic and cartoonist Takatsuki (n.d.) (under the pen name High Moon) cleverly depicts in Figure 1.1, we fail to recognise the impacts of our daily existence on the world around us.



Note: Behind the scenes, what's actually happening?

**Figure 1.1:** We fail to perceive the impacts of our daily lives (Takatsuki, n.d.)

For many years, influential authors such as Carson (1962) who alerted the world to unrestricted pesticide use and habitat destruction; Schumacher (1974) who wrote of economics and limits to growth; Leopold (1987) who stressed the need for a land ethic; and Lovelock (2006) who identified our planet as Gaia, a living entity in crisis; have tried to draw our attention to the alternative reality behind the scenes that High Moon's cartoon depicts. Even internationally popular and award winning fiction such as *Oryx and Crake* by Atwood (2003) or *Madigan's Fantasia* by Mahy (2005) forewarn of an apocalyptic future. Clover (2002) suggested that people lead double

lives; they live as though nothing has changed while knowing that much has indeed changed, but carry on as they always have done anyway. It seems that not until this alternative reality depicted by Takatsuki encroaches into our daily lives will we notice it exists. For example the price of crude oil saw its biggest-ever one-day price increase on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2008 with an increase of more than 9% a barrel to an all-time high of over US\$139:00 (Cooke, 2008), with predictions of higher prices appearing with daily regularity. Such events related to increasing resource depletion are creating new conceptualisations of the relationship between nature and culture.

A common theme in sustainability literature is that there has been a general and widespread failure to engage with social and environmental issues, and the problems that threaten the life-supporting ecology of the planet continue to become more threatening as time passes. More recently the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (UNESCO, 2004) involving over 1300 scientists across 96 different countries found that no part of the planet was free from human impact and around sixty percent of it was degraded (with some parts so severely degraded they may not recover in the foreseeable future). The media has paid little attention to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and it has been my experience that few people have an appreciation of the sobering findings it contains. The summary statement of the board included the following observation:

- We are spending Earth's natural capital, putting such strain on the natural functions of Earth that the ability of the planet's ecosystems to sustain future generations can no longer be taken for granted.
- At the same time, the assessment shows that the future really is in our hands. We can reverse the degradation of many ecosystem services over the next 50 years, but the changes in policy and practice required are substantial and not currently underway. (UNESCO, 2004)

I take the position that the future of all life on this planet will be shaped by how people choose to react to this situation in the next decade or so. If we (particularly in the developed world) continue to live in the destructive manner that we have done, the evidence presented by the UNESCO is unequivocal; those actions are prescribing future generations of humans to certain hardship in a world of increasing ecological impoverishment, climatic instability, and mass extinction. UNESCO has identified education as a key mechanism to facilitate awareness of the issues that are faced, and

encourage a change in values and behaviours to address those problems. The Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO, 2005) places responsibility for education for sustainability broadly across all sectors of education.

The bleak situation described by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and critical initiative described in the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development provide the wider context for this research. I do not debate either the findings of the assessment or the agenda of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, but take the position that humanity has no choice but to act to bring about change and that education provides a powerful medium to do so. This position suggests a moral and ethical imperative for sustainability that is clearly articulated in international agreements such as the Declaration of Thessaloniki (UNESCO, 1997) and is a driving force behind education for sustainability.

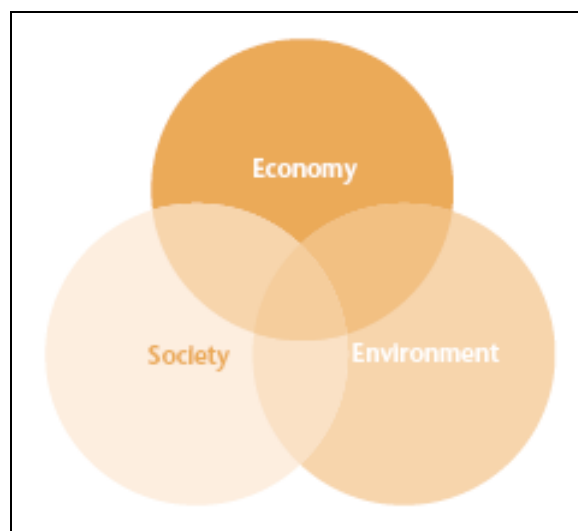
The definition of sustainability is widely contested. Senge, Lichtenstein, Kaeufer, Bradbury, and Carol (2007) have interpreted this contest over definition as follows:

"There are three different world views that inform the notion of sustainability. These are rationalism, which recognises the need for efficient utilisation of resources through "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs;" naturalism, which recognises the need to bring industrial systems into harmony with nature by not depleting resources beyond their rates of regeneration; and humanism, which recognises that sustainability depends on an intrinsic human desire to be part of healthy communities that preserve life for our selves, other species and future generations". (2007, p. 46)

Much effort has gone into moving beyond the contest over definition and it is important to recall two key conceptualisations of sustainability that have developed over time. These are referred to as weak and strong sustainability.

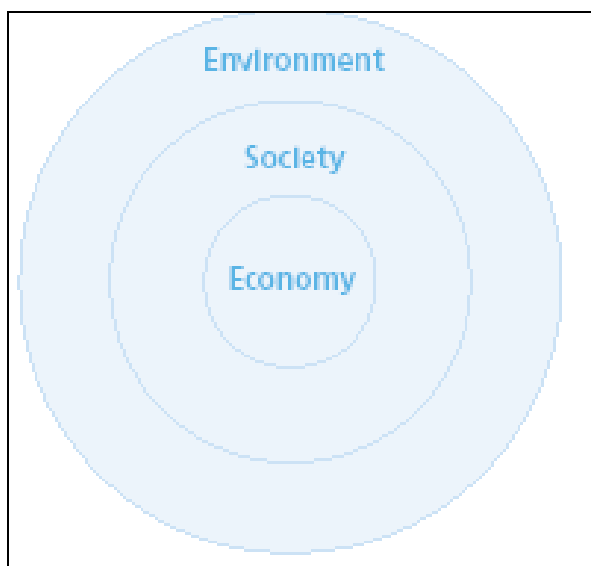
Weak sustainability is the term given to sustainability that presents the economy, the environment, and society as overlapping. This view of sustainability is commonly presented as the diagram contained in Figure 1.2. Opponents of this view note that the economy and society cannot exist outside of the environment, and that the view fails to take into account externalities such as the costs of pollution in production.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (PCE) notes that the weak sustainability model “assumes that degradation of one group of assets (environmental, social or economic) can be compensated for by improvement in another” (2002, p. 34) and that “The weak sustainability model fails to acknowledge the ecological constraints that humans, other species, markets, policies and developments must operate within.” (2002, p. 35)



**Figure 1.2:** Weak sustainability model

The strong sustainability model situates the economy and society within the environment and so internalises all externalities such as the costs of pollution in production. The PCE (January 2004a) describes strong sustainability as follows: “This model recognises that economic systems always exist within a social context and many important aspects of society do not involve economic activity. Similarly, human societies (and the economic activities that are conducted within them) are totally constrained by the ecological systems of the Earth” (p. 15). The model of strong sustainability described above is often presented as the diagram presented in Figure 1.3.



**Figure 1.3:** Strong sustainability

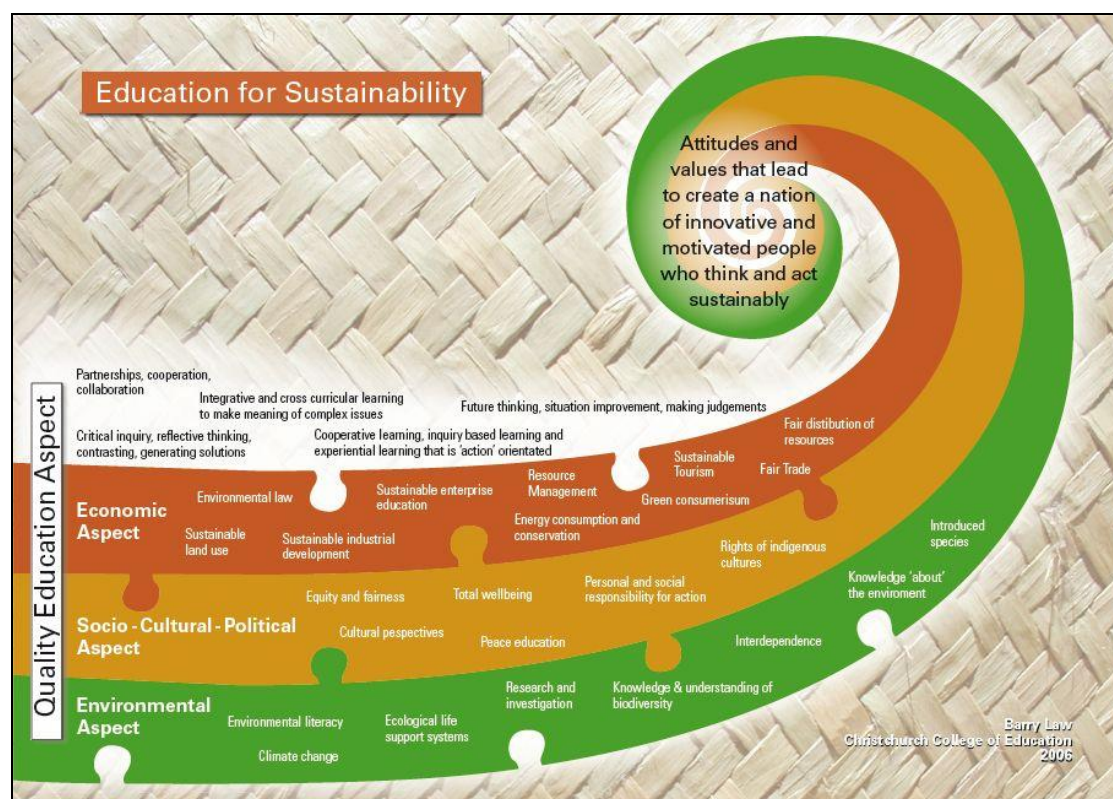
Chapter three contains a more detailed discussion about the contested nature of sustainability and the definition will be explored in more detail at that time. Chapters six and seven contain critical discussion about strong and weak sustainability in relation to organisational change. When the term sustainability is used in this research, it should be considered in the context of strong sustainability.

Education that has sustainability as a focus has also had many names but has come to be called education for sustainability in this country. The PCE describe education for sustainability as follows:

“Education for sustainability examines how people and groups in society can learn to live in sustainable ways. It is not simply education ‘about’ sustainability ... education *for* sustainability has a strong purpose. It aims to empower people of all ages and different backgrounds to contribute to a better future. It encourages people to ask lots of questions, challenge underlying assumptions, and to think for themselves. It looks at individual and systemic changes that are needed to resolve unsustainable practices. Education for sustainability will require people and organisations to see that changes for the better can be made, and that there will need to be a transformation (a redesign of many systems and established ways of doing things) to achieve a good quality of life for people far into the future.” (January 2004a, p. 15)

Influential author and environmental educator Law (for example see Law, 2003, 2004; 2006), with input from the National Environmental Education Advisory Team,

came up with the following diagram (see Figure 1.4) to explain education for sustainability. This model is referred to a number of times in the following chapters and is important because of the way it draws the three interlinked aspects of sustainability discussed earlier into an education context (shown as the woven background in the diagram). The economic, socio-cultural-political, and environmental aspects are also arranged in an ascending order of importance, with the environment, the most important aspect, at the base. Arranged horizontally within each aspect are examples of associated learning topics that are presented in no particular order.



**Figure 1.4:** Education for sustainability (Law, 2006)

One of the problems for education for sustainability is a lack of understanding of what is to be achieved and the outcomes are not simple or straightforward. For many educators, it appears that education for sustainability is about worm farms, recycling and planting trees (Chapman, 2005) and Law's diagram helps explain this problem.

The key function of education for sustainability is to challenge the world view or paradigm of students with a goal of encouraging alternative ways of thinking and

behaving. According to influential author Capra, paradigms are "*A constellation of concepts, values, perceptions, and practices shared by a community, which forms a particular vision of reality and a collective mood that is the basis of the way the community organizes itself*" [italics in original] (as cited in Milbrath, 1989, p. 116). A belief paradigm that is dominant in any society can be called the dominant social paradigm, and again citing Capra "*may be defined as a society's dominant belief structure that organizes the way people perceive and interpret the functioning of the world around them*" (Milbrath, 1989, p. 116). Dominant social paradigms are not static but change over time. Sometimes, dominant social paradigms are challenged in fundamental ways that sees them give way to new paradigms, and this process is called a paradigm shift.

Much work has gone into exploring the growing awareness of paradigm shift evident over the last four decades (for example see Schumacher (1974), Capra (1982), Leopold (1987), Milbrath (1989)) but as influential author Dunlap (FALL 2008) observes, the shift to an ecological paradigm has been slow and highly politicised. For example Dunlap explains "...defenders of the DSP can bring enormous resources to bear in mounting effective counterattacks to challenges to their hegemony, discrediting both the challenging ideas and evidence, as well as those who promote them." The key issue that concerns this research is how to make students aware of the new environmental paradigm (Dunlap & Van Liere, 1978) that underpins sustainability within the context of outdoor education.

The process of paradigm shift is not easy for either students or teachers and in my experience tension and conflict are inevitably part of the change process. Never the less, influential outdoor educators and academics such as Cooper (1997, 1998, 2000), Higgins (1997, 2000, 2003), Martin (1999, 2004, 2005), and Nicol (2003) argue that the pedagogy and context of outdoor education can make it an effective setting for education for sustainability.

However, as with sustainability, the definition of outdoor education is contested and authors such as Nicol (Nicol, 2002a, 2002b) and Lynch (1999, 2006) suggest that what constitutes outdoor education is not a constant but rather depends who is defining it. For example Nicol wrote:

"Outdoor education is not homogenous - it developed out of diffuse roots, was modified by statutory, ideological, practical and financial influences and is an area within which competing and contrasting claims made of it by an equally divergent range of practitioners and researchers. From this standpoint there is no such thing as "it". In order to understand outdoor education there is a need to dis-entangle the philosophies which underpin it, its content, the methods adopted by its practitioners and their objectives." (2002b, p. 96)

Despite the observation that outdoor education is not homogenous, in this country it is my impression that the historical development of outdoor education, the industry groups and the qualifications they espouse, coupled with the national assessment framework for outdoor education students in senior school creates an interpretation of outdoor education that is pervasive. That interpretation of outdoor education sees a key focus on a range of adventurous pursuits derived from other countries and managing risk (Payne, 2002). Authors such as Brown (2008) are critical of such an interpretation of outdoor education and maintain it is culturally situated and fails to take into account the important implications of the context created by local communities and environments.

This means that in Aotearoa New Zealand, any exploration of the dominant social paradigm must include reflection on the colonisation process, indigenaity, and biculturalism. And any attempt to position education for sustainability within an outdoor education context that is not cognisant of such an exploration is failing to recognise that cultural diversity and the associated diversity of knowledge, values and behaviours are critical to a sustainable future. From this perspective, outdoor education must also undergo a paradigm shift if it is to become a useful platform for sustainability.

These introductory discussions signal the complexity of drawing education for sustainability into an outdoor education context. At the very heart of this complexity lies the fundamental way that we view the world and the way we position ourselves within it. This process of locating ourselves within a social and ecological context is about identity; who I am, who I am in relation to others, and who we are in the environment that we find ourselves in. Education for sustainability is about creating spaces for students to explore and challenge their identity with a view to encouraging



students to think about new ways being. Education for sustainability is transformative and therefore has a political agenda. It is about change.

This research is about weaving education for sustainability into an outdoor education context and it aims to better understand the problems that are caused, the processes that take place, and the solutions that can be found when this happens. The research is neither passive nor removed from the reality of my lived experience. It is rather about challenging and changing the outdoor education context that I am involved in with a view to increasing the focus on education for sustainability within the BRecEd.

### *Layout of the thesis*

The research described in the following chapters is set out in the following way: In chapter two, the research methodology is described, my position as researcher is declared, a participatory research paradigm is established, and the research question is explored. Multiple methods of data collection and analysis are outlined.

In chapter three, discussion explores some of the key problems that arise when education for sustainability is incorporated into an outdoor education context. Discussion uses the history of outdoor education, biculturalism in outdoor education, and assessment in outdoor education as thematic examples to explore personal and professional tensions.

Chapter four is a significant chapter in the research and begins an in-depth exploration of identity that will continue throughout the chapters that follow. This chapter looks to how the dominant understanding of what it means to live in Aotearoa New Zealand is established, and presenting this process as a fundamental problem for sustainability, explores how outdoor education might be used to challenge and encourage change.

Chapter five looks to organisational identity to explain tensions within the BRecEd and sets out the methodology for the action research project. The initial intent of the project as it is described is to explore and reduce the tensions that education for

sustainability creates in an outdoor education context in order to make education for sustainability within the BRecEd more effective.

Chapter six explores how members of the action research group grappled with the concept of sustainability within the context of the BRecEd and within the wider context of CPIT. This chapter also describes the outcomes of the action research and evaluates it as a change agent. The concepts of individual identity and organisational identity are also explored and it is argued that these are mutually entwined and interdependent processes that can be manipulated to enhance change.

Chapter seven, the final chapter, weaves together the discussions that have been had in earlier chapters and conclusions are drawn.

## **Chapter 2: Research design and methodology**

### **Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology. First it begins with an intellectual autobiography, a discussion of my position in relation to the research. This section establishes the rationale for the research and reflects how the research has been part of a personal journey of discovery and awareness. A participatory research paradigm is established. The second section details the research purpose, objectives, and questions, while the third section discusses the focus and locus of the research. The fourth section discusses ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology within a participatory paradigm, and establishes an overarching participatory action research framework. The fifth section outlines the research strategy and the sixth section discusses the multiple methods employed within the participatory action research framework including literature review, interviews, autoethnographic reflection, student work, and student game. The final sections of the chapter discuss approaches to data analysis, and research trustworthiness. Note that the action research project referred to in this chapter is described in detail in chapters five and six.

### **Intellectual autobiography and research paradigm**

My childhood included experiences that were then and to this day remain commonplace in Aotearoa New Zealand: farming traditions and family celebrations, sailing, camping, fishing and tramping. As a consequence, I came to think of my individual identity (as many people do) in terms of my family, and the natural environment that I lived in (albeit an identity based on myths explored later in chapter 4). I have a strong sense of belonging in Aotearoa New Zealand, and with this sense of belonging I understand there is also a responsibility akin to Turangawaewae, a sense of obligation.

My formal education included training as a primary school teacher while completing a four year Bachelor of Education degree from Waikato University in Sociology and Education. I also completed a Master of Science (with honours) in Resource Management from Lincoln University, with a focus on philosophy and politics. Much of this formal education was critical of human relationships with each other and the environment.

I have come to understand an ecological interconnectedness of all things and that humanity is part of a very complex and dynamic natural world. I have also come to understand that traditional ways of anthropocentric thinking is the root cause of many problems that humanity currently faces. As Leopold poignantly observed, people in the developed world lack an environmental ethic (Leopold, 1987, p. 563) and there is an urgent need to rethink the position of humans in the developed world within (and not apart from) nature. I agree with Capra's observation that dominant ways of thinking have outlived their usefulness (Capra, 1982) and Orr's challenge that although current generations have inherited significant wealth, they also have inherited a sense of ecological disconnection (Orr, 1994).

My experiences as a university student in the late 1970's left me with an enduring conviction that social action could bring about political change. Of particular note, my involvement in anti-apartheid protests associated with the Springbok rugby tour of 1981 had a profound and lasting impact on me. This was because in joining the social movement that challenged the tour I learned that not only was change possible, but that the power for change was found in communities.

A sense of belonging bringing obligation, coupled with a conviction that public participation including civil disobedience has a legitimate role in democracy are of particular importance to this research. This is because I have been formed by these experiences and am an active player in the social context I find myself within. The research has grown from these experiences, and understanding of the world around me that has resulted from these experiences.

Throughout the research I have been employed by CPIT as a Senior Academic Staff Member on the Outdoor Programmes where I have worked for over a decade. I teach

primarily within the BRecEd, with teaching commitments in education for sustainability, research, policy and planning, and outdoor activities that include climbing and avalanche studies. As an educator, my interest lies in the theory and methodology behind challenging learners (particularly young adults) to consider alternative ways of thinking and acting to those they are most accustomed to as a result of their social and cultural context.

However, educating for sustainability has included much experimentation and my development as a teacher around sustainability has occurred in an informal manner that Brookfield (1995) would likely describe as critically reflective pedagogy; where teaching practice has evolved as a direct result of interaction with students. This pedagogy is a political action that sees me recognise myself as an active participant in learning together with students rather than an objective or neutral facilitator of learning.

These teaching experiences have led me to believe that the pervasive understanding of what constitutes outdoor education does not provide a context conducive for education for sustainability. Primarily this is because environmental education, a historical component of outdoor education, has faded to the point where little evidence of environmental education now exists in outdoor education experiences, particularly those in senior secondary schooling. As a consequence, I regard outdoor education as an integral part of the dominant social paradigm which means the context of outdoor education is such that sustainability can only be framed in a manner cognisant of that context. I hold that outdoor educators need to consider sustainability as a pivotal element of the curriculum, and then through outdoor education pedagogy, enhance education for sustainability through learning that takes place in the outdoors.

However this is a daunting prospect, for the tendency is to remain entrenched in our dominant position and grasp fragments of sustainability that fit with our understanding of outdoor education. Envisioning outdoor education framed by sustainability is a paradigm shift, and offers a very small glimpse of the magnitude of the challenge that faces our modern developed society.

Anthropologists such as Ronald Wright (2004) have observed that major paradigm shifts have historically been driven by cataclysmic social or environmental events such as war or famine as opposed to popular choice driven through social movements. This suggests that in the absence of a cataclysmic social or environmental event a paradigm adjustment relating to sustainability is perhaps visionary rather than practical; for the time being.

In trying to come to terms with what this means for my own thinking and teaching, I have found useful guidance from authors such as Diamond (2005), Wright (2004) and Heinberg (2007). These authors all observe that societies thrive or collapse on the basis of the cumulative effect of everyday decisions that people make, and that a moral imperative for individual action towards sustainability exists because as individuals we are all responsible.

A moral imperative to act draws the issue of sustainability and social change down to a personal level carrying personal responsibility. I do not question that our developed world has become a burden to the ecological landscape it inhabits; nor do I question the significance of the problems of human overpopulation, habitat destruction and species extinction, resource depletion, and climate change described in the Millennium ecosystem assessment report (UNESCO, 2004). My position is that these conditions have been well established and that there is no choice, particularly for those of us in the developed world, but to try to live in a less destructive manner.

However, I consider that the moral imperative to act does not solely derive from internal motivation for there are also external factors to consider. We live and work in communities and actions within communities are social by nature. Our actions impact on others and those of others impact on us. There exists a feedback loop; that although I might sense a moral imperative to take action, I also receive feedback for those actions from others. It may even be that I seek confirmation for who I am and how I should be, finding out about myself through interaction with the community that I am part of.

Diamond (2005), Wright (2004) and Heinberg (2007) all express the existence of a great human capacity for change, coupled with an optimism that we can change, albeit with a caveat. For example Heinberg reflects:

“If ever in the past a heroic collective effort was called for, it is needed even more now. Do I think it's going to happen? Frankly, it's not likely. Is it possible in principle? Yes, just barely. As long as there is life and breath, we should be working toward that end. If nothing else, we'll feel better about ourselves and about life in general if we at least try.” (Heinberg, 2007, p. 140)

I also find myself in this position of intellectual pessimism coupled with emotional optimism that is alluded to by Heinberg. Intellectual pessimism relates to the pervasiveness of the dominant paradigm including the dominant understanding of outdoor education described later in chapter three. However emotional optimism can be found in discussion within chapters four, five, and six about the relationship between discourse, identity and organisational change that argues that as individuals within communities we can make a difference to the world around us.

My desire was that the research would make a difference in a practical sense, in line with Snook's view that "... the point of research is to improve the situation of human beings." (Snook, 1999, p. 73) But such a desire is political by nature. This is because the choice of this research topic, the research paradigm, the participatory action methods that unfolded, and the conclusions drawn from the research cannot be separated from the background and perspective of the researcher, such as those that I have described earlier. This is because the values inherent in my background and perspective are woven deeply into this research; what is observed and what is told, together with what is not observed at all. As the often cited Lather observed, “just as there is no neutral education ..., there can be no neutral research” (1986, p. 257). However in qualitative research this failure to be neutral has developed into the positive recognition of the political role of research.

The politicisation of qualitative research resulting in social change based upon values such as social and ecological justice have become desired outcomes, and even celebrated by qualitative researchers in recent years. Influential authors Denzin and Lincoln pose the question “Today there is a pressing need to show how the practices of qualitative research can help change the world in positive ways” and they pose the

question “How do we move the current generation of critical, interpretive thought and inquiry beyond rage to progressive political action, to theory and method that connect politics, pedagogy, and ethics to action in the world?” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. x)

The discussion in this section has traversed a sense of belonging to a place through community, experiences of social change through collective action, and commitment to transformative learning leading to paradigm shift. These understandings are hallmarks of the participatory paradigm described by Heron and Reason (1997), and recognised by influential authors Guba and Lincoln (2005) as the fifth significant paradigm distinct from the traditionally recognised positivist, postpositivist, critical theory and constructivist paradigms<sup>1</sup>.

Heron and Reason (1997) describe the participatory paradigm as a world view that allows people to understand that they are part of and not separate from the world around them, or placed on earth to occupy a privileged position over other beings by a transcendent and all-knowing creator. The participatory paradigm allows for collaborative forms of enquiry within a living world, where the obligations and rights that living demands are pivotal. The key distinction that Heron and Reason make is that the participatory paradigm is fundamentally experiential, that what we experience defines how we are and what we know.

However I also find myself taking critical stances regarding class and power (particularly with regard to the enduring impacts of colonisation on Māori) which draws from the ontological position of critical theory. This suggestion of blurred boundaries between research paradigms with commonalities is well described by Guba and Lincoln (2005) in discussion on accommodation and commensurability. They observe that it is possible to blend the elements of one paradigm with another and that:

“This is especially so if the models (paradigms) share axiomatic elements that are similar, or that resonate strongly between them. So, for instance, *positivism* and *postpositivism* are clearly commensurable. In the same vein, elements of *interpretivist/postmodern*

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<sup>1</sup> It is acknowledged that there exist many different world views and that not all research paradigms (particularly indigenous research paradigms) will likely be encapsulated by the five described by Guba and Lincoln (2005).



critical theory, constructivist and participative inquiry, fit comfortably together.” (2005, p. 201)

The discussions that follow primarily derive from a participatory paradigm as a basis for the ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology that underpin this research. Blurred boundaries do not clearly separate paradigms and the position I have taken at times departs from a participatory paradigm.

### **Research purpose, objectives, and questions**

The purpose of this study is to add to the body of knowledge relating to the current and potential contribution outdoor education makes to contemporary culture within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. More specifically, it is anticipated that this research will assist the practice of outdoor education move towards being a more effective medium for sustainability education through firstly contributing to an increased understanding of the tensions created through sustainability education juxtaposed to traditional subjects, teaching methods, and institutional structure that act to normalise neo-liberal and colonial values; and secondly, exploring mechanisms to rectify these issues.

The research has two objectives. These are:

1. To contextualise political, social and cultural issues relating to outdoor education and their historical and theoretical analysis.
2. To develop a knowledge base through interviews, document analysis and an action research project and evaluation.

Given the very broad objectives outlined, the research approach needed to focus on outdoor education in a holistic manner, treating it as the complex social construction that it is. The notion of social complexity, multiplicity and interconnectedness has been compared to (and attributed the metaphor of) the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988). In such a context, there is no ideal speaker-listener relationship, homogeneous community or imposed decisions from a visible hierarchy of power.

The complexity described by Deleuze and Guattari (1988) is problematic in deciding where to begin the research or deciding when the research would include what needed to be included and there exists the risk of the research becoming an endless web of investigation. However, if the research were to focus on one aspect of sustainability education in outdoor education, then it would become the very thing it was trying to challenge; that being an ad-hoc and compartmentalised approach characteristic of scientific rationality to the complex issue of the relationship of people to the planet.

In an effort to mitigate these dilemmas, five broad research questions were proposed. These are:

1. What is sustainability education within an outdoor education context and what does it seek to achieve?
2. What is currently happening regarding the delivery of sustainability education within outdoor education?
3. What is the social context of outdoor education in Aotearoa New Zealand?
4. What can we learn from overseas theory and practice?
5. What can we do to make teaching sustainability education in an outdoor education context more effective in Aotearoa New Zealand?

### **Focus and locus of the research**

The focus and locus of the research has been both general and specific. The five research questions listed above seek to explore the place of education for sustainability in outdoor education in the broadest sense. This encompasses curriculum, assessment, vocational interpretations and influences, and cross cultural interpretations of outdoor education. This broad exploration has relied upon interviews, literature, a small number of school visits to meet with students, and has been focussed on secondary and tertiary outdoor education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

However the research questions also seek to explore education for sustainability within outdoor education in more detail. As a result, the research has also had the specific focus of the BRecEd and engaged with the programme as a microcosm of the wider outdoor education context. This engagement has included detailing the

experiences of students expressed through their work, exploring the identity of the programme through marketing and other forms of promotion and the identity of individuals teaching and studying within the programme, and change agency.

The decision to focus a significant part of the research on the BRecEd aligns with the use of case study in qualitative research. Case study is a broad term and does not relate to a particular methodological choice but rather to a choice of what is to be studied, and according to Stake (2005) is "...defined by interest in an individual case, not by the methods of inquiry used" (p. 443). I have worked on the BRecEd since it was established at CPIT, and have an intrinsic interest in education for sustainability in that context, an interest that existed before the design of this formal research began as highlighted in earlier discussion.

An intrinsic interest in a particular subject forms the basis for one of the three types of case study outlined by Stake (the others being an instrumental case study that facilitates our understanding of something else; and multiple or collective case study that includes a focus on several or multiple cases).

Stake observed that case studies draw upon a range of data in order to think about the case in different ways, but draw upon that range at the same time. Stake suggested the following range of data be considered:

1. the nature of the case, particularly its activity and functioning;
2. its historical background;
3. its physical setting;
4. other contexts, such as economic, political, legal, and aesthetic;
5. other cases through which this case is recognized; and
6. those informants through whom the case can be known." (Stake, 2005, p. 447)

Thematic issues are the focus in qualitative research involving case study. The *key* focal thread running throughout this research has been paradigm shift, how individuals and organisations move and adjust towards sustainability. This focal thread draws both the broad exploration and specific programme case study together into a cohesive discussion about social change, how it occurs, how individuals and organisations respond, and the difficulties that eventuate.

The focus also lies on me, how I have experienced change as a teacher, the strategies I have employed, the difficulties I have encountered, and the engagement I have had with education for sustainability within outdoor education in the tertiary sector.

In researching the place of education for sustainability within the context of outdoor education, I have also explored the relationship between outdoor education and colonisation. This is because social justice inherent in sustainability and the place of indigenous peoples, their knowledge and culture are interwoven concepts and cannot be considered in isolation.

### **Research ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology**

Although notions of knowledge, the circumstances through which knowledge is generated, and paradigms underpinning the generation of knowledge are highly contested (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), researchers are expected to declare their philosophical position relating to their research. Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that research paradigms should be considered as foundational beliefs about the nature of reality and how it is understood. In order to discuss the different research positions taken by researchers these authors proposed three key questions relating to the ontology, epistemology and methodology of the paradigm being discussed.

The first question relates to the ontological position of the researcher, and seeks to find out the nature and form of reality and, to what extent, can be known about it (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Heron and Reason (1997) suggest that the ontological position taken within a participatory paradigm is characterised by subjective-objective experiential knowing. By this they mean that the mind and the cosmos are entwined in what they call a co-creative dance, where through active engagement with the world around us, we meet that world as the other mediated by ourselves. Heron and Reason (1997) also note that knowing is something that occurs in social settings and “presupposes mutual participative awareness” (¶ 11). They maintain that such awareness is dependant on common understanding of language and the experience of shared meanings.

The second question relates to the epistemological position of the researcher and relates to the relationship between the knower (or prospective knower) and what can be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Heron and Reason (1997) suggest that the knower within a subjective-objective reality present within a participatory paradigm is likely to articulate their reality in four separate ways: experiential, presentational, propositional, and practical. Experiential knowing refers to direct encounters with the world around us; presentational knowing emerges from the experiential knowing as intuition in the form of music, verbal vocal and other art forms; propositional knowing is the knowing found in descriptions and expressed in written or spoken statements; and practical knowing that relates to the knowledge of how to do something and measured as skill or competence. According to Heron and Reason, the action contained in propositional knowing encapsulates the other forms of knowing, enhancing learning about the other forms of knowing while at the same time being grounded within them.

In addition to these four separate ways of knowing, Heron and Reason suggest that critical subjectivity is a reflexive process that links experiential knowing to the other processes. This reflexive process is important, because we need to ground our knowing in the world we experience, but at the same time remember that our knowing of that experience is distorted by the perceptions and beliefs that limit our knowing. Because personal knowing occurs in the context of language, culture and experiences within communities, critical subjectivity also requires attention to the shared experiences that generate that knowing.

This leads to the third question which relates to the methodological position and relates to how the researcher will go about finding out whatever it was they set out to discover (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Heron and Reason (1997) suggest that within a participatory paradigm, because the methodology needs to engage the reflexive process of critical subjectivity on an individual and community basis, researchers need to employ cooperative and collaborative forms of inquiry. They explain that in the participatory paradigm:

“...people collaborate to define the questions they wish to explore and the methodology for that exploration (propositional knowing). Together or separately they apply this methodology in the world of their practice (practical knowing), which leads to new forms

of encounter with their world (experiential knowing); and they find ways to represent this experience in significant patterns (presentational knowing), which feeds into a revised propositional understanding of the originating questions. Thus, coresearchers engage together in cycling several times through the four forms of knowing to enrich their congruence; that is, to refine the way they elevate and consummate each other, and to deepen the complementary way they are grounded in each other.” (Heron & Reason, 1997, ¶3)

Further to the three questions posed by Guba and Lincoln (1994) discussed above, Heron and Reason (1997) have suggested there is a need to ask a fourth question that relates to the axiology or values that underpin research. The question they pose asks: what is intrinsically valuable or worthwhile in human life, or more specifically what sort of knowledge has value in its own right? They answer this question by thinking about what will enhance the human prospect, what they call human flourishing. They maintain that:

“This kind of flourishing is practical knowing: knowing how to choose and act – hierarchically, cooperatively, autonomously – to enhance personal and social fulfilment and that of the eco-networks of which we are part.” And “...practical knowing is an end in itself, and intellectual knowing is of instrumental value in supporting practical excellence.” (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. para.60)

This means that the key purpose of research within a participatory paradigm is to undertake participatory action to further the notion of human flourishing in the broadest sense. This also means that research within the participatory paradigm has a transformative agenda within the context of the wider social and ecological setting, an agenda commensurate with the view expressed by Snook (1999) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005) earlier in this chapter.

Cooperative and collaborative inquiry described by Heron and Reason (1997) encapsulates an extensive array of participatory action orientated research approaches<sup>2</sup>. Participatory action research is one approach within this array and forms the substantive methodological approach employed in this research.

Participatory action research is described by Kemmis and MacTaggart (2005) as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> Heron and Reason (1997) cite research reporting some 35 varieties of participatory action research identified at that time.

“At its best then, participatory action research is a social process of collaborative learning realized by groups of people who join together in changing the practices through which they interact in a shared social world in which, for better or worse, we live with the consequences of one another’s actions.” (p. 563)

Participatory action research is most often described as a series of cycles where each cycle includes planning to do something, implementing the plan as an action and observing the results, and then reflecting upon the process and consequences of the action that were observed. The cycle is usually then repeated. Kemmis and MacTaggart (2005) maintain that each of the stages is best approached collaboratively by the participants in the research process, and that participatory action research should be thought of as a collaborative undertaking. However, they make the important observation that even though participatory action research should be considered a collaborative undertaking, in reality the reflection stage often constitutes an individual reflection upon collaborative action and often occurs in isolation. This point has important ramifications relating to emancipation within action research, particularly in regard to negotiated realities, and these issues will be explored in depth later in chapter 5.

Kemmis and MacTaggart (2005) observe the emergence of what they call critical participatory action research, where participatory action research takes a broad view of the relationship between education and social change. Critical participatory action research offers a way of working with “individualism, disenchantment and the dominance of instrumental reason” and also “creates a way of reinterpreting our own views of action research as they develop practically, theoretically, and pedagogically over time” (2005, p. 563). The influence of critical participatory action research will be found in later discussion, particularly discussion relating to the action research project described in part two of Chapter five.

Kemmis and MacTaggart (2005) identify seven key features of participatory action research. These are as follows:

1. Participatory action research is a social process (that explores the relationship between the individual and the social);

2. Participatory action research is participatory (where participants are encouraged to critically reflect upon their understanding and identity relating to change);
3. Participatory action research is practical and collaborative (where participants work together in reconstructing their social reality and the actions that create that reality);
4. Participatory action research is emancipatory (a political action aimed at challenging social, cultural or other structures that act to limit the development of individuals within their communities);
5. Participatory action research is critical (aimed at recognising the constraints imbedded in the way social groups communicate that maintain power and hegemony);
6. Participatory action research is reflexive (Where groups transform their practices through sequential cycles of critical and self-critical action and reflection);
7. Participatory action research aims to transform both theory and practice (where both theory and practice are considered at the same time, and each individual is seen as an agent of change).

The following discussion develops the specific model of participatory action research that was employed.

### **Research Strategy**

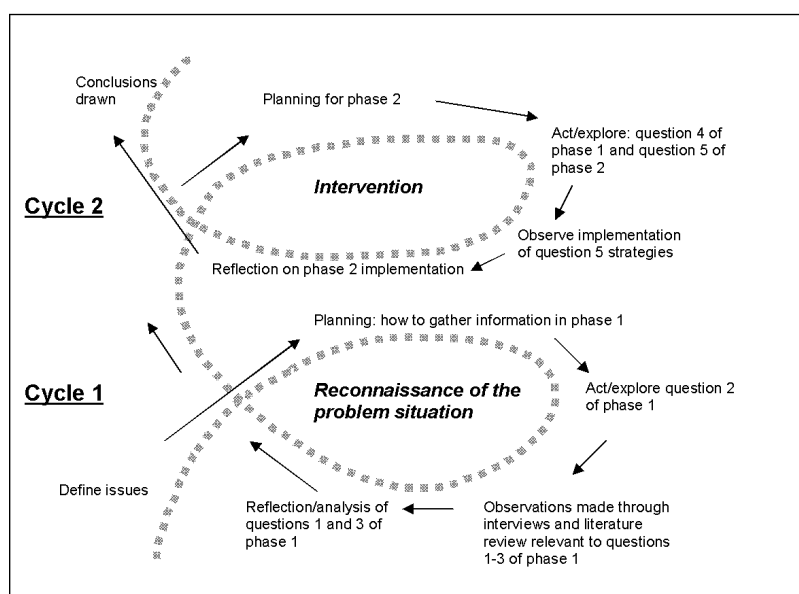
The five research questions that underpin this research described earlier were incorporated into two different phases of the participatory action research. Phase one was associated with research questions one through four and research methods employed comprised of literature search, interviews, student work, student game, and autoethnography. Phase two was associated with research question five, and the research method employed comprised of an action research project.

The research plan encapsulating phase one and two have been based loosely on the work of Cardno and Piggot-Irvine (1994). This model of action research involves



cycles of sequential activity; these being reconnaissance, intervention and evaluation. Each of the cycles contains the four stages of plan, act, observe and reflect.

How the research questions of phase one and phase two are distributed through the two-cycle model is presented in Figure 2.1. It is important to note that although Figure 2.1 depicts a corkscrew containing two cycles, phase one and two of the research are not aligned sequentially with cycle one and cycle two of the model. The two phases are mutually supportive, entwined together and inseparable with the literature search, interviews, student work, and autoethnography providing a theoretical basis supporting the action research and the action research providing a framework for the literature search, interviews, student work, and autoethnography.



**Figure 2.1:** The conceptual model of the research plan based loosely on the work of Cardno and Piggot-Irvine (1994).

Emergent design is an important aspect of any action research strategy. This is because as Kemmis and MacTaggart (2005) observe, action research spirals are in reality not distinct cycles of planning, acting and observing, and reflecting. Rather, the stages overlap and “initial plans quickly become obsolete in the light of learning from experience. In reality, the process is likely to be more fluid, open, and responsive.” (p. 563)

Emergent design takes into consideration one of the key elements identified by Checkland (1999) in his influential work on soft system approaches (a methodology within participatory action research). Checkland's work developed in recognition of complex social structures such as the rhizome metaphor (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988) mentioned earlier and sought to keep research as vague and wide ranging for as long as possible to ensure that conclusions were not jumped to or that in focusing on some utopian future the current situation was not ignored.

Emergent design has important ramifications for the researcher because research methodology and related methods are considered iterative, unfolding as the research progresses. This unfolding of methodology and methods meant that this methodology chapter took shape over the duration of the research and was one of the last chapters to be completed. An example of the unfolding methodology was the decision to incorporate student work, a decision that was not made until almost two years after the initial ethics application process to both institutions was completed. Emergent design features strongly in the evolution of the methods that are discussed in the next section.

The methods employed in phase one of the research are described in the following section. The specific methods employed in phase two (the action research project) are described in chapter five and six.

### **Research methods**

This section describes the multiple research methods that have been employed in phase one within the participatory action research framework. These are discussed in no particular order, and although presented as distinct from each other have in practice been closely entwined together. For example the discussion on secondary sources refers to people who have recommended material and conversely some people have been contacted for discussion or even interviewed on the basis of what they have written.

### *Literature and other secondary sources*

Secondary sources of data have been collected, collated and incorporated into discussion throughout the chapters that follow. In keeping with the focus given to emergent design within the research, this process has been both an evolving process and ongoing throughout the duration of the research.

The location and incorporation of secondary sources has been an evolving process and has not followed what might be considered a systematic pattern. Rather, the location and incorporation of secondary sources has been in line with those defined by Kelsey (1999); where she admits to being a bit of a magpie and has collected interesting relevant material as she comes across it over time; is passed relevant material by friends and acquaintances; picks up relevant material from conferences, speeches and other current media; and follows an eclectic array of threads that appear throughout her research.

Secondary sources that have been used in this research include but are not limited to parliamentary speeches, books, peer and non peer reviewed journals, manuscripts of audio/radio broadcasts, public appearances, cartoons, magazines and newspapers, and a variety of web based material. Kelsey celebrates such an approach noting that to rely solely on academic peer reviewed literature is to rely on often outdated ideas because of the time associated with the peer review process (Kelsey, 1999). Further, the use of public ideas has been critical to this research because these ideas signal a standpoint in relation to sustainability taken by people in the public arena (as opposed to academics in peer reviewed literature). Such standpoints have allowed for a wider and more complex analysis grounded in the reality of the speaker or the community they represent.

The use and analysis of secondary material, also in line with Kelsey's approach, has been directed by the research framework. What found a place in the discussion relates to what was required to explore the conversation being had at that time. Time is an important factor here because research on social change must take into account the past, the present and the future as social constructs that are in a state of flux and not static concepts that can be easily defined (McLeod & Thomson, 2009).

EndNoteX2 software provided by both CPIT and the University of Canterbury has been used to record and manage the sources collected. EndNoteX2 has also functioned to provide in-text citations and to compile the reference table in line with the version of APA fifth style guide employed by EndNoteX2.

### *Interviews*

Semi-structured interviews of approximately 90 minutes duration and focussed around a small number of key questions were conducted to allow for stories to be told within a framework that gave focus to participants but did not overly restrict responses. It was hoped that semi-structured interviews would take these important considerations into account and also allow for individuals to share experiences that may not have had a common context.

In keeping with an emergent research design, snowball sampling process (where those interviewed were asked to recommend others to be interviewed) was employed in order to allow the field of interview participants to grow organically. However, a possible limitation of snowball sampling was that a diverse range of perspectives might not be canvassed (where participants of a particular view recommended others with a similar view). When and where it became apparent that snowball sampling was failing to include a particular perspective, additional participants were identified by the researcher and approached for an interview. Several interview candidates were also recommended to the researcher by people who were not part of the interview process. In this way pragmatism helped to ensure a wide variety of perspectives were included in the interview process. Eventually the perspectives presented by participants became repetitive and further interviewing was considered unnecessary.

Over the course of the study, 24 interviews were undertaken including participants from the Ministry of Education, current and retired outdoor and environmental education academics in the tertiary sector, current and retired outdoor secondary education teachers, outdoor instructors, counsellors using the outdoors as mediums for Māori youth-at-risk to learn about Māori culture, Māori academics with an interest in

developing outdoor education for Māori, graduates of the BRecEd in teaching and instruction positions, senior managers (including the environmental manager) at CPIT, and professional adventurers. Both international and national perspectives were canvassed through the interview process (with two interviews conducted in Australia and the twenty two in Aotearoa New Zealand). Additional email exchanges were undertaken with academics in Scotland, England, USA and Canada.

Interview participants were provided with an information sheet and letter of consent prior to the interview taking place. Signed letters of consent were retained on file. For the most part, interviews were arranged to take place at the location of the participants choosing. This meant that interviews took place in a variety of locations and circumstances. A brief memo was produced following each interview that identified and described the place of interview, together with a short analysis of the interaction between the researcher and participant from the perspective of researcher (for example whether participants were able to focus on the interview or were occupied with other duties such as taking phone calls). All participants were extended a koha (or gift) of a bottle of wine for taking the time to participate in the interview.

Interviews were taped using a cassette tape recorder and remote table microphone (also known as a flat microphone). A digital backup recording was also made using a micro digital voice recorder in case the cassette tape recording failed. Transcribing of audio tape cassettes to word documents was undertaken by the researcher using a foot-operated Dictaphone. Transcripts were typed verbatim with no grammatical or other changes made by the researcher. Pauses and other non verbal signals, such as laughter were observed where possible and included in the transcript. Typed transcripts were returned to the participant for confirmation that what had been recorded by the researcher was what had been intended by the participant. Transcripts were returned to the participant as a digital attachment by email. A spread sheet recorded interview dates, dates that transcripts were returned to participants, and participant contact details. Completed digital transcripts were filed on a password protected computer, while hardcopies of transcripts were filed in a locked cabinet.

Information sheets and consent forms for interviews are included in the appendices.

### *Autoethnography*

Earlier discussions in this chapter have established that as researcher I have situated myself firmly within the research I am undertaking, an active player in the research rather than occupying a position of observer of events unfolding before me. In short, I wanted to improve my own practice. Reflecting upon this position of player is an important thread within the research, and my reflections as a player are woven throughout the following chapters to help explain concepts and illustrate problems and solutions on a personal as well as theoretical level, to ground the research in my lived experience. Paying attention to reflective process is also of critical importance to case study (Stake, 2005) and the action research project (Cardno & Piggot-Irvine, 1994) discussed earlier.

Methodology that explains the position of researchers describing their own perspectives and experiences in the context of their research is called autoethnography and constitutes an effort to draw the reader into the researcher's world. Autoethnography sees the researcher describe their own experiences in a manner that sees them held within a cultural context, albeit one where shifting relationships and perspectives are dynamic rather than constant. Holman Jones (2005b) describes the process clearly:

"Autoethnography writes in a world of flux and movement - between story and context, writer and reader, crisis and denouement. It creates charged moments of clarity, connection, and change." (2005b, p. 764)

Connection is an important point here, for autoethnography, like action research described earlier, provides another mechanism for the researcher to link theory and practice, to explore the space between the two, and to draw action into the research setting. However, this process is underpinned by what Holman Jones (2005b) calls a triple crisis of representation, legitimation and praxis, "...part of an ongoing dialogue between self and world about questions of ontology, epistemology, method, and praxis: What is the nature of knowing, what is the relationship between knower and known, how do we share what we know and with what effect?" (Holman Jones, 2005b, p. 766)

Through the reflections of the researcher's lived experience, the reader glimpses the reality of the researcher grappling with these questions, how the questions have manifested themselves within the researcher's world, and how the researcher has reacted to them. Autoethnography considers such glimpses of lived experience as a way to understanding, for they constitute a brief encounter with relationships between the individual, community, and environment. These relationships are of critical importance in qualitative research. This is because autoethnographic experiences can be seen as a means to highlight the subjective and contextual nature of identity, research, and cultural interpretation (Holman Jones, 2005b).

As with action research, action within autoethnographic research is about change; and action is therefore a political undertaking. In an eloquent explanation of the position taken by the researcher and the role of the autobiographical within research, Holman Jones (2005b) establishes the political nature of the autobiographical.

"Setting a scene, telling a story, weaving intricate connections among life and art, experience and theory, evocation and explanation ... and then letting go, hoping for readers who will bring the same careful attention to your words in the context of their own lives.

Making a text present. Demanding attention and participation. Implicating all involved. Refusing closure or categorization.

Witnessing experience and testifying about power without foreclosure - of pleasure, of difference, of efficacy.

Believing that words matter and writing toward the moment when the point of creating autoethnographic texts *is* to change the world." (p. 765)

Citing Olesen and influential authors Denzin and Lincoln, Holman Jones observes the challenge of autoethnography is to move towards "progressive political action, to theory and method that connects politics, pedagogy, and ethics to action in the world." (Holman Jones, 2005b, p. 767) However the dilemma for the researcher is encapsulated in the question: How much of myself do I weave into the research and how much do I leave out?

I have used autoethnography in a conservative way, similar to the work of Duncan (2004). This has seen autoethnography as a mechanism for me in my role as researcher to show how I made sense of the world within the context of the research.

In this way, autoethnography has provided a supporting role rather than being a central focus of the research. The process of autoethnographic reporting has not occurred in isolation but is both supported by, and supports the collection of other data through the methods listed in this section. Importantly autoethnography has provided a means of triangulation, providing for both confirmation and challenge to opinions formulated by the researcher throughout the research process.

Duncan also identified another important role for autoethnography and that was since few theories existed in her field at the time of her research, she “did not set out to test an established theory; rather, the autoethnographic process allowed [her] to explore and develop theories for improving the practice ... that might be tested later.” (Duncan, 2004, p. 33) I find myself in a similar position.

In the following chapters I have included reflections wherever there has been an issue of importance to me as player within the research. This rationale for the inclusion of reflections is based upon the assumption that in the telling, the reader might come to understand how these issues were received, regarded, and actioned in the context of the wider community where the research took place.

### ***Student work***

The theoretical analysis of research questions associated with the research coupled with my personal experiences working with students for the last decade had me think about how students experienced insight, interpreted issues, and grappled with problems related to sustainability education within an outdoor education context.

Within the BRecEd, students documented their perspective of their experiences in the course of their studies through assignments such as essays, reports and reflective journals (including assessed and non assessed work). These assignments are directly related to the learning outcomes of the respective courses which the students are enrolled in.



I have used extracts taken from some of these assignments to give real life examples to wider theoretical analysis. The extracts were particularly relevant to chapter three dealing with problems relating to sustainability education, and chapter four presenting solutions relating to the development of a sense of belonging.

Examples of students' social and environmental action projects have been incorporated throughout the research. These experiential projects have been undertaken by students in their final year of study and are projects they have thought of and designed themselves. Few constraints are placed on the students and funding is available to them if they need it.

The application to the ethics committees of both institutions sought approval to use extracts taken from students assignment work to demonstrate in a practical way how students came to deal with issues related to sustainability education as presented to them within the BRecEd.

The work used came primarily from two core sustainability education courses that I teach within the BRecEd at CPIT: AROE 600 Social environmental values; and AROE 700 Social environmental action. Extracts of often several sentences or paragraphs written by students were selected to illustrate a particular solution, problem or issue relating to the course work as it had been experienced by the student. Photographs taken by students and submitted as part of course work have also been included.

A small pool of students' work has been collected over the last decade. For example, work has been collected for external and internal moderation purposes and has been retained on file. Other work such as third year student reports of social environmental action project work has been retained so that current students can access the work of previous students in an effort to improve action projects through amassing a student body of knowledge associated with problem solving, funding sources, or other problems that might have arisen. Other examples of students' work were encountered as ongoing assessment took place. Students were not approached for consent about using their work until after the course (for which their work was prepared) had been completed.

As described in the proposal, the research includes discussion about the curriculum, the content, the assessment, and the pedagogy of sustainability education within the BRecEd. The assignments set for students and the research is linked directly through the action research, and through my own teaching and learning in the subject area.

There exist a number of precedents where research in outdoor education has incorporated students' perspectives through interviews, journals and assignment work. For example Law (2003) used reflective journal extracts in his PhD research on the place of experiential teaching approaches in environmental education for pre-service teachers; and Martin (2005) and Thomas (2005) used reflective extracts taken from student's journal assignments in their respective research to explore different aspects of outdoor education methodology and pedagogy relating to sense of place within Australian outdoor education university programmes.

Influential author Georgakopoulou (2006) has called the types of reflections described above as small stories, "... an umbrella-term that covers the gamut of under-represented narrative activities, such as tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, shared (known) events, but also allusions to tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusals to tell" (p. 123). He suggests such stories are small compared to lengthy interviews and provide alternative ways of thinking to grand narratives. Small stories play a critical role in thinking about identity and provide an insight into what he describes as "... the messier business of living and telling" (Georgakopoulou, 2006, p. 129)

All students whose work has been used in the following chapters have been asked for permission, received an information sheet and consent form. Students whose work has been used were shown the particular sentences to be used in the thesis, and they had right to withdraw the work if they desired (although none did). If students changed their minds and chose to withdraw their work, they needed to do so within four weeks of their giving consent.

I have been fascinated with the way students have grappled with the issues of who they are and what they believe in and these issues have been explored in a theoretical

and practical way throughout the thesis. These reflections add a deep richness and context to the theorising that could not otherwise be achieved.

However, the incorporation of students' work sees the roles of me as researcher and me as teacher become entwined. It has been impossible for me to remain remote as researcher when occupying the position as teacher, or likewise as researcher to not frame the teaching I undertake. For example long before the research began I had started to collect interesting reflections or communications that described the experiences of students, and reflecting upon these I had begun to modify my teaching in line with Brookfield's critically reflective pedagogies (Brookfield, 1995). The intent of such reflection and modification of practice constituted an effort to help students overcome the problems they identified over time while engaging with the change process inherent in education for sustainability.

Information sheets and consent forms for student work is included in the appendices.

### **Data analysis**

Atkinson and Delamont (2005) argue that "As qualitative research has become increasingly professionalized and increasingly subject to explicit codification and reflection, it seems to have become increasingly fragmented" (p. 821). Fragmentation and loss of a holistic perspective comprise significant problems for sustainability because the connectedness of all things is ignored, and it is no coincidence that influential authors such as Capra (1982) and Merchant (1980) have associated such problems with the positivist world views that this research seeks to change.

It has been important for this research to employ what Atkinson and Delamont have referred to as "analytic strategies that reflect and respect the intrinsic complexity of social organization, the forms of social action, and the conventions of social representation" (2005, p. 836). This means that data has been treated as a social phenomenon or form of social action (Atkinson & Delamont, 2005); not as an abstract construction removed from any social context.

An inductive approach to data analysis characteristic of emergent design has been employed. This means that hypotheses have not been formed prior to analysis being undertaken, and that "...what becomes important to analyze emerges from the data itself, out of a process of inductive reasoning" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 127). An inductive approach has seen the focus of the research itself evolve over time, that evolution both driving and being driven by the collection and analysis of data.

The way knowledge is created is contested and an inductive approach is not without critics. For example Haig (n.d.) notes that extreme versions of the popular naïve inductivism (where observed facts are collected in a theory-free manner) claim "observed facts can be known infallibly; that observations are made in an entirely theory-free manner; or that empirical generalizations can be secured through the use of a strongly justified principle of induction." (Haig, n.d., p. 3)

However, no such claims are made here, and a moderate stance regarding inductivism is maintained. Moderate forms of naïve inductivism can be defended according to Haig because the researcher recognises that: "Observed facts can be established reliably, if fallibly; theory has to be used to guide observations, and theoretical terms can be used to report observational statements without threatening the reliability of those statements; and, principles of induction can be given an adequate justification on pragmatic grounds." (Haig, n.d., p. 3)

The position I have taken regarding sustainability discussed earlier in this chapter (where the need to move towards more sustainable lifestyles underpins my world view) is important to consider in the context of data analysis. This is because *Epoche*, described by Katz as "...a process that the researcher engages in to remove, or at least become aware of the prejudices, viewpoints, or assumptions regarding the phenomenon under investigation" (as cited in Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 123) requires the researcher to remain alert to how their own position is manifested in the analysis process. Working with others has helped this process of self awareness.

Data analysis has occurred on a variety of levels and in a variety of ways, but generally collection and analysis has looked to explore the lived experience characteristic of phenomenological approaches but not in a manner that favours

individual experiences over social action and organisation. The following strategies of data analysis have endeavored to reflect this perspective.

The process of keeping a research journal and integrating reflections contained within that journal into the research in autoethnographic style sees me as researcher treating my own reflections as empirical material alongside other empirical material (interview transcripts and students work) collected.

No systematic approach has been used in the analysis of the empirical material collected. Rather, I have repeatedly read my research journals, interview transcripts and examples of students work in an effort to identify key themes, patterns, paradoxes, and dilemmas, and attempted to interpret these readings within the lived world as it has been expressed. Peräkylä (2005) describes this approach:

"In many cases, qualitative researchers who use written texts as their materials do not try to follow any predefined protocol in executing their analysis. By reading and rereading their empirical materials, they try to pin down their key themes and, thereby, to draw a picture of the presuppositions and meanings that constitute the cultural world of which the textual material is a specimen." ...

"An informal approach may, in many cases, be the best choice as a method in research focusing on written texts. Especially in research designs where the qualitative text analysis is not at the core of the research but instead is in a subsidiary or complementary role, no more sophisticated text analytical methods may be needed." (Peräkylä, 2005, p. 870)

Analytical memos have been a feature of the research since it began in 2004 and have been employed as a strategy for weaving together, exploring and deconstructing ideas that have been amassed through the multiple methods discussed in the last section. Many memos have been written, and over the duration of the research, have filled a variety of roles. For example, analytical memos formed the basis for many discussions with my research supervisors; have been provided to action research project participants to stimulate discussion on a variety of topics (discussed in more detail in chapter five and six); have been provided to Outdoor Programme staff to help explain concepts such as sustainability; and have been used as the basis for writing chapters. Analytical memos have not been treated as 'snapshots in time' but rather as ongoing constructions that have evolved as a result of feedback from those who have read them or as additional material became available.

Student work (the small stories) has provided a wonderful glimpse into what it means to be a student learning about sustainability within the BRecEd. The inclusion of these text extracts, photos and recollections of actions have grounded analysis of data in real-life experiences that is then reflected in discussion. The students have occupied a position that has been central to discussion about paradigm change and this has meant that their experiences have driven (rather than been driven by) theoretical analysis. Importantly, the social and environmental actions of students have allowed for what Atkinson and Delamont (2005) called the “intrinsic complexity of social organization” to feature in the analysis of data.

The student work, interview transcripts and my own reflective journaling have been treated as lived experiences, or types of speech acts (Atkinson & Delamont, 2005) that are enacted social performances. Treated as such, empirical material, particularly material that is generated without mediation or structure imposed by the researcher (as is the case with student work), can be considered identity work that their tellers engage in (Georgakopoulou, 2006). Identity work related to paradigm shift features strongly in this research.

This approach incorporates characteristics of narrative analysis outlined by Chase (2005) that looks to explore identity work that people engage in as they construct selves within specific institutional, organisational, discursive, and local cultural contexts. Taking this approach, researchers treat narratives as lived experience. Researchers "...are as interested in the *hows* of story telling as they are in the *whats* of story telling - in the narrative practices by which story tellers make use of available resources to construct recognizable selves" (Chase, 2005, p. 658). This is because "...the stories people tell *constitute* the empirical material that [researchers] need if they are to understand how people create meanings out of events in their lives." (Chase, 2005, p. 660)

Note: A large amount of data generated through interviews has not been used in this thesis. Additional data generated through games and interviews conducted with groups of senior secondary school students has also not been used. This material will provide the research base for a future writing project.

## **Trustworthiness**

In discussion about trustworthiness in qualitative research, Maykut and Morehouse (1994) draw upon the work of Guba and Lincoln to identify key features of research process that contribute to research trustworthiness. These are the employment of multiple methods of data collection; the building of an audit trail; working with groups of people; and incorporating participant validation mechanisms.

Employing multiple methods ensures that a variety of perspectives are considered and that any “Convergence of a major theme or pattern in the data from interviews, observations and documents lends strong credibility to the findings” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 146). Multiple methods have been a feature of this research.

A significant method has been the use of student work. Student work has brought trustworthiness because it has not been solicited. The work expresses the sentiments of students at the time of writing; and many examples that have been included were written before the research began. This has meant that any course assessment producing the student work has not been framed in a manner to lead the students towards expressing sentiments to support discussion. Rather discussion in the research has been driven by what students have written.

The building of an audit trail relates to the evidence that has been collected throughout the research and forms the basis for analysis from which conclusions have been drawn. In this research, original copies of researcher journals, minutes of meetings with supervisors, analytical memos, interview transcripts, student work, and action research meeting minutes all exist in retrievable formats should an audit of the research be required.

Working with groups of people rather than in isolation is seen as important because the scrutiny of others acts to keep a researcher honest. In this research, such scrutiny has been achieved through the formal supervision process provided by supervisors Anne Scott and David Small at the University of Canterbury, through the use of what

Law (2003) called critical friends (where analysis and conclusions have been discussed on a regular basis and feedback welcomed), and most importantly through participatory action research and collaboration with the staff and students that were involved.

The incorporation of participant validation mechanisms also act to provide trustworthiness in qualitative research. In this research trustworthiness is achieved in a participatory setting through several mechanisms. In the action research project described in chapters five and six, an emphasis on emancipatory processes such as negotiated realities, and group agreement on participatory actions are indicative of inclusive processes. Trustworthiness of the participatory action research project is more thoroughly explained in chapters five and six.

However, the most powerful claim to trustworthiness of any research is found in whether people believe enough in the research to act on the results (Mischler as cited in Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Influential authors Kemmis and MacTaggart (2005) take a similar position in discussion about trustworthiness in participatory action research. They observe that:

“The criterion of success is not whether participants have followed the steps faithfully but rather whether they have a strong and authentic sense of development and evolution in their *practices*, their *understandings* of their practices, and the *situations* in which they practice.” (Kemmis & MacTaggart, 2005, p. 563)

Given that the action research project produced outputs that have been implemented suggests trustworthiness has been achieved. The staff sustainability workshop is worthy of particular note because this development has drawn staff members from the Outdoor Programmes into sustainability teaching roles outside of their normal teaching load, required permission from faculty management for staff to be involved, and the course has been adopted and funded through professional development mechanisms by the CPIT executive through the Staff Development department.

An important strategy in developing trustworthiness has been presenting and publishing work on an ongoing basis. A conference research presentation and a related workshop was given at the Confluence: International Outdoor Recreation and



Education Conference 2008 and the associated paper appeared in the conference proceedings (Irwin, 2008b). Other presentations have included: research presentations to CPIT Faculty of Commerce staff in August 2005 and October 2006; and a University of Canterbury Sociology Department research seminar series presentation on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2009. One peer reviewed article relating to discussion contained in chapter three has been published in the New Zealand Journal of Outdoor Education (Irwin, 2008a). A second article relating to discussion contained in chapter three and four was submitted in November 2009 for a special edition of the same journal.

### **Summary**

This chapter has outlined the research design and methodology. First it disclosed an intellectual autobiography, a discussion of my position in relation to the research. This section established the rationale for the research and reflected how the research had been part of a personal journey of discovery and awareness. A participatory research paradigm was established.

The second section detailed the research purpose, objectives, and questions, while the third section discussed the focus and locus of the research. The fourth section discussed ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology within a participatory paradigm, and established an overarching participatory action research framework for the research.

The fifth section outlined the research strategy and the sixth section discussed the multiple methods employed within the participatory action research framework including literature review, interviews, autoethnographic reflection, student work, and student game. The final section of the chapter discussed approaches to data analysis, and research trustworthiness.

The next chapter explores problems relating to sustainability in an outdoor education context.

## **Chapter 3: Challenges for Sustainability in Outdoor Education**

### **Introduction**

It wasn't until I embarked on a study of issues about sustainability, that I realised the depth and complexity involved in facilitating a change in patterns of thinking and behaving. The sustainability paradigm challenges the fundamental dimensions of our reality on an economic, political, spiritual, social and ecological level. It includes for example challenging how things happen; the ways decisions are made; organisations are structured; and planning processes are conceived and implemented. A holistic approach to sustainability is required and this is difficult to achieve in our traditional and compartmentalised educational setting.

Any discussion about sustainability in outdoor education eventually leads to an array of fundamental and often complex problems. These problems include the way the past has shaped our view of outdoor education and how this can impact on our present practice, and the way critical reflection related to sustainability creates dissonance for students by challenging the way they have viewed the world and their place in it (dissonance describing the unease experienced by an individual when opposing realities create conflict). These problems are related to the concept of framing, how individuals, organisations and communities construct meaning and articulate that meaning to others.

This chapter explores some of the difficulties with education for sustainability in outdoor education using the history of outdoor education, biculturalism in outdoor education, and assessment in outdoor education as thematic examples. This chapter also traces my growing awareness of personal and professional tensions and presents these as problems for staff and students of the BRecEd degree at CPIT.

The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section explores sustainability in the context of the historical development of outdoor education; the second investigates the place of sustainability in assessment; the third explores links between

sustainability and biculturalism in outdoor education; the fourth explores perceptions of sustainability; and the last section explores tensions sustainability brings to outdoor education practice. The purpose of this chapter is not to present a comprehensive discussion of each of these threads, but rather to clearly demonstrate that there exist fundamental and complex problems for education for sustainability in outdoor education that can be viewed in a number of different ways.

### **Sustainability and the history of outdoor education**

Any discussion about problems with teaching about sustainability must first consider the context provided by the history and development of outdoor education. The purpose of this discussion is not to provide a detailed historical account of outdoor education, or to enter into a theoretical discussion about how outdoor education is defined in Aotearoa New Zealand, for these discussions have occurred elsewhere. For example, for a thorough exploration of the historical development of outdoor education in this country see Lynch (2006); for analysis of the place of outdoor education in the curriculum see Boyes (2000); and for the nature and scope of outdoor education in New Zealand schools see Zink and Boyes (2006).

The key purpose of this discussion is to investigate how different perspectives formed through the development of outdoor education in this country contribute to problems associated with attempting to place sustainability education within an outdoor education context.

Broadly speaking, there are two significant historical initiatives in this country that established a rationale for taking students outside the classroom. The first initiative can be traced back through the colonial era and is related to the Victorian fascination with natural history and nature studies. This fascination led to field studies and clubs that provided an intervention to classroom work and eventually embraced a range of curriculum areas such as biology and geology (Lynch, 2006). Later, this focus became integrated into school camping experiences. The second initiative can be traced to a preoccupation with the physical fitness of young soldiers and civilians in times of war. This preoccupation became particularly important to the future of

outdoor education during the Second World War, when Kurt Hahn established structured training programmes primarily for merchant sailors based upon a philosophy of rising to meet the challenge of adversity. This philosophy, that would later mobilise the worldwide Outward Bound movement and form the basis of adventure education, also became woven into the school camp experience through the inclusion of outdoor pursuits and adventure based activities.

Other influences impacted on the development of outdoor education in Aotearoa New Zealand, but generally these influences, (such as the establishment of outdoor pursuit centres, the import of USA based Project Adventure and associated interpretations of experiential education (particularly high and low ropes courses), and the migration of experienced outdoor educators from Britain to Aotearoa New Zealand) deepened the entrenchment of the initiatives identified above (Lynch, 2006).

Importantly, these historical initiatives have presented contemporary practitioners with a legacy of a mixed and somewhat divided opinion as to what exactly outdoor education is, and consensus around the purpose of outdoor education is difficult to reach. A plethora of labels for different perspectives (such as adventure recreation, adventure education, outdoor education, education outside the classroom) indicates the range of opinion. Because of the breadth of perspective, defining outdoor education can only be undertaken in the broadest of terms, and definition is related to the perspective of the speaker.

However, Boyes (2000) has suggested there are two general perspectives that dominate outdoor education discourse. The first perspective is Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) as curriculum enrichment activities across all subject areas; and the second is outdoor education as adventure education with a subtext of environmental education, as influenced by British and American interpretations (Boyes, 2000), that sees a number of activities (such as climbing and kayaking) as “stable features” of both the Australian and New Zealand interpretations (Payne, 2002).

In recent years, the terms EOTC and outdoor education have become commonly used in this way. For example, definitions in line with those described above were

included in promotional material distributed to members and teacher education graduates by Education Outdoors New Zealand (EONZ) (Thevenard, 2008). In this material, outdoor education in schools was described as “adventure based learning as a vehicle for personal growth” and examples given of taking “students on camp, tramps and cycle trips” in order to meet the outcomes specified in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum (Thevenard, 2008, p. 3).

The EOTC perspective of outdoor education encompasses the breadth of curriculum characteristic of the historical initiative of taking students outside the classroom to study topics related to nature. In this way, EOTC can be regarded as a teaching methodology. Boyes (2000) maintains that it was the intent of the Ministry of Education to encourage this perspective, and to refocus outdoor education back to the wider teaching and learning premises in the broadest sense to ensure the credibility of all learning opportunities outside of the classroom (Abbott, cited in Boyes, 2000).

In contrast, the perspective of outdoor education as adventure education and environmental education has a narrower focus in that it is not viewed as applicable to all curriculum areas. For example, the British proponent Higgins (2003) summarises outdoor education as the “... promotion of aspects of personal, social and environmental education through direct (adventurous) experience out-of-doors” (pp. 134-135). Adventurous experience, suggests Cumming (2001) is provided through the instruction of a range of movement oriented recreation activities and outdoor pursuits.

Exacerbating this problem of duality is the ad-hoc way that outdoor education has developed. There has not been a consistent approach, method, or practice, and the two perspectives are not always distinct in every situation. For example a school camp might include aspects of adventurous activities as well as other curriculum area study. Lynch (1999) suggests the history and development of outdoor education in this country is characterised by a variety of practices, local enterprise, self-help and cooperation. Boyes (2000) adds further uncertainty to the practice with his assessment that an unacknowledged theoretical base also contributes to confusion about the defining characteristics of outdoor education.

These two perspectives dictate significantly different teaching and learning contexts. EOTC encompasses a broad methodology of teaching and learning in all curriculum areas. For example Education Outdoors New Zealand has produced a resource for teachers called Maths outdoors (Education Outdoors New Zealand, 2006) that includes suggestions for teaching of algebra, statistics, and geometry. However the perspective of outdoor education as adventure education and environmental education is arguably a discipline arranged around adventurous activities with a lesser emphasis on environmental education.

Outdoor education as a discipline is popular amongst instructors in Aotearoa New Zealand. An important example of outdoor education as a discipline is found in the New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Association (NZOIA). NZOIA trains and assesses many outdoor educators; as of September 2006, it had 451 current financial members, and since inception in 1987 it had a total of 2512 members (S. Scott, personal communication, Sept 9, 2006).

Because the syllabus and assessment framework of the NZOIA qualifications focuses on the technical aspects of practical pursuits including rock climbing, kayaking, alpinism, sea kayaking, and tramping, my perception is that outdoor education has also come to be focussed in this way for NZOIA instructors. It is also my perception that the focus on technical aspects is further exacerbated by a gender imbalance within NZOIA, with around 70% of members likely to be male (New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Association, 2006), which means male values associated with competition, skill acquisition and mastery of pursuits are more likely to feature in instruction.

The NZOIA also appear to actively promote outdoor education as defined by their syllabus and assessment framework. For example, in a letter to schools, the Chief Executive of NZOIA warned principals:

“If your outdoor education staff do not hold NZOIA qualifications and do not hold a New Zealand Outdoor Registration Board card then you and your BOT are exposing yourselves to a degree of risk; not only in that your students may be being led by someone of unproven competence, but in terms of exposure to criticism in the unfortunate event that an accident occurs.” (Cant, 2009, September)

The popularity of this perspective presents a significant obstacle to sustainability education. If an instructor perceives outdoor education as a discipline, the planned outcomes of the experience will be focused on skill acquisition and safe facilitation of the pursuit or adventurous activity. This focus is problematic, for such an experience will not easily support opportunities for reflection on the social ecological relationships associated with sustainability education (Boyes, 2000; Henderson, 1996; Martin, 2004).

Local authors such as Brown and Fraser (2009) have more recently challenged the dominant place of risk in contemporary outdoor education practice and argued that educational outcomes are marginalised through a focus on safely managing risky activities. For example Brown and Fraser observed:

“While risk taking has a part to play in learning a focus on activities deemed to be ‘risky’ potentially limits the learning possibilities for participants. In activities that are ‘risky’ experts provide specialist advice and controls on participation, thus opportunities for genuine learner-based decision-making may (rightly, for safety reasons) be largely absent.” (Brown & Fraser, 2009, p. 6)

In challenging the dominant place of risk, Brown and Fraser draw upon examples such as ropes courses now popular in outdoor education in this country. Brown and Fraser argue that ropes courses see students as participants within a narrow framework of activity the students have no control over, and therefore learning opportunities are limited to what is available within that framework.

The inclusion of outdoor education in the Health and Physical Education (HPE) Curriculum 1999<sup>3</sup> saw outdoor education ‘come of age’ and gain legitimacy according to Lynch (1999). However the placement of outdoor education within the HPE curriculum, coupled with an underlying emphasis on adventurous pursuits, saw some commentators speculate that legitimacy would be limited. For example Cumming wrote:

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<sup>3</sup> *Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand Curriculum 1999* has been a requirement in schools since December 2001 and is compulsory to Year 10.

“Will having it [outdoor education] as one of the seven key areas of learning really legitimise outdoor education as a subject? I don’t believe it will. In the curriculum guidelines the outdoor experiences tend to be very movement oriented and outlined more as outdoor pursuits / recreation than educative, reflective experiences.” (Cumming, 2001, p. 15)

There are two key issues that Cummings’ observation highlights. The first is the perception of outdoor education as an activity-based discipline that fits within the domain of physical education is pervasive. This notion is supported by the curriculum stocktake (McGee, et al., 2004) that found most teachers were most confident teaching physical activity and over 80% of teachers expressed a high level of confidence teaching physical safety (P.265). Zink and Boyes (2006) came to a similar conclusion in separate research and stated that generally teachers “... did not see the outcomes of cultural and ethnic understanding or environmental understanding to be as important as the skill and personal development goals.” (2006, p. 20) The second issue is the inability of movement-oriented outdoor pursuits and adventure recreation to provide an adequate mechanism for dealing with the underlying philosophy relating to a socio–ecological perspective present in the curriculum.

Here lies the problem. The curriculum signalled a philosophical move toward education for sustainability, because it contains an underlying socio-ecological perspective that is intended to enable “physical educators to relate practices to the power structures and social and economic forces underlying wider society” (Culpan, cited in Boyes 2000). But the popular model of outdoor education cannot easily support this.

Exacerbating this problem is the difficulty presented by attempts to draw other curriculum areas into outdoor education, or outdoor education into other areas, which acts to further compartmentalise and isolate the discipline from the holism of sustainability education. This conflicts with the Education Review Office’s assessment that “some aspects of the health and physical education curriculum also have very direct links to other areas of the New Zealand curriculum (Education Review Office, 2001, p. 6). Yet compartmentalisation appears widespread; for the Curriculum stocktake noted that:



“Across all school types, physical education was taught primarily as a subject with its own timetable slots (73.2%). A third (34.3%) of teachers taught physical education in blocks or modules – particularly primary and intermediate teachers. About a third (31.7%) of teachers integrated physical education into other learning areas, especially at primary schools.” (McGee, et al., 2004, p. 267).

When these problems are considered together, the problem of sustainability education within an outdoor education programme become entwined. For example, in the BRecEd, there exists a solid theoretical exploration of social and environmental relationships incorporating what Martin (1999) has described as critical outdoor education, while at the same time a range of pursuit papers are offered with a very high level of technical skill required<sup>4</sup>. Outdoor education means different things to the different staff members, which led one academic staff member at CPIT to reflect during interview:

“I think we need to decide what we really try to do since I think we try and do lots of different things that have conflicting needs. We teach technical skills for adventure recreation on the one hand, and want to go to the best places and give people the best value with the most suitable equipment to do that. On the other hand we say we are driven by wanting to make a difference to people’s lives and to the environment that we live in and I think they have contradicting needs. Maybe we have to decide what we really are trying to do and be consistent in what message we are sending out, because I don't know that we are. We are a diverse staff driven by different things - which gives students the opportunities to question all sorts of things and explore what drives people - what their barriers are, but doesn't necessarily send out a consistent message if that's what's important.” (Excerpt from interview transcript)

But this problem is not solely a result of different individual perspectives. It also reflects the institutionalisation of outdoor education over time and the structures built up around this phenomenon, such as industry organisations and vocational training and assessment.

This dilemma is not unique to outdoor education. In his presentation to UNESCO describing the then current state of education for sustainability in this country, Law (2004) observed that teacher education was susceptible to: the rapid rate of changes in the education system; the autonomy of training institutions over their own programmes of study; training for what schools wanted rather than training to reorientate the practices within schools; and a lack of support from some managers to

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<sup>4</sup> For example white water kayak paper AROE 770 has students paddling the grade 5 Karamea River where errors in judgments would result in serious injury or death.

support curriculum that is not considered core or mandatory. As one person interviewed poignantly observed:

“We have a light version of sustainability education practised within the school setting, and it won’t get very close to the central principle [of sustainability] because it is just – well the context in which we are trying to do that does not allow that to happen.”  
(Excerpt from interview transcript)

The legacy of outdoor education is that it does not easily support education for sustainability. It is difficult for educators and instructors to fit sustainability perspectives into the curriculum and discourse because they have not been provided the tools nor have they been given time within an already crowded timetable to develop these topics (pers. comm. M. Boyes, 10/6/03).

This places outdoor educators and their places of work in a difficult position because, as Snook (1999) goes to some length to explain, teaching, and particularly formal teaching in schools, universities and polytechnics carries ethical obligations to serve the needs of the learner in the broadest sense; to encourage a greater understanding and more enlightened practice, and to encourage communities based upon plurality, democracy, justice and tolerance.

The next section looks at the impacts of assessment (one of the more critical tools that Boyes refers to) on education for sustainability.

### **Sustainability and assessment**

The location of sustainability education in mainstream schooling and tertiary education is the result of a more diverse society comprised of people holding a wider range of, and in some cases opposing, world views. Curriculum designed through an inclusive process of consultation reflects this diversity. However, assessment and qualifications structures in both the school and tertiary environments have tended to be increasingly vocationally driven and industry focussed. For example, Williams (2002) argues that “through unit standards, we can only assess a small portion of outdoor pursuits – the technician, certain unambiguous skills that require no judgement, higher order thought or artistic flair” (p.96).

### *In secondary outdoor education*

Although the implementation and practice of education for sustainability in school based outdoor education is signalled within the curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007b); pedagogy in senior school tends to be driven by assessment. This drive is particularly evident with secondary students from year 11-13 because they become NCEA focussed. If lessons are not targeted at obtaining credit, it has been observed by most teachers interviewed that students tend to adopt a “why bother” attitude.

This presents a significant problem for education for sustainability in outdoor education since the links aren't formed between assessment and the curriculum. On the one hand the holism present in the curriculum is attempting to deal with the pressures of change in society, while on the other, assessment criteria in outdoor education unit standards is established to measure activity based practical skills (with references to respect for the environment and access to the environment). The intent of the curriculum and the popular assessment framework do not match. One person interviewed explained:

“Our job as teachers becomes less one of imparting particular sets of knowledge and skills and more one of facilitating development of skills for coping with change and coping with the multiple tasks that people are required to do in their lives. So it is a more generic sort of teaching and learning and so we tend to do that but because that's occurring in a situation where assessment processes are very vocational and sort of practically applied, there is a tension between those things.” (Excerpt from interview transcript)

Thus teachers are placed in a position of tension that has them trying to meet the needs of assessment as well as trying to draw holism inherent in the curriculum into their teaching. This leaves the place that education for sustainability plays in outdoor education programmes up to the initiative of individual teachers. One secondary outdoor education teacher interviewed explained:

“It's the practicalities of making environmental education links that becomes really hard and you have to be really careful not to be driven by assessment. It used to be we were really driven by assessment and unit standards and ... not doing that deeper learning justice and that it didn't work for me philosophically – I thought there was more to it than that. So we made a decision to cut right back on what we actually assessed, tried to move

away from that assessment driven process. It isn't easy but if you are looking at the whole picture then that is what you need to do, and it is more important than the number of credits." (Excerpt from interview transcript)

Another option has been to try to create units of assessment pieced together from other curriculum areas that support sustainability education teaching. However this takes time and considerable creativity, both difficult to find in a busy work place. While on work placement in a local secondary school a student designed an assessment unit comprised of units from other curriculum areas as her action project. Her supervising teacher commented:

"[The student] is trying to put together an environmental unit and find some unit standards from other places that we can use – probably environmentally focused geography units. But it is not easy, and if it is not straight forward then I do not think other teachers will make it happen. You are just so limited on time and your outdoor education courses are just one part of a whole lot of focuses. If it is not straight forward then I think for a fair number of schools it probably does not happen." (Excerpt from interview transcript)

Generic achievement standards in education for sustainability were placed on the framework for the 2008 academic year and these provided additional options for assessment in senior school outdoor education, and should have made the task of designing teaching units a little less arduous. It is my perception that very few outdoor education teachers have used these standards in assessments, and obviously signals an area that training to develop capacity needs to occur. (The achievement standards will be discussed more thoroughly in later chapters).

Changing the way that assessment in senior school takes place requires commitment from teachers and a strong belief in the need to incorporate sustainability education into teaching and learning. Therefore sustainability education, like outdoor education in high school settings becomes the prerogative of teachers who wish it to happen. With a mixture of humour and cynicism, one teacher interviewed commented: "I am the boss and I think it is important!"

### *In tertiary outdoor education*

As with secondary schooling, subjects, programmes and disciplines within tertiary organisations tend to be isolated from each other. After completing her PhD research

on sustainability education at Simon Fraser University in Canada, Moore (2005) remarked "Despite a long list of warnings from academics, universities continue to be discipline centered and teach undergraduates subjects as if they were arranged in tidy boxes" (p. 543). However compartmentalisation is also exacerbated by the commercial reality of contemporary tertiary education. For example with regard to adventure and experiential education in the U.S.A., Wurdinger (1994) observed that modern tertiary institutions run as businesses to provide education to fee paying students which results in more time spent on theory and a general compression of learning into tighter time frames. Wurdinger concluded that in the tertiary sector, "We are efficient at getting information out to students, but inefficient at providing them with meaningful learning experiences." (Wurdinger, 1994, p. 34)

In this country, Williams (2008) completed PhD research into the uptake of education for sustainability across the tertiary sector with a focus on universities. Williams found similar barriers to sustainability in her research that Moore had identified, including compartmentalisation, specialisation, hierarchical autonomous management systems, and a lack of leadership in sustainability. In an earlier study the PCE in a background paper to See Change (January 2004b) found that the tertiary sector generally lacked specific guidance around, or monitored progress towards sustainability. This conclusion was reached because the national policy framework lacked cohesion, failed to make consistent and explicit reference to sustainability, and did not link measurable outcomes to funding.

Together, these strands of compartmentalisation, commercialisation, specialisation, hierarchical autonomous management, a lack of leadership, and a policy framework that fails to include specific outcomes for sustainability present significant problems for education for sustainability in tertiary outdoor education.

Although there has been no specific stocktake of education for sustainability in outdoor education within the tertiary sector in this country it is my observation that many tertiary outdoor education programmes appear to have included education for sustainability in their programmes. However there is likely wide variation in what is delivered and how it is integrated into programmes. In my experience, the inclusion of education for sustainability alongside other areas of study in outdoor education is

not an easy task. For example it is difficult to find the meaningful integration of sustainability themes into kayak or business management papers within the BRecEd. The 2006 external moderator Dr. Tom Potter noted in his report:

“Students expressed that while environmental awareness and action was generally woven throughout the entire BRecEd degree, it could and should be emphasised more strongly in other courses. Even though an audit of sustainability education outcomes across the BRecEd degree found 53 outcomes in 25 courses that have themes in line with sustainability education, students felt that the environmental standards advocated and expressed by some of the tutors should be stronger. While it is understandable that the environmental ethics across courses will vary, staff should be encouraged to hold discussions upon a school-wide shared vision of sustainability education.” (Potter, 2006, p. 4)

Where attempts have been made to bridge papers, students have not always reacted receptively. For example, prior to travel to Australia to climb in 2005, students were asked to research their ecological footprint in order to gain an understanding of the impacts our travel would have. In frustration, one student wrote:

“This is a rock climbing instruction paper not a social – environmental paper. I do not believe that this assignment in its current format warrants any place within this module. I certainly do not question the place of these environmental issues within the context of the degree programme, but there are other provisions in the degree for these issues. I have enrolled in this paper to gain a greater understanding of climbing and the issues within the sport. I feel that this assignment has been set at the cost of a relevant topic of learning.” (Excerpt from student feedback on assessment)

Thus compartmentalisation of curriculum and a vocational focus placed on assessment (particularly in practical papers) in tertiary outdoor education limits opportunities for holistic learning. These forces also focus education on a normalising process and make it more difficult to assess practical assignments based on transitional learning.

This problem is most visible when social and environmental action projects are involved as part of assessment criteria. This is because, as influential authors Jensen and Schnack (1997) observe: “If environmental-based action competence among other things means that insight into solving environmental problems requires social and structural changes, then major demands are put on the teacher's ability to put individual actions and their potential into perspective, both locally and globally.” (p. 9)

Further, the need to assess actions as assessed outcomes of a tertiary course raises additional (although not insurmountable) problems. How does one compare the action oriented accomplishments of a student composing, writing and recording a political protest song, a waste audit that sorts and reports on a day's 'rubbish' generated by CPIT, and coordination of food collections for city food banks? Inevitably these undertakings are problematic to grade. In 2005, two students chose to challenge the government's stance on the Zimbabwe cricket tour and their action consisted of letters, petitions to local MPs, articles written for student newspapers, and letters to editors of larger newspapers. The result of their effort could not be measured – there was no visible outcome. The ramification of traditional assessment methods are inconsistent with practical assignments based on transformative learning. The structure is not compatible.

However the structure of outdoor education in Aotearoa New Zealand has other ramifications. The next section deals with the question of what sustainability means for biculturalism within the context of outdoor education.

### **Sustainability and biculturalism**

The importance of biculturalism to sustainability in Aotearoa New Zealand is justified from the perspective of the links between indigenous cultures and their knowledge and traditions relative to the lands and oceans they have occupied for generations. The assumption is that, although few if any indigenous cultures lived in a truly sustainable manner (Diamond, 2005; Flannery, 1994; Wright, 2004), indigenous cultures have through trial and error amassed knowledge and processes that reflect long term commitment to the place they inhabit. Sustainability recognises the need for the diversity of this indigenous knowledge relating to place to be protected and validated against the monolithic and colonising culture of the developed world.

The place of cultural diversity in sustainability discourse is well documented. For example the concept of sustainability is strongly linked to culture through the role that tolerance and intercultural understanding play in achieving cooperation and peace (UNEP, 1972). Sustainability is also strongly linked to cultural diversity through the

value placed upon indigenous knowledge and local environments developed over many generations (UNCED, 1992. 26.1). Sustainability is also linked to cultural diversity by asserting the expression of indigenous knowledge using indigenous languages, for knowledge is culturally contextualised and inseparable from language (UNESCO, 2005). Nation states are also urged to support cultural diversity in an effort to move towards a more sustainable future (Ministry for the Environment, 1993).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the link between sustainability and cultural diversity emphasises the importance of Māori perspective, knowledge, language and traditions to be brought into decision processes. This place is contextualised by the legal and policy framework that has developed from the expectations provided through the Treaty of Waitangi. For example, in considering the passing of legislation that included the Resource Management Act 1991, New Zealand's [sic] National Report to the UN Conference on Environment and Development stated:

“Achievement of Māori economic and social objectives requires an equitable balance between socio-economic ends and cultural considerations. The legislative changes have great significance for Māori since they are statutory recognition of the principles of the Treaty. They should enable Māori to be better represented in the determination of public policy relating to sustainable development.” (Ministry for the Environment, 1992, p. 86)

Later, the government's Environment 2010 Strategy again reaffirmed the participation of Māori in policy decisions relating to sustainability recognised through resource management legislation (Ministry for the Environment, 1994). In this way, biculturalism is not only desirable, but is currently a legal requirement of any sustainability discussion or decision relating to policy formation and land use. How this has played out in reality has been the subject of much debate and a number of court cases have established a lack of consultation with Māori over resource management decisions and a subsequent failure to apply the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (for example *Ngāi Tahu Māori Trust Board v Director-General of Conservation* [1995] 3NZLR553 set legal expectations regarding consultation for the Department of Conservation relating to the issue of concessions).

The PCE have noted that the Guidelines for Environmental Education in schools have a significant Māori component and that environmental education provides a context



for students to learn about the partnership established through the treaty for managing environmental resources; the special place of Māori in relation to environmental resources; cultural heritage; and the significance of this heritage to present and future peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand (January 2004a).

Outdoor education must also embrace biculturalism as part of any effort to incorporate education for sustainability. However, it is more difficult to discuss biculturalism in an outdoor education context. Earlier discussion described outdoor education in this country as a product of historical developments that derived from a number of developed countries including Britain, the USA and Australia. Given these influences, it comes as no surprise that authors such as Smith have noted that with regard to ethnic diversity in outdoor education, "the majority of significant recreational and outdoor educational texts are written in the western world for a western context." (E. Smith, 2005, p. 8)

In her PhD research, Lynch observed that Māori perspectives were absent from the records she had access to, suggesting an underlying unrecorded incorporation of Māori students into outdoor education (Lynch, 1999). This supports the reality described by authors such as Bell and Carpenter (1994) that Aotearoa New Zealand has generally not catered to separate bicultural realities in education; and through until the 1960's, assimilation into the dominant paradigm of the colonists was actively promoted in policy and practice. Even the separate Native Schools programme had assimilation as a core function (Consedine & Consedine, 2001). Education has generally been aimed at the middle class and underpinned by predominantly Pākehā and otherwise European values, and it is not until the more recent development of Kohanga Reo, Kura kaupapa and Wananga that this has changed. Outdoor education is contextualised within this framework.

If outdoor education is considered through the lens of the dominant social paradigm then universalising knowledge and method subsumes and marginalises alternative perspectives just as the colonising society has done in the past. Thus, this perspective assumes that the dominant discourse, method and values are applicable to a Māori paradigm. For example some years ago, students working with one of several local

Kura Kaupapa Māori (tikanga Māori immersion schools) reflected on the absence of outdoor education as they perceived it within the school:

“Te Kura kaupapa had no outdoor education programme available for their students. This year ... was the first year that the school had their own physical education teacher, before now there was no physical education programme available to the students. For the physical education department, outdoor education is a fairly new concept and there is a lack of knowledge about the provision of outdoor education experiences from trained personnel. .... Outdoor recreation activities, team building initiatives and camping are not fully integrated into the Te Kura kaupapa school curriculum.” (Excerpt from student report)

Yet rangatahi (teenagers or youth) at the school participated in kapa haka, hāngi and other marae-based community activities that occurred outside the classroom as well as a range of other curriculum related EOTC activities. The students had perceived outdoor education from the perspective of dominant culture and noted the absence of the perspective within the kura, but education outdoors was still taking place.

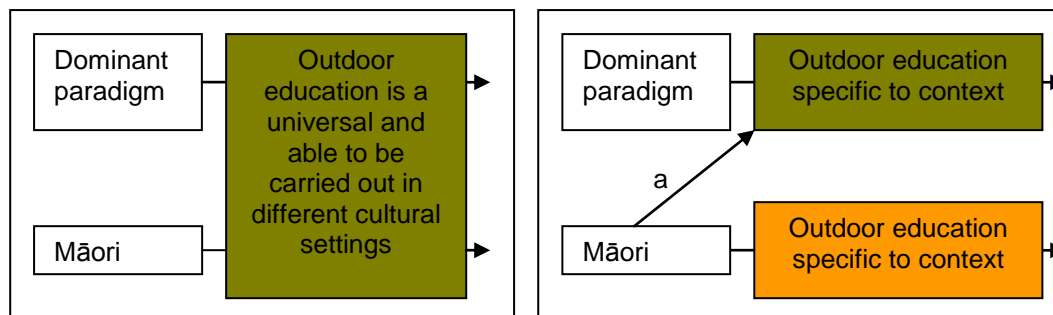
Traditionally, Māori have educated outdoors and engaged with an outdoor pedagogy in their own way. This led one person interviewed to suggest that the outdoor education discipline that I was part of should be considered a Pākehā initiative based on European activities and pursuits in response to traditional Pākehā pedagogy that tended to be situated indoors (see Figure 3.1 where rangatahi are pictured encountering outdoor education based on European activities). Another student working with the same kura reflected that “one of the difficulties that I have had when working with the kura has been the Pākehā framework that I have come from. This is a system designed, administered and taught by predominantly white middle class Pākehā people.”



**Figure 3.1:** Rangatahi encountering outdoor education based on European activities

Importantly then, if the perspective of traditional Māori (as in the case of the kura) is recognised as having a unique interpretation of outdoor education, then when I talk about biculturalism in outdoor education, I am really discussing Māori perspective drawn into the dominant context of outdoor education that I occupy, rather than within a Māori determined education context such as the Kura Kaupapa Māori, which is a different issue.

Figure 3.2 depicts these two distinct conceptual frameworks. The diagram on the left illustrates the concept of outdoor education from the dominant perspective (as expressed by students earlier) that has application as a universal knowledge to both Māori and dominant cultural settings. The diagram on the right illustrates the concept that outdoor education discourse is relative to the cultural context and that the dominant perspective is only relevant to the dominant context. The arrow (a) depicts Māori perspective drawn into dominant outdoor education discourse.



**Figure 3.2:** Outdoor education is a universal; outdoor education is related to cultural context

The issue is further complicated by the reality that most Māori live and actively participate within the dominant social context to some degree, and not all Māori are participants in Māori renaissance initiatives such as the Kura Kaupapa Māori. For example it is likely that some Māori experience a disconnection from their whakapapa and associated traditional ways of knowing, and have limited access to te reo Māori. In this way the problems relating to human – nature relationships highlighted by sustainability within the dominant context also apply to Māori within that context as well.

It is difficult to assess the extent of biculturalism in outdoor education for practice tends to be defined by the practitioners themselves, and as already discussed; there is a dearth of literature on the subject. However, it is likely that there are a variety of efforts to draw increased bicultural diversity into pedagogy.

A good example of this exploration in outdoor education practice is the bicultural dimension to ‘sense of place’ achieved by linking the landscape to the ‘mythology of place’ undertaken at Waipuna Trust in their adventure counselling programme. In this example, the close relationship between counsellors and kaumātua allows for local history to be passed on to students. Without the presence of local indigenous stories, a sense of belonging cannot be found; for belonging and understanding are related and inseparable (personal communication, Pawson, February 25, 2005).

In another example Brown (2008) writes about the benefits of place-based approaches to outdoor education that draw biculturalism into the context of the outdoors. He

describes working on the Aoraki Bound project that saw Ngāi Tahu and Outward Bound working together to provide culturally contextualised outdoor education experiences for Māori youth (although the course is open to others as well).

These examples suggest that biculturalism is the meaningful presence of Māori perspective in outdoor education. However, you cannot transplant fragments of an indigenous culture, referred to as “cultural borrowings” by Panoho (1992), into the context of another more dominant culture without some degree of tokenism. Cultural borrowings (such as the Air New Zealand logo) have become embedded in the dominant culture, and, while they form part of national identity (discussed further in the next chapter), they lose context and relevance. Cultural borrowings exacerbate the marginalisation of Māori and are why Panoho maintains that the cultural dimension of appropriation should not be ignored.

Therefore biculturalism needs to be embraced with genuine intent. However, what genuine intent means is problematic since it is relative to perspective. One person interviewed suggested that genuine intent meant open and reciprocal partnerships with mutually beneficial outcomes for both Māori and the dominant social group. Biculturalism therefore becomes an exploration of partnership, and by definition, an exploration of the treaty.

Sustainability demands the critical reflection of bicultural relationships as they have been arranged in the past with a view to exploring and building new and more equitable relationships in the future. The key point here is that Māori have the right to tell their ‘story’ (Panoho, 1992), to define their own perspectives as in the Waipuna Trust and Aoraki Bound examples.

Importantly, sustainability provides an alternative paradigm in which the Treaty of Waitangi can be conceptualised. From this perspective, the place of a Māori voice, opinion, language, knowledge, and tradition in sustainability discourse is of vital importance, and the bicultural partnership that is created through that discourse is enshrined in the treaty. This is particularly relevant at a time when political debate is polarised over the place of the treaty and Māori perspective in contemporary society.

The problem is how to approach biculturalism from the perspective of dominant outdoor education? The development of outdoor education in this country has been heavily influenced by the development of outdoor education in Britain and the USA (Lynch, 2006). The uniqueness of biculturalism is not reflected in the structures and practices that have been established over time. For example, although the New Zealand Outdoor Instructor's handbook refers to multiculturalism and the assessment frameworks include aspects of traditional knowledge, the pursuits that make up the NZOIA framework are European in their origin and the assessment methodology is very culturally situated<sup>5</sup>. Senior students working with the kura kaupapa offered a useful insight into their perceptions of biculturalism in dominant outdoor education:

“A lack of links to Māori culture within outdoor education and a lack of Māori instructors within outdoor education are also problems which add to the lack of Māori integration into outdoor education programmes.” (Unsolicited reflection of students working with rangatahi at the kura kaupapa)

Sustainability requires outdoor education practitioners to embrace biculturalism in a meaningful and equitable manner. Yet to do so, the structures that have evolved will need to be challenged if tokenism and cultural borrowings are to be avoided. This discussion will be picked up again in the following chapter. The next section explores perceptions of sustainability.

### **Perceptions of sustainability**

Framing is the verb employed by social movement scholars to signify the work that is undertaken in the generation of interpretive frames with the purpose of inspiring and legitimating collective action (Benford & Snow, 2000). This work is critical because the more clearly the framing process can be articulated to others, the more resonance, or impact that framing work will have. However, interpretive framing of the issues relating to social movements occurs both within the social movements and in the wider social context. Framing activity relating to sustainability is a feature of the following discussion and continues into the next chapter.

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<sup>5</sup> NZOIA recognizes that the award scheme as it currently exists can provide barriers to participation to some people from some cultural backgrounds (New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Association, 2005, p. 15).

Framing that occurs in the wider social context that construct alternative and even oppositional meanings to the framing that occurs in social movements is called counter framing. Benford and Snow (2000) have noted that counter framing activity is subversive, aims to undermine the work of social movements and is undertaken by those opposed to social change. Counterframing they maintain constitutes an attempt to rebut and even undermine the movement.

However, counterframing also occurs when a concept like sustainability enters popular culture and is incorporated into a wide range of discourse by people and communities lacking a clear idea of what the term means. In this way, ignorance rather than subversiveness can also drive counterframing.

Educators of sustainability are faced with a myriad of definitions and differing applications of the term sustainability. Jickling (cited in Chapman, 2004b) estimates that there are more than 300 definitions for the term; and that definition is dependant on perspective. For many it has become a vague slogan that is often susceptible to manipulation (Jickling, 1994). Of particular interest is the way that in a business context, sustainability has come to be thought of as viability. For example CPIT conducted a Sustainability Review released in September 2005<sup>6</sup> which predominantly considered economic factors in future planning for the institution and linked to strategies for perpetuating the growth of student numbers over the coming years. The review had no link or reference to ecological, social or cultural sustainability (although links to these aspects of sustainability were included in successive reviews). This review provides one example of how the term has been co-opted to frame a perspective of future thinking unrelated to the way humans relate to each other or the environment.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2005) states that sustainability is best defined by the synthesis of two statements: “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987) and “improving the

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<sup>6</sup> Sustainability Review presented by John Scott, CEO of CPIT, to staff throughout Sept 2005.

quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems” (IUCN, UNEP, & WWF, 1991). However, there still remains the critical problem of how people conceptualise the definition.

At the heart of the problem is whether sustainability as defined by the UNESCO synthesis is interpreted as heralding a new way of thinking or simply viewed as tinkering with the current way of thinking. For example, a perspective held by one interviewee demonstrated the former with the observation that sustainability is a path, a journey or an ideal, and that “you can’t add sustainability to the current economic model... based on growth”. Another person interviewed demonstrated the latter with the reflection that: “sustainability is about sustaining the present which is about sustaining the unsustainable”. However ambiguity around the UNESCO definition of sustainability was probably intentional since the process of international policy formation sees many different interests coming together which often results in the production of necessarily vague policy statements (Robinson, 2004).

For this reason, Blewitt (2006) argues that educators of sustainability should regard sustainability as a heuristic, or a method of learning, where students are encouraged to discover things for themselves and to learn about the contested nature of knowledge and human – nature relationships. Some of the key principles that underpin education for sustainability are a strong values base, critical inquiry and reflective learning, future-focused thinking and judgements, how to participate in democratic decision processes, life long learning, learning across the breadth of the curriculum, and transformative learning that includes taking action in a cooperative setting (Law, 2006). (These principles were shown in Figure 1.3). Change towards new behaviours is a critical element of education for sustainability and in this way differs from traditional approaches to environmental education. The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (PCE) (2002) articulate this difference well:

“An important aspect of the progression towards more sustainable development is the need for society and governments to clearly recognize the difference between ‘environmentalism’ and ‘sustainable development’. The first can be defined as activism to protect nature from the ravages of the economy while the second is about redesigning the economy itself. Put another way, environmentalism can be considered a movement against pollution, degradation and serious loss of nature while sustainable development can be considered a movement towards new action and behaviours.” (p. 7)



Explaining the purpose of education for sustainability and justifying why it has a place in formal and informal education in this country were the key functions of the PCE think-piece report titled *See Change* (January 2004a). The report called for sweeping changes to the formal education system and for sustainability to be integrated into all learning situations, a call that would one year later be repeated in the context of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO, 2005).

When education for sustainability is woven into an outdoor education setting, the way outdoor education is perceived changes. For example Cooper (2000) argues for outdoor education to encourage attitudes and skills that lead to more active and aware people who appreciate the importance of their personal connection with nature; who begin to understand inter-relationships on a global scale while at the same time being empowered to have an impact locally.

### **Tensions in Practice**

On a personal level I have found that teaching education for sustainability in an outdoor education programme creates dissonance that becomes evident in different ways. Dissonance is expressed by students trying to assimilate knowledge and experiences that challenge beliefs and assumptions held since childhood; and conflict appears to be an inevitable feeling as students grapple with notions of what is truth and reality. Trying to act on this new knowledge also creates conflict in that it requires attitude and behaviour changes that can be difficult for students to make because those changes can alienate individuals from the 'normal' way of doing things. It can also confront students with dilemmas that are not easily solved. The following extract from a student's essay illustrates these tensions well:

"I am being honest with myself when I say this, and in doing so I am completely and utterly ashamed of my own attitude and perception of this sustainability issue. However, if my neighbour is driving to work then why shouldn't I? ... If my brothers are flying around the world having big adventures, why can't I? ... These last couple of years of study have really increased my awareness of the environment, however at this age and stage of my life, I am not willing or prepared to make any changes in the way I live that requires any extra effort on my part, especially if my efforts are not noticeable and are insignificant from society's point of view. This is an extremely selfish attitude, because

I'm saying if I'm going to do anything of value that requires effort for the good of society, I want to be acknowledged for it." (Excerpt from student essay)

In this statement, the student speaks of the shame associated with the recognition that he/she is unprepared to change his/her own behaviour because of the sense that he/she is making a sacrifice that others will not make and they will receive little or no reward for making. Just as the herdsman [sic] in Hardin's Tragedy of the Commons asked "What is the utility to me...?" (Hardin, 1968, p. 1244), the student is acting in a rational manner, looking to his/her own wellbeing in relation to others in an environment where each of us seeks to maximise our own benefits without constraints. The student sees purpose in change, for there would not be shame without understanding; it is that the student sees no benefit to him/her undertaking change, for they perceive others will not notice or value this sacrifice. This sense of loss is exacerbated by the perceived utility to others who continue to drive to work or to fly around the world having big adventures. However, the student qualifies their stance with the notion that at this age and stage of their life they are not willing, or prepared to make changes in the way that they live. This suggests that the student perceives their rational behaviour is a prerogative of youth, and that age or maturity may see them react in a different manner. However, Hardin makes no concession for age and maturity when he identifies that escape from the dilemma is futile. Another student reflected "we are always striving to make ourselves more and more comfortable in our surroundings, with little thought for the consequences that are far removed from our actions" (extract from student's journal). This challenging analysis of the dilemma is no less a judgement of the human condition than Hardin's conclusion that "the individual benefits as an individual from his ability to deny the truth even though society as a whole, of which he is a part, suffers" (1968, p. 1244).

The drive to better one's own circumstances in a manner that is ruinous if everyone did so is also an element of the Free Rider dilemma described by Poundstone (1992). In the Free Rider, public transport users late at night are confronted with a coin operated turnstile allowing access to the subway which can be jumped for a free ride. However, if all subway users opted to jump the turnstile without paying, the subway system would not be economically viable and would fall into disrepair or even close. As with the free rider, the student is presented with the notion of personal loss but for

a collective good, while others they know make decisions resulting in personal gains that contribute to a collective loss. Poundstone (1992) observes, “Real-world dilemmas are built of subjective valuations of the welfare of one’s self and others” (p. 277).

Central to the tragedy of the commons and the free rider is an individual’s perception of personal gain, coupled with a perception of what others are doing. If educating for sustainability cannot be presented in a way that demonstrates individual benefits as opposed to individual losses, then it is hard for the individual to justify making changes to the way they live. Similarly, if educating for sustainability cannot be presented in the context of a community effort and a social responsibility, then an individual cannot help but feel alienated when they make changes towards sustainable living. If sustainability education can achieve this, it can intervene between the understanding of detrimental human impact on the environment and the sense of helplessness associated with Hardin’s futility of escape.

Further, social networks are able to perceive, support and emotionally reward the individual. Also, and possibly more importantly, a sense of belonging to a collective action can counter the sense of alienation from others, as the following example describes:

For their social environmental action project, a student organised a submission against the proposal to fluoridate the Hastings town water supply. The student collected 1000 signatures and organised speakers for the council hearing. This role placed them in a position of conflict with other people who wanted fluoridation of the town supply to go ahead. The student received comments such as “who did they think they were, opposing the application when they were just a student?” (Personal reflection)

In this example, the student was able to surround their self with a support network that included fluoride action groups from other cities, a nationally renowned dental researcher who assisted with the submission preparation and hearing presentation, and family and friends who helped them to gather signatures for the petition. However, most importantly, this action project involved the student in a political decision made by local government. Empowering students to become involved in the democratic process is a critical element of education for sustainability (Cooper, 2000), and reinforces the political nature of education.

Generally, primary, secondary and tertiary education is a political process that provides for social replication. Social replication is fostered through encouraging perspectives, knowledge and attitudes that are relevant to the dominant social paradigm, while at the same time marginalising or even ignoring those perspectives, knowledge and attitudes that are perceived as irrelevant or counter to the beliefs of the dominant social paradigm (for example see: C. Bell, 1996; Gibbons, 2002; A. D. Smith, 2000). Influential author Giddens (1997) wrote:

"Schools tend to inculcate what Illich called "passive consumption" - an uncritical acceptance of the existing social order - by the nature and discipline and regimentation they involve. These lessons are not consciously taught; they are implicit in school procedures and organization." (Giddens, 1997, p. 416)

There are many examples of the role of education in this process; education acts to perpetuate social class by reproducing social class inequities (A. Bell & Carpenter, 1994); education can act to disempower oppressed peoples from decision making processes (Freire, 1970); education can contribute to feelings of alienation from the environment while at the same time ignoring that humanity is nature (Martin, 1999). Orr (1994) has suggested that what has traditionally been taught is out of step with reality and that the "myths" of education need to be challenged.

But education can also foster social change. Through education, Brookfield (1987) has argued for the need to restore true democratic processes of inclusive public decision making, which can only occur when people have sufficient understanding of the issues at hand, together with the conviction to challenge official definitions of those issues, and to effectively participate in decision processes, as demonstrated by the student above.

Sustainability education should aim to develop critical thinkers who are empowered to challenge the beliefs and norms that underpin the realities of developed society relating to the unsustainable nature of that society in economic, social and cultural, and environmental terms (e.g. economic theories based upon perpetual resource use and growth). Students should learn about their place on the planet, what Orr (1994) has described as a first hand intelligence of nature (intelligence that relates to knowledge of ecological systems upon which all life is dependant and from which

humanity is inseparable). But students also need to focus on “active change” in line with Freire's conscientização (Clover, 2002) which means learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality (Freire, 1970). In the Guidelines for Environmental Education in New Zealand Schools (Ministry of Education, 1999), active change is about “personal initiatives and social participation to achieve sustainability” (p. 8). Helping students to develop their skills to undertake such action, referred to as “action competence” by Jensen and Schnack (1997), has a critical place in education for sustainability in this country (Eames, et al., 2006).

As such, sustainability education is very much a political action and can be perceived as promoting a counter cultural perspective by some people. For example when sustainability education was included in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum in 1999, it was opposed by the Business Round Table on the basis that the curriculum was trying to change society (Culpan & Bruce, 2004). Freire explains this structural polarisation: “confronted by this universe of themes in dialectical contradiction, men [sic] take equally contradictory positions: some work to maintain the structures, others to change them. ... There is a tendency for the themes and for reality itself to be mythicised, establishing a climate of irrationality and sectarianism” (Freire, 1970, p. 92). Thus the very nature of critical teaching inherent in sustainability education creates contradictions in perspectives of reality.

One of the central tasks of sustainability education is to create paradoxes in people's minds. Chapman (2004b) refers to encouraging analysis that creates paradoxes, to the intensity where people reach tipping points, where the discomfort becomes unbearable and the individual initiates change to reduce conflict. Thus sustainability education engages individuals in a process of creating their own decisions about how to live, a process that involves by definition conflict and contestability. It is an approach based upon reflection and change, as demonstrated by the following students' journal entry:

“On the topic of sustainability I have worked through a cycle of feelings and opinions relating to environmental issues, which resembles the grief process. Firstly, I was in denial. Secondly the reality of the inherent destructive nature of man [sic] hit me as I examined the evidence. Thirdly, I reflected on whether there was hope that education

would be beneficial. Finally, I reasoned that I have a moral obligation to attempt to make a difference in protecting our environment.” (Excerpt from student journal)

In the journal entry above, the student describes a process that eventually led to a tipping point; with the most critical aspect of action alluded to in the final stage. Unknowingly, the student has described the “stages of realisation” in the context of social change associated with environmental crisis that are aligned with the grief process (Heinberg, 2007). The final stage of action is critical because as Heinberg points out, “Knowing the world is unraveling while assuming there's nothing you can do about it is a recipe for desolation. Being involved in heroic work to save the world is empowering and exciting.” (2007, p. 130)

But it is also possible to stimulate other more defensive reactions that are about removing the challenge posed by education for sustainability to deeply held beliefs such as those of a religious nature. In the course of the research, I encountered two examples where students had formally complained to their respective tertiary institutions when education for sustainability within their outdoor education programme produced too much discomfort through challenging their world views. One of these examples took place at CPIT and my recollection of this experience is presented below:

In his final year of the three year diploma, the student struggled with many aspects of education for sustainability. Concepts such as negotiation, recognising individual and collective responsibility, critical reflection, collaborative learning environments, a focus on values and attitudes as opposed to information and knowledge were difficult for them and they felt these things did not have a place in outdoor education. As a Christian, the student also found it difficult when readings and other class related discourse (such as student presentations) linked traditional Christian values to poor human – nature relationships. At the end of the course, the student wrote a letter to the Dean of the faculty suggesting that it was a commonly held sentiment amongst the students that the class be discontinued and that this paper would be of little or no use to them. The student tabled this letter at the end of year celebration and it was passed around students and staff. When the other 16 students in the class became aware of the letter and the consequences that it could have, they also wrote to the Dean in support of the course, my teaching and course content. All remaining students signed this letter. After initially challenging the course through a detailed internal moderation process, the Dean allowed the course to continue unchanged. Some five years later, the student returned to CPIT while I was away, and expressed to another tutor that since they had been working and had more experience, they had come to realise and appreciate what the education for sustainability course had set out to achieve and the teaching methods utilised. The student conceded that they would not now react as they had then, and the academic staff member was quite taken aback and impressed that the student was making the effort to re-build relationships with the programme and take ownership for their earlier actions. (Personal reflection)

This student was undoubtedly provoked into writing to the Dean, but their reaction to a tipping point experience was to challenge the cause of the tipping point as they perceived it; in this case the course and instructor. The other students, architects of the supporting letter to the dean, also demonstrated that they had reached a tipping point, for they were motivated to defend the course and perspective of sustainability education presented. The student's later visit to CPIT and disclosure of their realisation also demonstrates that tipping points may not occur until sometime after education for sustainability activity has occurred, possibly until further experience triggers unbearable discomfort, or creates grounding for learning to have a context.

The example described here was from the first year I taught sustainability education within the structure of a dedicated course and the end of course experience was emotionally draining and professionally challenging. The student's letter contained criticism of content, teaching method, and my ability as a teacher in a number of areas including integrity and organisation. Interestingly, Chapman (2005) has observed that the success of sustainability education can be measured by the number of complaints you receive. However I found the experience of this complaint not something I wished to repeat. In subsequent courses over the following decade I structured courses in a more formal manner and have exerted less pressure on students to reflect on their religious beliefs than I did that year. However the political nature of education for sustainability has ethical implications.

In acknowledging the political nature of sustainability education, teachers face several ethical dilemmas relating to pedagogy when they challenge the values and reality of students in their care. Teachers occupy a position of power over students, and it is easy (and at times tempting) to promote a personal perspective over other realities. If sustainability is presented as dogma, the importance of a diversity of perspectives inherent in education for sustainability is lost. It is also incongruous with what Freire (1970) calls problem posing education, where he argues "It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours" (p. 85). An atmosphere of reflection and discovery allows for a re-evaluation and transformation of social constructs while sustainability presented as dogma limits the ability of

students to make informed decisions about their own position in relation to the concepts discussed. One person interviewed noted:

“My view of education for sustainability is that it oughtn’t to be a process of engaging individuals with any particular mental map or paradigm or set of beliefs or values, that is imposed from outside but it ought to engage them in a process of creating their own decisions about how to live and why and so the fact that there is tension and the students are having difficulty grappling with a new way of thinking I would say would be a good thing as long as they are grappling with how do I respond with the challenges that are being made by my teacher and the curriculum rather than me trying to live in a way that I don’t want to live – that I don’t see any reason for.” (Excerpt from interview transcript)

In such an environment the power relationships are more equitable (but never neutral), and as Freire (1970) notes, all are learners and all are teachers. Education that sets as its goal to challenge dominant thinking must employ strategies and arguments that are counter to the dominant perspective, but at the same time encourage diversity of perspective, for diversity is a valuable aspect of sustainable communities. Jickling (2004) argues, “It is through public discussion and the controversy of contested positions, that we can engage with the ethics of social and environmental issues and avoid the monologue of ideology (p. 14).

But this is not easy. Students look to their teachers for guidance in their learning as “experts” that they can rely upon to explain the way the world works, a position students are comfortable with given “teacher as expert” is what they are accustomed to (A. Bell & Carpenter, 1994). In his critique of tertiary education, Orr (1994) noted that positioning of academic staff as experts with particular areas of expertise was common and contributed to less-than-optimal compartmentalised learning environments. He concluded that “Campus architecture is crystallised pedagogy that often reinforces passivity, monologue, domination, and artificiality” (Orr, 1994, p. 14). The resistance of students to processes designed to bring about new realities has been also observed in teaching related to social mobility. Bell and Carpenter (1994) note “students are active agents in the classroom, controlling their teachers’ practice by their own willingness to or unwillingness to engage in certain kinds of schoolwork” (p. 131). These factors are also likely to feature in education for sustainability and likely act to constrain efforts to bridge between subjects and create environments of critical reflection and discovery relating to sustainability.



There are also credibility issues in actually being able to demonstrate education for sustainability teaching method within an outdoor education setting. It is not credible to imply sustainability education should happen without being able to demonstrate how. For example, one student reflected in their journal that “tutors talk about integrating sustainability into the practical aspects of outdoor education but seldom actually do it. The experience of seeing this done is very worthwhile but needs to increase within the programme if it is to be credible”. Clearly, teaching staff on the BRecEd do not “walk-the-talk” consistently and that sustainability education has caused contradictions in the programme.

A further dilemma for educators is that in drawing sustainability discourse into a setting that juxtaposes that discourse to dominant perspective, the controversy caused by that opposition, if not challenged, can be subsumed by the dominant perspective (Jickling, 2004). In the context of outdoor education it has been observed that it is not possible to separate adventure activities and ecological tourism from trade, finance, lifestyles, and images (Boyes, 2003). Such an inseparable inter-relatedness, together with pedagogical examples emphasising social conformity such as army style drills (Lynch, 2006) or vocationally focused assessment (Jones, 2005), means that outdoor education should be considered part of the dominant paradigm with content and pedagogy that likely normalises the dominant world view much of the time. Therefore, the risk for outdoor education is that education for sustainability within an outdoor education context will become coopted to the dominant perspective. Herbert Marcuse (cited in Jickling, 2004) describes this process as “the flattening out of the antagonism between culture and social reality through the obliteration of the oppositional, alien, and transcendent elements” (p. 12).

For example the paradox created by the native bush scene on the CPIT 4WD van in Figure 3.3 is lost through our acceptance of, and dependence on, motor vehicles in our society. In this example, the impact of burning fossil fuels on climate change, and loss of natural habitats to allow oil and mineral exploration is obliterated.

Another more subtle example is found in the Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Pursuits Centre mission statement: “developing human potential and environmental awareness through challenging adventure programmes facilitated in a fun and supportive

manner” (Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Pursuits Centre, n.d.), where “challenging adventure” is juxtaposed to the goal of “developing ... environmental awareness”. In this example, the dominant view of outdoor education framed around adventurous pursuits (and instruction focused on associated technical skills or managing safety) acts to obliterate the difficulties identified by Martin (2005) in creating a sense of belonging with, and learning about nature within the context of challenging adventurous activities.



**Figure 3.3:** Native bush scene on the sides of the CPIT Recreation 4WD van

Thus as educators, we face the dilemma of desensitising students to the ethical dilemmas produced through alternate perspectives, by allowing those perspectives to be normalised by accepting rather than challenging the paradox present in the learning.

There is also the problem of credibility for teachers of education for sustainability in that the values that students see through our actions are more powerful than the values we say we have or espouse through teaching (Higgins, 2000). Consequently the actions we display as educators can dilute attempts to encourage students to critically reflect on the social values that underpin those actions.

The actions we display as educators also raises the ethical question of if the ideals of sustainability are not easily achieved by the teacher, how can expectations of sustainability be raised for students? Confronted by this dilemma, a student reflected following a high school instruction experience that: “one of the challenges is I do not feel comfortable or ethical telling someone not to pollute when so much of what I rely on is a pollutant and I am wearing an array of toxic and non biodegradable chemicals” (extract from a student essay).

This is the hardest thing for me, reconciling my own actions with my discourse – trying to walk the talk or bridge what has been termed the “rhetoric versus reality gap” (Chapman, 2004a, p. 93). I live my life in the developed world, and have aspirations and ambitions based upon what are valued in this reality. Consequently I find myself constantly challenging my own assumptions and behaviours.

From 2001 until 2005, I was involved in teaching multi-pitch climbing to CPIT students in Australia, since no equivalent environment existed in Aotearoa New Zealand. The course involved both level 6 and 7 students and was regarded as a flagship course within the programme of study. However on the one hand, talking about sustainability issues and developing a sense of place with local environments, and then on the other undertaking international travel raises a significant reality gap. In their interview, one staff member commented:

“To me one of the most powerful things that I work on is the Arapiles trip in terms of influencing peoples lifestyles or role modelling alternative ways because students get to see people living for an extended period of time in what is potentially a much more simple way of living. Talking to students about what they got out of spending 3 weeks camped in one place; not going into town every day to bars, clubs and takeaways. They've never done that before. Yet we fly to Australia to get there - we kind of say its ok to travel. That's so full of contradictions.” (Excerpt from interview transcript)

Exploring contradictions between practice and theory saw Payne (2002) conclude that contemporary outdoor education is “fertile ground” for rhetoric reality gaps. He argues fertile ground exists because contemporary efforts to incorporate critical social discourse into an outdoor education context have not also challenged the context of adventurous pursuits and the technologically developed equipment that allows those pursuits to take place. Payne (2002) explains:

“Put simply, the activities privileged in outdoor education are also a product of the culture now criticised in outdoor education and should not be immune from criticism in any discourse that lays claim to being critical.” (p. 6)

However the need for a deep examination of the gap between rhetoric and reality is not limited to outdoor education, and can be seen to characterise moves to incorporate education for sustainability in general. For example Chapman (2004b) discusses the rhetoric reality gap in relation to general teaching practice in Aotearoa New Zealand while Moore (2005) discusses the rhetoric reality gap in relation to management, policy and systems in an institutional education setting. Payne (2002), Chapman (2004b) and Moore (2005) all argue that identifying, challenging and moving to reduce the presence of rhetoric reality gaps are vital elements in the progression towards creating more effective contexts for education for sustainability, but as Payne (2002) demonstrates with his examples of “humble activities that enframe a ‘low’ technics in their design” (p. 17), these elements require care and thoughtfulness to arrange.

## **Summary**

The purpose of this chapter has been to explore some of the ways outdoor education has created a difficult environment for the delivery of education for sustainability. This is because outdoor education is a part of our modern society that education for sustainability seeks to challenge. This makes understanding what education for sustainability means rather difficult because it challenges us on very personal as well as professional levels.

Outdoor education, like all education, is a normalising process, and education for sustainability raises contradictions for both staff and students involved. These contradictions include a risk of obliterating the oppositional, encountering a rhetoric-reality gap, teachers perceived as experts, and feelings of loss.

Yet we are participants in society and our aspirations and values are entrenched in that place. Any effort to undertake education for sustainability in an outdoor education context requires careful consideration of what we teach, how we teach, where we

teach, and most importantly why we teach, because education for sustainability is educating for social change, and as such is a very political action.

The next chapter explores the role of identity in education for sustainability and looks to how outdoor education can create spaces for identity work to occur.

## Chapter 4: Constructing a sustainability identity

### Introduction

Identity is the term used to explain who we are as individuals, communities, cultures and nations, and is one of the key threads in this research. Identity is a term that implies a complex and shifting array of perceptions and realities that are difficult to capture at any single moment but that define us all the same. People are active players in the formation of their identity and the identity of others around them, and any discussion about a sustainable future must turn to identity, for as discussed in the last chapter, the way we live in the world is defined by how we perceive ourselves within that world.

Much of this chapter is focussed on Pākehā identity and the willed and imagined realities that underpin that ethnic position. This is an important discussion for several reasons. First, sustainability, colonisation and colonialism cannot be considered in isolation; and second the pervasive interpretation of outdoor education is culturally situated in a Pākehā paradigm.

The substantial chapter is divided into three parts. The first part explores identity as a complex and multi layered understanding of who we are as individuals and briefly discusses some of the mechanisms by which people assemble their identity. The second part explores how a sustainability identity for Aotearoa New Zealand is being created. This part looks to the perpetual process that individuals and communities engage in to construct and reconstruct themselves and explores how sustainability discourse and related community oriented actions signal an emerging collective identity constructed around sustainability. The third part explores how education for sustainability in outdoor education creates spaces for students to explore their own identity and can create a new understanding of their sense of place within Aotearoa New Zealand. It is argued that by encouraging students to carefully reflect upon their identity through outdoor experiences, one helps students find a sense of community and obligation to the land.

## **Part One: Understanding identity**

Groups of people form shared or collective identities as a result of a complex interplay of constantly shifting perceptions and interactions. The land people occupy is part of this interplay and ever since earliest times, groups of people have looked to their natural environment as a source of inspiration and collective identity. Kaufmann and Zimmer describe three key ways of thinking about the relationship people have with nature: as universal and historically persistent (which does not explain how relationships and perceptions change over time); as reflective of national virtues (such as socio-cultural concepts of freedom and liberty); and that the symbols of the landscape held by groups of people are contingent on “particular cultural and political contexts” (1998, p. 3).

Groups of people can be discussed collectively as nations (such as New Zealanders) or as separate ethnic identities that make up nations (such as Māori and Pākehā). However, discussions about groups of people is highly politicised, for as Bell points out, the construction of a nation is about “the politics that enables one culture to obliterate or assimilate another, through such processes as colonisation, genocide and immigration policies” (C. Bell, 1996, p. 8), a process widely referred to in literature as nationalism.

In order to discuss these concepts further, definitions such as those offered by Smith in his analysis of key debates on the subject are useful as a starting point. He defines the term nation as “a named human population occupying a historic territory or homeland and sharing common myths and memories; a mass, a public culture; a single economy; and common rights and duties for all members.” Nation is different from nationalism, which Smith defines as “an ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity, and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential ‘nation’.” (2000, p. 3) Despite this distinction, Smith maintains that the complex reality of modern nation states is such that both processes are almost always present. Different from nation and nationalism, Smith describes an ethnic community as “a

named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of shared culture, a link with a homeland, and a measure of solidarity, at least among the elites” (2000, p. 65). These words are important to discussion that follows in this chapter; although the distinction between nation and nationalism is not as critical as is the idea of dominant framing of the way things are.

Within nations and in the context of communities, individuals are engaged in the creation of their own identities. This is a process that della Porta and Diani regard as "...neither a thing one can own, nor a property of actors, but as the process through which individual and/or collective actors, in interaction with other social actors, attribute a specific meaning to their traits, their life occurrences, and the systems of social relations in which they are embedded." (2006, p. 92)

However, Thompson, Day and Adamson (1999) observe that it is important to be cognisant of the problems associated with talking about national identity in a singular sense, particularly where the idea of a culturally homogeneous nation is pursued. They argue that discussion of national identity should explore some of the struggles to define issues of place, community and nation; examine everyday actions that remind people who they are as well as defining difference from others; and stress the importance of deconstructing larger national discourses by identifying the existence of competing versions of national identity. (Thompson, et al., 1999, p. 64) The following discussion also uses this approach.

### ***How identities are formed***

As identified by Kaufmann and Zimmer (1998), socio-cultural ideologies and symbolism play an important role in the formation of ethnic and national identities. Smith suggests that apart from symbols such as “language, dress, emblems, rituals, and artifacts, these elements consist in memories, myths, values, and traditions and in the institutionalized practices that derive from them”(2000, p. 66). Citing Barth, and Armstrong, Smith elaborates that "Such symbolic clusters are both subjective, in their reference to individual perceptions and beliefs, and objective because their patterning



produces a structure of social relations and cultural institutions that persist across the generations, independent of any individual beliefs and perceptions" (2000, p. 66). This notion is important to discussion later in the chapter about students engaged in activities that challenge perceptions of who they are.

Yet individual and group needs may vary according to the context, which may also vary, opening the possibility for the development of plural identities. For example in the 2006 New Zealand Census, just over 10% of respondents identified with more than one ethnic group, and almost 20% of children aged 0-14 years were reported as belonging to two or more ethnic groups (Statistics New Zealand Tatauranga Aotearoa, 2006), likely a result of couples of different ethnic identities becoming parents of children identifying with both ethnicities. Thus, discussions of ethnic identity are problematic, for as Spoonley notes, it is "quite misleading to assume that any group is united around its ethnicity" (1993, p. 57).

A significant problem in discussing ethnic identity is that the characteristics or properties of ethnic identities are often not agreed upon (Spoonley, 1993; Walker, 2001). This means that what one individual considers to be critical features of his or her ethnic identity will not necessarily be the same for another individual associated with the same group. As a consequence, trying to draw conclusions about the ethnic composition of society is very problematic (Callister, 2004)<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> For example, the ethnic identity of Pakeha is particularly controversial. Although the term is widely used, there remains considerable misunderstanding of what Pakeha means, and even a widespread perception that it is a derogatory term (Callister, 2004; King, 1991). This misunderstanding was the rationale given by 77% of those reporting they never used the term in the 1996 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) conducted by Massey University (Pearson & Sissons, 1997, p. 69). In the 2001 Census only 8,128 people recorded themselves as Pakeha (Callister, 2004), while in 2006, approximately 8,500 people (V. Treliving, personal communication June 27, 2007) recorded themselves as Pakeha. However, using Statistics New Zealand census data to indicate ethnic identity is problematic. For example the word *Pakeha* appeared in the 1996 Census as 'New Zealand European or Pakeha' but not in the 2001 or 2006 Census, where those who identified as Pakeha had to write this identity under the 'Other' category – the word Pakeha was not present on the form. Interestingly, Pakeha respondents are collected under the New Zealand European category and not visible as a significant ethnic grouping in public census-data reports (Callister, 2004; Statistics New Zealand Tatauranga Aotearoa, 2006). Importantly Walker (2001, p. 13) notes: "Group labels, as found in censuses, do not express the social and psychological complexities of the way people see their ethnicity."

This raises a significant problem for educators; Aotearoa New Zealand is a diverse settler nation comprised of many different and shifting ethnicities. For example my classes in the BRecEd have included students identifying as Pākehā, New Zealand Europeans, Kiwis, Māori, Asian New Zealanders, Samoan New Zealanders, Fijian New Zealanders, and recent migrants or temporary residents from England, Norway, the USA, and Brazil. The problem for educators is how to facilitate an increased understanding of Aotearoa New Zealand as a nation if who we are as a nation is not agreed to?

The process of building collectively coherent identities characteristic of ethnicity or nation relies upon shared understanding that includes perceptions of shared ancestries, historical events, ideologies, myths, and symbolism. As Smith notes, these are not so much fabricated as they are imagined, with the nation “equally a felt and a willed community” (2000, p. 59), with a continuity and appeal that carries across generations with such enthusiasm that people are willing to defend them as in times of war. Imagined or willed understanding is a process that everyone engages in but those in powerful positions play an influential role and will be discussed further later in the chapter.

Blewitt argues that “We become who we are in communities” (2006, p. 96), and that the individual and community are entwined. However communities can take many shapes and notions of community extend to polytechnics like CPIT and even apply to distinctive sub-groupings such as faculties, schools or programmes such as the BRecEd. Important here is that social identification with a community is the “perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate” (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 21). For both the staff and students on the BRecEd a sense of belonging is important and will be explored in more detail in chapter 5.

However belonging also suggests change because belonging to any community is not static. The process of reconstruction to align identity with a changing community context has been called identity work (Cockburn, 1998). This is a process of active transformation based upon thinking and working on perceptions of oneself, and of the context as one perceives and experiences it (Giddens, 1997). Importantly people look to their day-to-day lived experiences to remind them who they are and to their

communities to define who *we* are and how *we* are different from *them* (Thompson, et al., 1999). This process is referred to as othering, and explains the way individuals and groups celebrate the similarities that define their group as being different from the similarities defining other groups. For educators exploring identity related to sustainability, the idea of *we* and *they* are important.

This is because authors such as Plumwood (2002) suggest the process of othering is not limited to distancing oneself and one's community from other social relationships, but also extends to ecological relationships that can also become distanced (as High Moon (Takatsuki, n.d.) depicted in Figure 1.1). Therefore, redefinition must also be reflective of a wider ecological context where "...the rationality of Othering our planetary partners must be countered by an alternative self-critical rationality of 'studying up' to find the source of our problems and difficulties with nature" (Plumwood, 2002, p. 167). This is an important point for educators.

Othering also presents very significant problems for identity work when questions of power and equity are raised, as they must in discussions around sustainability. This is because, as Porter observes, by engaging in an othering process that is a result of a person's desire for self-esteem and an ordered social world, that person also creates a world comprised of sustainable and unsustainable others, of "winners and losers" (2005, p. 10). This process is an unavoidable part of social relations and is revisited in later chapters where discussion explores the idea of individuals and organisations positioning themselves using sustainability as a point of difference. Othering has the capacity to slow change within groups because othering focuses on difference and leads to fragmentation and defensive positions.

Cockburn (1998) was confronted by similar othering dilemmas in her research into diverse group composition, and she looked to transversal politics as a mechanism to explain how groups move beyond "immobilising contradiction" (1998, p. 8). Transversal politics developed from the experiences of Italian women anti-war activists who had to overcome what Cockburn describes as "the dangerous belief in universal sisterhood and a relativist stress on difference that... [doomed them] ...to division and fragmentation." (Cockburn, 1998, p. 8) Cockburn explains that in her

research the relationship that underpinned group activity and defined their identity was a result of true collaborative projects. She observes:

“If the space is safe, the process transparent and the self (let us say a grouping) feels affirmed, then it may feel able to ‘own’ rather than project its fears. It is more likely to hear and engage with, rather than fantasize and demonise, the other.” (1998, p. 215)

The concept of creating safe spaces for students to explore an understanding of who they are in relation to others is important for education for sustainability in outdoor education and will be revisited later in this chapter. Cockburn maintains it is only through local political practices of individuals working in collectives (as opposed to national political practices that worked to maintain ethnic tensions) that can create these spaces, creating the “...difficult reality of unavoidable, unending, careful, respectful struggle.” (1998, p. 216) The local political practices that comprised Cockburn’s study therefore provided a mechanism for people to come together with others in a constructive rather than a destructive way. In this way, the reconstruction of identity builds upon the understanding that others are equals engaged in the same struggle but holding a different reality. This concept has important ramifications for ethnic diversity such as Pākehā and Māori, and will be discussed further.

In this country the shared identity of Pākehā is particularly important to discussion about collective identities because Pākehā, as the dominant and colonising ethnic group, frame dominant narrative that underpins the concept of nation. However Pākehā, as an ethnic identity and as a source of dominant narrative, is also characterised by multiple and shifting positions relating to perspective and these are discussed in the next section.

### ***Pākehā as an ethnic identity***

Ryan defines Pākehā as meaning “not Māori, European” (1989, p. 38) and the word is frequently used in this way by Māori and non- Māori speakers alike. Traue (1991) reflected that Pākehā are New Zealanders of European descent who know no other home or allegiance. In discussing Pākehā as an ethnic identity, King explores the term from his position of being Pākehā:

“Pākehā’ ... is an indigenous New Zealand expression that denotes things that belong to New Zealand via one major stream of its heritage: people, manners, values and customs that are not exclusively Polynesian. But it also denotes *things that are no longer simply European*. It denotes people and things that *derive* from abroad but that, through the transformations of history and geography, through their new characteristics and combinations, are now unlike their sources and antecedents.” (King, 1991, p. 16)

Much of the confusion around the definition of Pākehā (outlined briefly in footnote 5) lies in a lack of understanding of Te reo, for as Spoonley notes “Those who do not feel comfortable in an indigenous linguistic landscape, which grants Māori recognition and status, oppose the use of terms such as Pākehā” (1993, p. 57). However Pearson and Sissons suggest there is a deeper political issue at stake:

"Naming is a contested colonial practice, empowering of the namer and frequently disempowering of the named. An underlying, and perhaps largely unconscious, concern of those who reject the label, Pākehā, may be, therefore, the politics inherent in their being named as other. Any Māori word might have been attributed with negative connotations in such an assumed context of discursive aggression." (1997, p. 69)

King’s definition above alludes to the contentious political nature of being Pākehā, addressed by Spoonley in the following statement:

"Saying 'I am Pākehā ' is not something neutral. It has been created in the politics of the 1970s and particularly the 1980s. It is a response and a way of beginning to negotiate with Māori, and increasingly with other ethnic groups about a New Zealand future. I can't separate what I mean when I say that I am Pākehā from these politics." (1991, pp. 155-156)

The politics of the 1970s and 1980s referred to by Spoonley relate to the erosion of power, and marginalisation of land and ‘other’ people through historical and ongoing colonisation. These politics (described by Bell (1996) as the politics of assimilation or obliteration), are realities that for the most part remain beyond the imagined felt and willed Pākehā identity. This means the dominant Pākehā narrative informing us about nation has been willed and imagined to suit the needs of this group. This narrative is distanced from reality through an imagined history and created sense of naturalness, and is critical in maintaining a stable authenticity for the nation. It comes as a great surprise to many students to learn that history does not always present an accurate recollection of events and the impact of this learning will be explored later.

According to Kaufmann and Zimmer, the inter-relationship of landscape and nation take two forms, these being the “nationalization of nature” (where popular history is projected onto a landscape to produce distinctiveness) and the “naturalizing of nation” (where landscapes are viewed as having a direct affect on the moral and spiritual identity of the population) (Kaufmann & Zimmer, 1998, p. 6). It is useful to explore the dominant Pākehā narrative resulting from these processes to better understand the willed and imagined nation of Pākehā. Such exploration produces two significant contradictions: the first relates to the myths that underpin the narrative; while the second encapsulates efforts to create a sense of belonging and is discussed in the next section.

### *The myths that underpin Pākehā narrative*

For the early colonists arriving in this country, engagement with nature was framed by the Romantic period in Europe that produced a fascination with natural scenery. This had important ramifications, for the environment of Aotearoa New Zealand (including the indigenous people the colonists found) came to be regarded as something to view and wonder at, naturalising the nation. Nature was considered a sublime spectacle, argued Evans, and became “... a central part of Pākehā New Zealander's sense of themselves and of Māori, and, in turn, of Māori 's subsequent self image” (2007, p. 62). This saw New Zealand and its indigenous people thought of as a scenic wonderland; and from about 1880, a tourist destination based “ideological aestheticisation” (Evans, 2007, p. 101).

This has resulted in historical and contemporary marketing of Aotearoa New Zealand (such as the recent New Zealand Tourism Board’s 100% Pure New Zealand campaign depicted in Figure 4.1) that presents natural scenes as a representation of national identity.



**Figure 4.1:** Indigenous people and scenery as a representation of national identity (New Zealand Tourism Board, 2006)

So pervasive is the imagined and willed notion of a pure and unspoiled landscape, the 100% Pure New Zealand narrative can now be argued to have become a collective understanding of the way things are for our nation. However, there is a conflict between the ideological aestheticisation of nature as can be seen in the 100% Pure campaign and the way dominant discourse frames the utility of nature in the discussion that follows.

Early settlers were selected on their ability to be self sufficient and on arrival to the country saw themselves as conquerors of the environment as they rose to the challenge of taming the land (C. Bell, 1996; Evans, 2007). This led to a perception of the settlers having a close relationship with nature and seeing themselves “...as of the environment” (C. Bell, 1996, p. 36). The high productivity of farms and significant export of primary produce over the ensuing decades further cemented this perception, acting to nationalise nature. To poignantly demonstrate the utilitarian relationship of Pākehā with the land, Evans looks to the role of slaughter houses as a metaphor for what being close to nature really means. He observes “... meat processing

encapsulates the brutalities and excesses of European colonisation and nakedly displays the utilitarian connection of the Pākehā to the land.” (Evans, 2007, p. 117) When the image of slaughter house and the image encapsulated in 100% Pure are juxtaposed, it is easy to understand the contested space of nation that students have to grapple with.

The taming of the land came at a cost. The work was physically hard, hazardous, and the places being tamed were remote and isolated. It is likely that as a nation we became desensitised to, or even came to expect and accept, injuries and death associated with this process. In a very interesting remark, one person interviewed suggested that there seemed to be some tolerance of serious accidents and fatalities in the outdoors and that this tolerance might be an extension of our colonial past. The person interviewed gave the example of how no schools cancelled school camps at the Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Pursuits Centre following the seven deaths of Elam School students in the Mangetepopo Gorge in 2008.

The idea of Aotearoa New Zealand being a nation of people living close to the land with an identity based on a utilitarian relationship with the land is common amongst Pākehā. For example the following statement made by a student reflecting on their place in this country demonstrates a strong farming heritage common to many students:

“My ideas, beliefs and values are characterized by my time spent here [on this land]. The land is important to us for life. It sustains us nutritionally and spiritually. Our family vegetable gardens border on commercial enterprises! The sea sustains us with her gifts. Excess food is preserved or smoked and given away. Lamb, mutton, beef, pork, bacon, eggs are supplied by the farm. Waste is composted and recycled back into the land. My southern family has similar connections with the land and sea. A large percentage of the extended family lives within an hour’s drive of each other. Predominantly rural, their core values are largely unchanged. They identify strongly with their local area and many have remained in their district their whole lives.”  
(Excerpt from student journal)

This reflection supports the idea of a dominant narrative that draws from a utilitarian relationship with the land to explain who we are as a nation, a relationship based upon what the land can provide for us. This poses an interesting dilemma for sustainability discourse on a national level, for if land is primarily valued for its usefulness, then the underlying principles of sustainability are easily overlooked. In a recent well



publicised example of this dilemma, National government minister for energy and resources Gerry Brownlee proposed in a speech to the Australasian institute of mining and metallurgy that laws protecting conservation estate be repealed to allow for mining activity (Brownlee, 2009). Here the imagined and willed narrative of utility expressed by Brownlee challenges the imagined and willed narrative of aestheticisation of nature as it is manifested in the conservation estate.

The language that draws from the nationalisation of nature and the naturalisation of nation can produce powerful imagery and symbolism (such as 100% Pure) that provides tangible evidence of identity, but also acts to distance perception from reality. Smith observes these symbols are more potent than the principles they are founded upon, because they are inevitably widely disseminated through a variety of media “so that the nation ceases to be the abstract property of intellectuals and becomes the immemorial imagined community of all those designated as its members.” (A. D. Smith, 2000, p. 73)

For example, the deeply ingrained perception that Aotearoa New Zealand is clean and green was referred to by Prime Minister Helen Clark in her 2007 speech to parliament: “We pride ourselves on being a nation with a sense of fair play, on being clean and green, and on being nuclear free.” (Clark, 2007) Here, Clark is articulating her perspective (albeit somewhat different from that expressed by Brownlee), one version of dominant imagery of nation to the nation. It is not surprising her image obstructs the reality of environmental degradation, habitat destruction and species loss in Aotearoa New Zealand together with the role people have played in this process (for example see Ministry for the Environment, 2007).

Another related image informing Pākehā identity is the relationship indigenous peoples had (and continue to have) with the land. This imagined and willed image displays a tendency to romanticise the past relationships indigenous people’s had with their local landscapes, assumes indigenous peoples lived in harmony with their landscapes, and assumes those harmonious relationships continue to occur. Figure 4.1 depicts such imagery and is a great example of the link between the notion of 100% Pure and harmonious indigenous relationships with landscape.

Zink observes that as discontent with the modern developed world grows on a range of levels (including environmental), there is a need for what Grande has called "an illusion of the uncomplicated primitive utopia" (cited in Zink, 2007, p. 6). In this way, indigenous knowledge comes to be idealised, as demonstrated by Abbot below, but has little grounding in reality.

"The Māoris' strong links with the land, their bush survival techniques, their awareness of edible plants and animals, and their folk law are all valuable in developing an environmental and physical ethic for use in the New Zealand outdoors." (Abbott, 1990, p. 307)

The danger here is that contemporary Māori may not be able to live up to the expectations included in Abbot's observation, which have been constructed in this case to meet the needs of dominant Pākehā outdoor education pedagogy. Bell also takes this position, suggesting that "Māori culture is paraded publicly as indigenous New Zealand, conveying the idea of a country that is at one with nature and history. This is less to support Māori than to support the political agenda of non- Māori." (C. Bell, 1996, p. 30) In the case of the 100% Pure campaign, the political agenda was initially driven by tourism, but has since developed into creating marketing advantage for exported products such as dairy produce and meat against competing countries that are more industrialised or populated. In this way, imagined images of Māori become part of a romantic national unifying symbol that informs how both Pākehā and Māori consider themselves. For example Zink wrote:

"When framed through discourses of race it becomes difficult to avoid the motif of the ecologically noble savage as it is closely linked to a moral superiority attached to nature. Indigenous people are construed as having a closer relationship to nature than is possible for non-Indigenous people" (2007, p. 6).

This creates problems for Māori who are also struggling to come to terms with contemporary issues related to social and ecological sustainability. The perception of Māori having a close relationship with the land that is not reflected in contemporary urban lifestyles and raises important questions for Māori about sustainability, for as Royal (2008) notes, the disconnection of indigenous cultures from traditional lands and traditional ways tends to be overlooked by both indigenous and non-indigenous peoples alike. This theme will be discussed further later in the chapter.

### ***Pākehā, biculturalism, and creating a sense of belonging***

Many authors have argued that Pākehā have a respectful cognisance for the political context of ethnicity and biculturalism that sets them apart from the other dominant group related identities such as *New Zealander*<sup>8</sup> or *Kiwi* (for example see Callister, 2004; King, 1985, 1991; Spoonley, 1991; Traue, 1991). The identities of New Zealander and Kiwi, by their assumed inclusiveness, are a way of denying ethnic diversity, “a form of nationalism” argues Spoonley, that is often “contradicted by the racism of its adherents” (Spoonley, 1993, p. 16). Pearson and Sissons add that “These, what we might call national unifier discourses, are important sites of contestation between the relatively powerful and powerless along a variety of fault lines of inequality” (1997, p. 72).

However, the values associated with ethnic identity labels of Pākehā and New Zealander may not be as distinct as Spoonley has suggested. In summarizing their 1996 ISSP findings on this subject, Pearson and Sissons (1997) remarked “...overall, the pattern of responses to biculturalism reflects, in our view, a marked conservatism, if not hostility, towards most bicultural possibilities among a majority of both the always and the never Pākehā” (P. 76) and “...the link between being Pākehā and being bicultural is surprisingly weak.” (p.79).

But there is a critical element in King’s analysis. King argues that being Pākehā encompasses a unique perspective and culture (King, 1991). This is because a Pākehā perspective acknowledges the influence of Māori culture and language. These influences, together with the uniqueness of the land, exist in no other place. Pākehā, King notes, “regard their Pākehā culture as one that is becoming - like Māoritanga - intrinsic to New Zealand” (1991, p. 7) and both cultures see “Aotearoa New Zealand [as] the focus of present and future loyalties and commitments” (1991, p. 9). What this acknowledges suggests King is a culture that “is not something foreign: it is a *second indigenous New Zealand culture.*” (1991, p. 19).

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<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, Census 2001 saw 89,000 people identifying as ‘New Zealander’, approximately ten times the number of those identifying as ‘Pakeha’ (Potter, cited in Callister, 2004).

However, there are important differences between the experiences of Māori and Pākehā. The former was colonised by the latter and that process has resulted in an intergenerational marginalisation of Māori people from their communities, culture, resources, opportunities and power. Chris Laidlaw, whilst holding the office of Race Relations Conciliator wrote:

“.... to describe both Māori and Pākehā cultures as indigenous is a risky business. The very word seems synonymous with *tangata whenua*, and other distinctive words in native languages that identify the first occupants of the land.” (1991, p. 169).

Maaka and Fleras, (citing Oliver) propose that the risky business Laidlaw refers to is really about the distribution of power; that "References to indigenaity are inseparable from competition over *power* - or, more accurately, the transfer of power from those who have it to those who want it and never consented to relinquish it" (1997, p. 23). Consequently, an exploration of indigenaity is about the restitution of indigenous rights within the political context of the nation state. Maaka and Fleras observe:

"Indigenaity as principle and practice is ultimately concerned with reshaping the structure of indigenaity-state relations in hopes of establishing a legitimate political order where innovative patterns for belonging can be explored" (Maaka & Fleras, 1997, p. 21)

Therefore positioning Pākehā identity as intrinsic to Aotearoa New Zealand (but not indigenous as King proposes) allows for the discourse of oppression associated with colonisation to occur. The term indigenous is highly politicised and suggests a people victim to the process of colonisation. To date this has not been a Pākehā experience. Recognising this reality, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has offered a useful definition of indigenous peoples:

“Indigenous or aboriginal peoples are so-called because they were living on their lands before settlers came from elsewhere; they are the descendants ... of those who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived, the new arrivals later becoming dominant through conquest, occupation, settlement or other means” (July 1997)

Therefore claims to indigenaity by dominant cultural groups can be viewed as continuing efforts to colonise. Pākehā culture can be intrinsic to Aotearoa, but only the Māori culture is indigenous by the reasoning of the high commissioner. This

differentiation is not intended to marginalise one over the other, for as King notes “The fact that one of these peoples has been here longer than the other does not make them more 'New Zealand' than later arrivals, nor give them the right to exclude others from full participation in the national life” (1991, p. 9). Importantly, the distinction between intrinsic and indigenous allows for separate identities and discourse relating to marginalised peoples and colonising processes to take place. Creating spaces for students to explore these positions is important and will be discussed further later in the chapter.

However, although claims of Pākehā indigenaity are directly related to the colonisation process, they are likely also a reaction against the homogeneity of wider globalising pressures such as the trade in food, fashion, and music, and large scale migration. This notion is supported by Barber and Bell, who argue that the origin of claims to Pākehā indigenaity “can be found in contemporary transformations of class relations brought about by the process of economic globalisation” (Barber, 1999, p. 33); a reaction to an increasing uncertainty about a sense of place “which has undermined traditional local identification and diversity” (C. Bell, 1996, p. 21). Evans also writes of “adaptation and resistance” to global homogenising trends (producing “glocalisation” – a local interpretation of global influences) but argues that such efforts are not original creations but rather a pastiche of what has gone before (Evans, 2007, p. 173).

This is important because it means that only by taking cognisance of the past will we find a way to the future. Head observes:

“We're a new nation with old roots, and a people in the making. A degree of continuity in cultural tradition is essential to spiritual strength, but I am certain that it is in the fracture of tradition that New Zealand identity is being built. What lies in the fracture is the Māori - Pākehā relationship. What we do about it is the thing by which we will be either saved or damned” (Head, 1991, p. 34)

The notion of people in the making through Māori - Pākehā relationships is important and suggests mutual engagement and breaking with history. Creating the spaces for this to occur is a critical part of education for sustainability in outdoor education and will be discussed in part three.

The discussion that has taken place about the willed and imagined realities that underpin the Pākehā narrative (including discussion about aesthetics and utility, clean and green, and that indigenous people are closer to nature), coupled with discussions about belonging, are critical to thinking about nation, and particularly to thinking about sustainability and nation. This is because conflict exists between the lived history and realities of both colonialism and colonisation, and the definition and articulation of nation by Pākehā. This conflicted space that defines national identity is also a contested space, where other willed and imagined realities are promoted in an effort to change the way we think about what it means to live in Aotearoa New Zealand. Changing the way that we think about what it means to live in Aotearoa New Zealand is the focus of Part Two.

### **Part two: A sustainability identity is being constructed for Aotearoa New Zealand**

The willed and imagined realities of nation are not static, but rather display change that is spread over settled and unsettled ideological periods. Kaufmann and Zimmer (1998) observed that during settled periods the values, symbols and myths that form cultural traditions supporting national identities are accepted without question and are considered common sense. However, during unsettled periods in history, the authenticity of these cultural traditions is put into question, leading to efforts at redefining national identity. Smith explains:

“Ideologies like nationalism provide blueprints for liberation and social change. They may be used by any group that so desires to legitimate and gain recognition for its collective aspirations. At the same time, nationalism can encourage and stimulate groups to seek undreamt of political goals and has often done so.” (A. D. Smith, 2000, p. 39)

In unsettled periods of history and accompanied social adjustment, people have an increased sensitivity to how relationships with the landscape are conceptualised. Kaufmann and Zimmer explain this well:

“... the philosophical and moral interest in the natural environment was not constant over time. It commonly gained in intensity at times of crisis, when profound changes in the broad cognitive and moral frameworks of orientation provided fertile ground

for the emergence of new conceptualizations of the relationship between nature and culture.” (Kaufmann & Zimmer, 1998, p. 1)

The emergence of new conceptualisations of the relationship between nature and culture informing nation can be found in recent public discourse in this country. For example, in her 2007 Prime Minister’s statement to Parliament, Helen Clark observed that “Sustainability is central to our government's programme across all three key policy themes; economic transformation, families young and old, and strengthening national identity.” (Clark, 2007) Here, an alternative national reality to those described earlier in the chapter has clearly been willed and imagined by the Prime Minister. Over time such examples have become increasingly more visible to the extent that efforts to nationalise sustainability (albeit sustainability as perceived by the speaker) can now be regularly found in the nation’s public and political discourse.

In a similar appeal made in the 2008 treaty debates, Māori academic Royal challenged the people of Aotearoa New Zealand to unite to achieve social justice and environmental sustainability by engaging with traditional obligations to other people and to the land through a cultural movement he describes as producing a ‘new tangata whenua’ (Royal, 2008). In his essay Royal argued:

“I suggest these two themes [caring for one another and caring for the environment] can be common meeting ground for all New Zealanders, including those Kiwis newly arrived and might be the basis of a tangata whenua of the new Aotearoa New Zealand. My thought is that tangata whenua might be a vision for humanity in which we all may share regardless of ethnicity, culture, gender and religion. Creating and maintaining quality relationships between ourselves, New Zealanders old and new, is critically important as is sustainable relationships with our natural world. These are issues of the highest importance and my suggestion is that tangata whenua might be an Aotearoa New Zealand cultural movement and vehicle designed to uphold these ideals and address these challenges.” (Royal, 2008, p. 5)

Royal’s vision of a new tangata whenua has appeal in drawing people of different ethnicities together to rise to the national challenge of living in a sustainable manner, anchoring different ethnicities to distinctly New Zealand discourse that provides a national project. Such activity can enhance a sense of belonging, for as Cockburn suggests, “Where an ethnic group has not conceived of a national project, its members will not feel a national identification” (1998, p. 213) and this might be where Royal is positioning his challenge.

However, there are problems with Royal's new *tangata whenua* as a national unifier. This is because language is an expression of culture, and therefore the meaning of words is culturally situated. One person interviewed pointed out that "should the words *tangata whenua* be coopted by the dominant perspective without that cultural context, the importance of marginalisation through colonisation attached by many to the term [*tangata whenua*] could be lost". From this perspective, *tangata whenua* is directly related to, and can only be negotiated through *whakapapa*.

Earlier discussion also spoke of multiple and shifting identities and herein lies the problem with national unifier statements. This is because, as Thompson (2001) points out, a nation is not a unitary entity where all members are agreed in their beliefs, but a collection of individuals that interpret nation and national identity in their own way. Therefore national unifier statements such as those of Clark and Royal by themselves are unlikely to change the idea of what it means to live sustainably in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Further to national unifier statements, Brah, Hickmann and Mac an Ghail (1999) add that a sense of national identity is the product of a complex interrelationship of national, local, communal and individual processes of identity acquisition and formation. Therefore it is not surprising Thompson suggests that:

"...people make decisions about nations, on the basis of their knowledge of 'national cultures', and locate themselves and others accordingly. In these ways, nations do not just *exist*, they are made real to the individual by the individual in the course of her/his deliberations and interactions. This is what I mean by the *local* production of national identity." (Thompson, 2001, p. 24)

A useful example of this was signalled in my intellectual autobiography, where I recall the protests against the Springbok tour in 1981, and the lasting impact this experience has had on me. However, authors such as Bell (1996) suggest that lasting impact of this event has also been on a national scale, and that the widespread division and conflict associated with this event was a defining moment in the construction of a national identity. The collective action associated with the social movement against apartheid became part of not only who I was, but who *we* were although as individuals we would all perceive the event in different ways. As Saunders (2008)



observed, individual, collective and public identities are all important aspects of social movements.

Social movements provide rich opportunities for individuals to locate and develop relationships with other people with similar values and goals and can play a key role in the formation of national identity. Sustainability is held in common by people across the diverse tapestry of organisations<sup>9</sup> such as environmentalism or the global justice movement intent on bringing about social transformation. Significantly, these organisations and the individuals that they are comprised of tend to have a focus on reacting to global issues on a local scale. This can result in nations also seen as impediments to action because the activities of nationalism are not necessarily related to the needs of the local community or environment. For example legislation can place the actions of activists beyond the law (a theme that will be returned to later in the chapter).

Activism is an integral and often highly visible element of social movements and provides a powerful force to draw people together towards a common goal. In this way, the formation of personal and collective identities that hold sustainability in common is linked to how people act, as well as their perception of reality provided by myths, symbols and imaginings. Collective action, (described by Giddens (1997) as people gathering to pursue shared interests such as the anti-apartheid protest) is seen by della Porta and Diani as being characterised by the intersection of collective involvement and personal engagement (2006, p. 91). The two aspects of collective involvement and personal engagement are important to remember when outdoor educators are looking to create situations that allow students to explore an identity related to sustainability.

Māori academic Royal has spent some years (see Royal, 2003, 2004, 2008) exploring the ways language limits discourse relating to people (particularly indigenous people), and the way all people relate to the land. He has advocated the importance to rethink

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<sup>9</sup> For example, Castells suggests the typography of environmentalism occupies five broad movements including: conservation of nature; local communities protecting local landscapes; counter-culture movements advocating eco-centrism; international environmental organisations; and green political movements (1997, pp. 112-121). Castells notes that in reality the boundaries between these movements are blurred.

the language that we use to frame relationships, particularly when we are trying to grapple with problems associated with thinking about the future (Royal, 2008). Royal demonstrates this positioning in the following statement where he suggests that what is needed is:

“... a fundamental consideration of relationships between people and between people and our natural world. We need to devise new ways by which to respect difference and diversity whilst participating in a whole called Aotearoa New Zealand. We also need to create sustainable and mutually nourishing relationships with the natural world.” (2008, p. 6)

Royal’s essay argues for the forging of new ways of knowing and behaving relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> century that draws upon existing knowledge about how people conducted themselves in the past, particularly in relation to local people making local decisions based upon local knowledge.

Royal maintains there are difficult questions that go to the heart of values that underpin our modern society in Aotearoa New Zealand. These questions require of Pākehā a “deep engagement with our past” (2008, p. 6), particularly around issues of power, equity, justice, coupled with an understanding of issues that affect the land such as overconsumption, and the pervasive notion of an economy separate from the environment. This means critically examining the willed and imagined realities such as those of aesthetics and utility, clean and green, and that indigenous people are closer to nature discussed earlier.

Of particular importance, Royal observes that Pākehā have “overlooked the importance of ritualising our sense of place and connection” (2008, p. 6). Bell (1996) and Evans (2007) support this with their detailed analysis of Pākehā identity constructed through the incorporation of celebrations related to the cultural traditions of the northern hemisphere. Spoonley voices these concerns when he reflects:

“I don't claim to have a rounded understanding of my own cultural traditions. There's a lot that I am ignorant of. But that is for future generations. For Pākehā, New Zealand is a young country and we have to create our own traditions, and our own understanding of what it is we are doing and have done. There can't be many cultural groups in the world who are less tied to a cultural past and with so many opportunities. It is an exciting and liberating task to work through the issue of what it means to be Pākehā.” (Spoonley, 1991, p. 156)

For Pākehā, this means recognising that we are part of a culture that is made up of what Laidlaw (1991) calls borrowings from other cultures and places, because it is important to come to terms with what it means to be Pākehā and acknowledge an identity that is unique to Aotearoa New Zealand. Significantly, this process involves recognising the borrowings from Māori that have taken place and the opportunity to continue to learn from their indigenous knowledge, culture and traditions (Laidlaw, 1991). It is this deep engagement with the past in a manner that generates new understandings of relationships with people and the land coupled with a shared vision of a sustainable future, critical in Royal's essay, that must find a place in outdoor education. Royal's suggestion of partnership is important here, for as will be discussed in the next section, partnership offers mechanisms that create clearer understanding, and through understanding, comes tolerance of diversity.

Partnership also signals a common interest in a sustainable future and Royal argues that all peoples share this. Australian outdoor educator and academic Ellis-Smith (2005) also writes about common interest, and observes that all cultures share a physical and spiritual connection with the land but he suggests some cultures have forgotten what this means.

However, a sense of intimacy with the land also needs to be accompanied by the sensitivity of the impacts of that relationship upon the land, and the responsibility to act where that impact has negative effects. It means striving to achieve a state of understanding and balance, and recognise traditional ways of knowing that have, in many ways, been left in the past by all cultures. It is about what one person interviewed called the "ancient wisdom" that intricately linked living in Aotearoa New Zealand with the natural systems of the land in a way that they become reflected in all of the social structures, values and behaviours of the people that live here.

Part three explores how, through engaging with education for sustainability within an outdoor education context, students can be encouraged to reflect deeply upon their own identity in a manner that can lead to changes in the way they see themselves and their place within Aotearoa New Zealand.

### **Part three: Education for sustainability in outdoor education creates spaces for identity work**

In chapter one, it was established that there is a need for education for sustainability in outdoor education to create a setting for students to think critically about the way they see themselves and their place in the world. To begin it is insightful to think about what this means from a student's perspective. The following journal extract on the process of developing a sense of belonging in Aotearoa New Zealand gives a useful insight to what students are experiencing:

“I was influenced throughout my childhood by my father and his beliefs. I was influenced throughout my childhood by my experiences of the ocean. And I am influenced by my culture and the dominant paradigms within that culture. And currently I am challenged and influenced by the ideas and theories and experiences within my outdoor education degree – a programme which has taken my world view, turned it upside down, flipped it sideways and labelled it ‘environmental sustainability’. Being exposed to the world of academia can breed dissonance, inspiration, or agreement. It makes you think about place, about your experiences within that place, about your place within a culture and your place within a paradigm. It makes you question and challenge and philosophise ‘place’. It may put you in place or out of place or may even help you discover place. After all, that’s what indigene is about – our relationships to place – whether it be ancestors or the land, the mind or our culture, it really all just comes down to our ‘place’ and how we make sense of that place.” (Excerpt from student journal)

In this reflection the student has described the process of developing a personal position and understanding in relation to place. The student speaks of initially being influenced by their culture and dominant paradigm but then speaks of being deeply challenged and influenced, of having their world turned upside down, and of thinking about their place within a culture and within a paradigm. As Porter observes, “... deep underlying identity positions are shaken, jostled, and threatened by the call for sustainability” (2005, p. 1). The student is describing how they have entered into a process of identity work and of reshaping the way that they see their self in relation to the world around them. Their realisation and acceptance of different ways of looking at their world has seen them link this process with what they have called “indigene – our relationships to place”.

Creating the spaces for reflection as described above is critical if education for sustainability is to be successfully integrated into an outdoor education context. As argued in chapter three, this requires a re-conceptualisation of what outdoor education is and how it is framed. For example Ellis-Smith has suggested that:

“...this can occur through "soft option" activities which de-stress the participants as much as possible and allow peoples inner-knowing, connection and Truth to come to the fore. The facilitator's role is to guide participants through their process, not to prescribe what their outcome should be." (Ellis-Smith, 2005, p. 80)

Australian academic Martin has been particularly influential in developing my own understanding of outdoor education that is focused on thinking about who we are and critically reflecting on the relationships between people, and between people and the land. Across his influential work (for example see Martin, 1999, 2004; 2005), Martin has identified key influences on the formation of relationships with nature developed through outdoor education experiences. In very broad terms these influences include creating time for students to explore and deeply reflect on their sense of place in a multi day journey style experiences that do not have the development of technical skills related to pursuits as a sole focus. Martin also encourages students to become familiar with the plants and animals they encounter and to revisit places to allow familiarity with those places to develop. Critical outdoor education has been the hallmark of Martin's work and can, in his words “contribute distinctively to education for the planet by focusing on the cultural beliefs and practices that may be contributing to the ecological crisis.” (1999, p. 464)

Other Australian academics have also been influential in developing my thinking about education for sustainability in an outdoor education context. Brooks (2002) has argued the importance of engaging with local environments and local communities and to challenge notions of universal and detextualised outdoor education. He has also challenged the pervasive understanding of transference and the privileged position of adventure in outdoor education (Brookes, 2003).

Also from Australia, influential authors Payne and Wattchow (2008) introduce the importance of time to outdoor education. Advocating what they call slow pedagogy, they argue that once a focus on technical activity and performance is removed, the outdoors becomes a place to linger, enhancing the opportunity for a sense of belonging. Both authors are also critical of traditional outdoor education practices and promote engagement with the outdoors in a manner that is not overly dependant on either advanced technical skills or equipment (for example see Wattchow, 2005).

However these authors are situated in Australia and as a consequence do not articulate the unique context of Aotearoa New Zealand described by authors such as Brown (2008). This unique context, Brown argues, is found in the bicultural context of outdoor education in this country discussed in the last chapter coupled with the exploration of identity as discussed earlier in this chapter. Drawing upon the work of Martin, Payne, Wattachow, and Brookes, the following case study is an example (developed over a four year period) of how a traditional outdoor education experience can be woven with education for sustainability themes relevant to Aotearoa New Zealand.

***Case study: Te Kiekie Mt Somers climbing journey***

In this journey, a class of second and third year BRecEd students learning about multi pitch rock climbing, tramp for approximately three hours into Te Kiekie Mt Somers scenic reserve in Canterbury. The students carry in heavy packs containing all their food, tents, climbing gear and personal equipment that will be required for the eight day course. The journey into Te Kiekie Mt Somers ascends through remnant and regenerating beech forest to the sub alpine environment where they will camp in the proximity of the Pinnacles Hut. Courses generally have about twelve second year students and up to six third year students. The ages of the students can range from late teens to early thirties but generally students are aged in their early to mid twenties and split evenly across both genders.

The walk in to Te Kiekie Mt Somers can be a daunting prospect if students are unfamiliar with carrying a heavy pack. However the students can walk in at their own pace which means the class splits into groups traveling at different speeds. The walk provides students with unstructured time to think about where they are going and the country they are passing through, described by one student as “quintessential Aotearoa New Zealand”. Despite the difficulty of the walk, a student reflected:

“Even though it is one of the hardest tramps I have ever done, I was still able to develop a love for the area and there is no doubt that I will be returning again in the near future.” (Excerpt from student journal)

The tramp into and out of Te Kieke Mt Somers coupled with the extended camping experience is considered important. For many students, this will be the longest they have spent in one place in a remote setting. They have no access to vehicles and other conveniences and this is important because it then becomes possible to reflect upon the place these things play in our daily existence. There is no cell phone reception in the basin which further detaches students from their daily lives and they become immersed in the here-and-now. After eight days, the daily routines of food preparation and waste management, student presentations, walking up to the climbing area, climbing, sitting at belay ledges high on the cliffs, fetching water, bathing in the creek, sitting and talking, being part of the weather, landscape and wildlife become the lived experience that feels like home rather than something that exists far from home. For example, at the end of the course, two students reflected:

“The course felt very personal development oriented and I felt very relaxed and calm the whole time so I was able to develop a love for the area.”

“The length of time is an important factor because every other issue and life encounter is either left behind or carefully thought about in a completely different setting” (Excerpts from student journals)

The course adopts what Ellis-Smith (2005, p. 80) referred to as a “soft” approach. This has meant removing the traditional emphasis on physical performance, technical skills, and traditional values of dominance associated with climbing that derive from climbers overcoming the adversity of nature (Martin, 1999); and looking to approach the experience with what one person interviewed described as humility. Students were encouraged to decide what climbing they were capable of and to work within those parameters without the threat of failing the course because they could not meet performance parameters that were set for them. When students were asked to reflect upon this, one student observed:

“I never felt any pressure to push [climbing] grades or climb too often. Walking up to the crag each day created this sense of journey, and the tutor’s balance of information formally and informally has allowed me to just be me and in this way I have learnt more about myself in a week than perhaps in a long time... I believe the structure of the course created a space for the group to gel in a pressure free environment, which in turn created a better learning atmosphere.” (Excerpt from student journal)

The students are encouraged to learn the names, and particularly Māori names, of the plants and animals around them, many of which they will not have encountered before. For example, one student reflected that “I really enjoyed seeing the Kārearea [New Zealand Falcon] for the first time” after daily visits from several birds in the area. The climbs that have been created for teaching at Te Kiekie Mt Somers have also been given Māori names (such as Whakatenatena which means encouragement) so that students become accustomed to using the words more often. Presentations given by the students play a big part in this learning, and they are encouraged to select topics related to the cultural, historical, geological or ecological character of Te Kiekie Mt Somers. These form powerful learning experiences for the students, as the following reflection describes:

“Learning from peers is, in my opinion, a superlative form of getting to know an area. Hearing different voices and different perspectives makes the knowledge much more memorable. Hearing [another students] Māori creation story half way up to the crag made me feel more in touch with the environment through the setting she chose [sitting on a large rock] and the way it was delivered [telling the story while all students made a flax flower that they later left in a place that was special to them].”  
(Excerpt from student journal)

An important part of the Te Kiekie Mt Somers experience has been allowing time (usually a whole day) for the students to explore the area in their own way, and most students have used this time differently. For many students, having this time to just enjoy being in the area, to find a place to read or think was the highlight of the trip. One student told of an experience near the summit of Te Kiekie Mt Somers reading for nearly an hour while a Kārearea sat and watched from a nearby rock. Another student followed a stream up a valley where no track existed and later wrote:

“... the morning light never ceased to capture my soul, walking down the river gave me space and meaning to my footfalls that allowed me to feel less an intruder than a contributor. I know the plants by name, the rock by its feel and the wind by its strength. I can see my home on the plains below and connect the two... this extends my home. And yet here the bird song never dies, the trees are watchful all the while; rocks so solemn watch me walk, for without words yet still we talk.” (Excerpt from student journal)

This reflection is a useful example of the point that Payne and Wattchow (2008) make when, citing Cresswell, they observed:



“...the outdoor place that is not colonized, normalised and naturalized by the linear-like hegemony of a traditional activity, with its various technical demands for skillful performance, is both a location and locale to pause, rest and dwell in. Time as place is elevated in importance rather than subjugated, rendering sense of place and, possibly, place attachment more possible.” (p. 30)

The creative and emotional reflection also illustrates how the Te Kiekie Mt Somers experience has helped the students overcome the rationality of othering nature described by Plumwood (2002) discussed at the beginning of the chapter. The students have deepened their understanding of what Plumwood describes as our planetary partners and appear to have at least considered a more respectful association than that of only utility. The remnant sub alpine and beech forest ecosystems that the students learn about through presentations also provide a stark contrast to the heavily modified agricultural landscape of the Canterbury plains. The impact of colonisation on the land is clearly visible from Te Kiekie Mt Somers and students readily make the connection between the remnant ecosystems and the extent of what has been lost on the plains below<sup>10</sup>.

Through the use of selected readings about the relationships people form with the land through outdoor education, conversations can be generated about the method of teaching and learning that has been developed for the Te Kiekie Mt Somers course. For example the readings foster reflection on getting to know local areas more intimately through learning about the culture, history and ecology of that place. At the end of one course, a student reflected:

“I am sad to be leaving. I have a close friend at home and whenever I go to visit, even though I don't see him very often, I still just stroll in the front door and feel welcome. That is the feeling I get sitting here looking up at Te Kiekie. As much as I don't like the fact that the development of something such as a relationship can be theorised, I think the structure of this week has had a great impact on this process. The things that Peter Martin talks of in developing 'sense of place' like knowing the history and flora and fauna of the area do help me a great deal in developing that relationship. I still think a big aspect of this process cannot be explained. It is something I don't think I would like to be explained because that would take away from it.” (Excerpt from student journal)

A tradition of preparing a dinner on top of the Orange Wall, about 40 minutes walk above the camp has become an event to celebrate the time spent at Te Kiekie Mt Somers. After eating, and after sunset when the lights of Christchurch are clearly

illuminated on the plain below, the third year students have been required to facilitate a session that has second year students reflecting upon belonging. One year saw a student of Waitaha descent speak about what a mihi represented in her tradition before she offered her own, and then everyone presented their own mihi (prepared earlier in the day) that looked to history and place to establish who they were. The student of Waitaha descent would later reflect on the experience in the EONZ publication *Out and About*:

“As we shared our history, where we were now and our hopes for the future, we sat at the top of the cliff and watched the sun set. I didn’t realise until later on that we were in the middle of a facilitated action for us to gain a sense of place there, and it worked! The second years did not know it until later also that the session we ran with the mihi was facilitated by us because of an assignment. I certainly felt oblivious to what was happening. I knew that there was an underlying agenda for this thing, ‘sense of place’, but never would I have picked it that it was happening to me at the time.” (Te Maiharoa, 2009, p. 19)

My perception is that this experience has allowed the students to explore what being intrinsic or indigenous to the land means. The experience has been overwhelmingly expressed as the highlight of the journey; “unreal” as one student reflected.

Peer assessment of seminars and a formative peer and tutor assessment of climbing and instruction related assignments play an important role in the tone of the Te Kiekie Mt Somers trip. Critically it creates for a more cooperative rather than competitive relationship and places the tutor into the role of learner. For example several students reflected:

“I think there is something special about peer assessment in that it creates a learning environment in which everyone is a learner, and is here solely for that learning, what ever it may entail.”

“Formative assessment seemed to make [us] less stressed about ‘performing’ and [we] could enjoy the experience more.”

“I think this course would not be nearly as good if the last two days were summative assessment days. That would completely take away from this process and in a way, would be an earlier return to Christchurch and ‘real’ life.” (Excerpts from student journals)

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<sup>10</sup> Students learn about the extent of habitat destruction in other classes discussed in the following chapters.

The variety of experiences at Te Kiekie Mt Somers appear to have challenged the students to consider where they live in a deep and meaningful way, and through their reflections it can be demonstrated how the methodology employed on the course has helped them in this process. The reflections that describe a growing relationship with Te Kiekie Mt Somers are particularly interesting in that there is an absence of the utilitarian relationship described earlier in the chapter that is significant in the formation of national identity. Rather, reflections have been more about learning about the place, developing intimacy and familiarity. Should the course have focussed more on the technical aspects of climbing, it is likely the journal reflections of the students would have looked more to describing the quality of climbing Te Kiekie provided.

I feel that having a Māori perspective woven into the experience is critical, for as one person interviewed noted, by learning about the mythology and history of a particular place one becomes aware of what is unique to this landscape. This is well described by King:

“... the Māori presence here has given the land on which we live a historical echo, a resonance it would entirely lack had the Māori not *been* here first, and *named* things first. Whenever I go to a new place, or visit a familiar one, I instinctively look for the shapes on the land and the middens that indicate where the first inhabitants of that place chose to make their home and gather food. I am drawn to and comforted by the psychic residue of their presence.” (King, 1991, p. 19)

The use of te reo Māori on the trip has also helped students to think about the place of Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand; for te reo Māori reinforces the uniqueness of the land and the place of the people that inhabit it. Using te reo Māori at Te Kiekie Mt Somers gives students who do not often speak te reo time to practice their pronunciation and gain confidence. This is important according to PhD researcher Julia de Bres who observed “Many of those who were strongly supportive of the language said they still felt inhibited, for example, about the pronouncing Māori place names in case they got them wrong or because of other's attitudes towards them” (as cited in Mulrooney, 2008).

It is also likely that te reo Māori opens up the possibility to overcome some of the challenges regarding ethnicity and discursive aggression that were discussed earlier in

the chapter. Using te reo Māori supports the idea of Māori as namer and Pākehā as named, abhorrent to so many that live in this country.

However, the experience at Te Kieke Mt Somers does not include the critical elements of community participation and action associated with social movements and because of this, is limited in the impact it can have with students and how they see themselves in relation to community and environment. As Kraft (1981) poignantly noted, outdoor educators often reflect on social, political and environmental problems while sitting on a mountain top but have failed to move this reflection to action on return to the city.

### ***Students taking action***

As already discussed, the idea of taking action with a view to bring about some form of change has been a fundamental part of environmental education discourse and more recently was included as one of the five aims in the Guidelines for environmental education in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 1999). It is also clearly the intention articulated through the vision, principles, values and key competencies of the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007b). This intention has also been demonstrated through the development of six Ministry of Education achievement standards at level 2 released in December 2007 that include in unit 90810 the planning, implementation and evaluation of an action that contributes to a more sustainable future (Ministry of Education, 2007a). These action events constitute what one person interviewed called “real life learning experiences”.

The skills associated with taking action have come to be regarded as action competence. This is described by influential Danish academics Jensen and Schnack (1997) as built around the ability to act on a societal as well as a personal level in a manner that addresses solutions to problems being studied. Citing Jensen, Eames et al. (2006) describe action competence as “...a process in which students identify environmental issues, determine solutions, and take actions in ways that develop their competence for future action to solve or avoid environmental problems” (P.8).

Jensen and Schnack (1997) have observed that actions can be categorised as either direct or indirect. Direct actions are those that are aimed directly at solving environmental problems, while indirect actions are those whose purpose is to influence others to contribute to solving problems collectively. They also note that students must understand the greater regional, national or global context and rationale of the problem being tackled or the educative value of the action for the student may be limited to simplistic and individualistic outcomes.

Jensen and Schnack (1997) have identified four important components of action competence. These are:

- Knowledge and insight about what the problems are, the cause, and opportunities that exist to solve them;
- Commitment and assertiveness to tackle the problem;
- Having a positive vision of the future; and
- Experiences of ‘concrete’ actions to draw upon.

The following student reflection was composed after the completion of an action project with a classmate and is a good demonstration of the components listed above:

“This action has helped further build up my ideas and opinions on alternative transporting. After doing some extensive research I was made aware of how many different organisations have a well set up and frequently used car pooling system in place. This opened my eyes to the potential for CPIT to also reduce the number of cars travelling to and from the city each day and therefore making a difference to the amount of carbon emissions produced. The research done on alternative transport (problems with current systems and solutions) has reinforced my reasons for biking everyday, and has made me want to encourage others to do the same, or at least give them ideas on how to cut down the amount of driving one does each week. This has been an informative and memorable action.” (Excerpt from student report)

The student also clearly demonstrates that they have made the crucial links between reflection on the action and personal behavioural patterns within the context of the problems being tackled, something Jensen and Schnack (1997) acknowledge is difficult for students.

The action projects take place in the compulsory third year paper AROE700 Social environmental action and are worth 70% of the course grade, and elements of the assessment require: planning, implementation, reflection and presentation.

The actions that students undertake and the way they go about undertaking them tell us a lot about how students view their place in society and the world around them. Relationships can be seen to form around common goals, unlikely groups can be seen to be working together over long periods of time (sometimes beyond the academic year), and countercultural behaviours can be displayed. The AROE700 actions that have been undertaken include the following examples: critical mass cycle protests; car-less days (at U.C., CPIT and the College of Education); Random acts of kindness (an international movement); habitat restoration activity; working with youth at risk; waste audits of various departments at CPIT; political lobbying; writing a children's book with environmental themes and with external funding circulating it to Canterbury schools; designing alternative models of assessment in senior school outdoor education; supporting food banks and other charity groups; submitting and presenting submissions within the Resource Management Act public participation process.

However, observation of actions can only provide part of the picture for as Mezirow and associates (1991) note, reflection on the action undertaken in an educational setting completes the process. For the students in AROE700, reflective journals and presentations complete this process.

The following case studies are examples of actions that illustrate how the transformative learning in education for sustainability in an outdoor education context can impact on the identity of students involved. The actions discussed have been selected to present examples of how students have engaged with the key issues of individual and national identity, social movements, community and change discussed in this chapter. The case studies draw heavily from the reflections of students that provide insight into how they have been moved by the actions they were part of.

### ***The Kura Kaupapa Māori action***

Each year since 2004, some students have elected to undertake their action at local Kura Kaupapa Māori (two kura have been involved). These actions have involved BRecEd students meeting with teachers from the kura and working in a collaborative

manner to design and deliver a series of educational outdoor experiences for the kura rangatahi (teenaged school students). The process of working collaboratively means a number of things in the context of these actions. Collaboration has involved a formal and traditional Māori welcome of the BRecEd students onto the school grounds. Collaboration has also meant that the BRecEd students need to discuss with the kura teachers a range of themes related to classroom topics the kura rangatahi are studying and design activities to incorporate the themes into an outdoor setting. Collaboration also means that BRecEd students sometimes need to share the burden of locating resources for activities that cannot be supported by low decile schools.

The formal welcome onto the school grounds and into the Kura Kaupapa Māori community has been a challenging process for the BRecEd students. This is because for all of the students involved with the action to date, this experience has presented them with a cultural setting that they have not been comfortable with and they have had to work to adapt to. For example the following students recall their experience of the pōwhiri at the beginning of their action with the kura:

“Today was fantastic for me on a number of personal levels. I spoke at the pōwhiri and sung our whānau waiata and this was quite challenging for me. In the past I have not had much to do with my Māori culture and when I have been involved I never played a major role like I did today. It has been easy for me to shrink into the background in the past, which has left me with little to no experience in these situations.

So today when we were heading to the Kura and in fact for the hour or so leading up to it, I felt as if I was sitting in my kayak at the top of [a grade 5 rapid]. It was a great feeling to do it, and do it with competence. I spoke in Māori and gave my mihi, and then sung a song in front of 15 students and 3 teachers. I was lucky to have the help of [another student] and my sister who both guided me through this. ...

Even though I have been involved in pōwhiris before, I don't think I understood what they were about until I was in this role. [the kura physical education teacher] said to us that when we walked in that morning our feet were tapu, but after the powhiri and we shared kai, we were one, and became whānau. ...I have total belief that we are now part of the kura whānau in the true meaning of the word.” (Excerpt from student report)

As indicated in the reflection, this student (who identified with several ethnicities including Māori) had not taken a lead role in a pōwhiri before and so had to prepare for the experience. This saw the student drawing upon friends and family to assist with their preparation on what to do, what to say, and how to speak in te reo Māori. The student talks of the pride experienced at participating in the pōwhiri with

confidence, an indication of how the experience has enhanced what it means to be Māori for this student. A Pākehā female student had different challenges to deal with:

“I would like to express ... my reservations or perhaps better described as challenges I think I may face during our days with Kura. One of our aims ... is developing a good relationship between diverse cultures, and I think acceptance and recognition of each others cultures is a big part of this aspect of our action. In acknowledging that this is a big part I also want to acknowledge an area of the Māori culture that opposes my own: during the Pōwhiri females do not speak. This is a part of the culture and tradition that I have struggled with at times (being a confident and enthusiastic female speaker). Upon our arrival it was pointed out that only Chris would speak (I was given opportunity to speak after the formalities had taken place). I also noted that although Chris and I were standing together, Chris was invited to play in the league and touch rugby at lunch and I was not. I think acknowledging and respecting their views on female roles within their culture is really important for me to do, I also think it will be the same for them when I am instructing in an outdoor based pursuit. This will probably be quite different from traditional female Māori roles, this is my impression so far and I am looking forward to learning and observing more.”  
(Excerpt from student report)

In this reflection, the student documents her concerns relating to the role played by women in traditional Māori settings. The first challenge was that the pōwhiri required different roles for the male and female students attending, with the female student not having the same opportunity to speak as her male student partner. The second challenge for the female student was that she also felt excluded in games after the pōwhiri because she was a woman. Evidence that the female student had accommodated these challenges was found in comments such as “This was a really positive experience” and “The pōwhiri was really interesting and was a new experience for me, I really enjoyed it and feel like [the male student] and I are really welcome at the kura.”

By making the effort to meet these challenges constructively, both the students are actively engaging in a bicultural experience that sees Māori moved from being part of the iconic natural scenery described earlier in the chapter to part of the lived experience that the students are interacting with. For example, becoming more familiar with te reo Māori, as Spoonley (1993) points out, leads to increased levels of comfort for Pākehā and grants Māori recognition and status, and helps breakdown notions of “discursive aggression” identified by Pearson and Sissons (1997, p. 69).

However, the partnership experiences described by the students are also key settings to provide for the reconstruction of identity around the other, as discussed earlier in the chapter. In this discussion, Cockburn (1998) described spaces that allowed for people to



come together as equals engaged in the same struggle but holding different realities. For the students, their negotiated outdoor experiences allowed for Māori and Pākehā to work together, while embracing difference in a positive rather than the destructive way associated with othering.

Collaborative work has created safe spaces that have allowed the students (and myself) to challenge the process of othering that results in the “us” and “them” position described by Thompson et al. (1999). A challenge to the process of othering happens when students see value in, and respect, what others bring to the collaborative relationship. For example the following student wrote of preparation for a session with the kura that required consultation with the Te Mātauranga Māori department at CPIT:

“The Polytechnic is currently starting on what could prove to be a very strong relationship in the future. Te Kura Kaupapa Māori brings the Māori immersion students who are in need of outdoor education. Te Mātauranga Māori department brings the knowledge and culture side of things and the outdoor department of course provides the outdoor education side of things. Both our education pedagogies [Māori and outdoor education] have some common themes that can be very beneficial for society in general; if we work together then these could become so much more powerful. This in time could become a very strong and effective relationship. However ... this will take time, and more importantly a lot of work mainly from the outdoor department.”  
(Excerpt from student report)

The ongoing loosely organised relationship referred to here by the student has endured for six years since the statement was made. There are no clear boundaries but the parties have all colluded to keep the actions happening. This collusion displays the hallmarks of communities of practice that Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) describe. Communities of practice are comprised of relationships built around the purpose to create, expand knowledge and to develop individual capabilities; that there exists self selection based on expertise or passion; that there exists fuzzy boundaries of association; that passion, commitment and identification with the group holds them together; and that the group lasts as long as it is relevant and of interest to the members (Wenger, et al., 2002, p. 42).

Of particular interest, this same student questioned: “what right do I, a Pākehā, have to teach Māori students anything, especially as I am the first to admit that my knowledge is very poor of most things to do with Māoridom?” After consultation with Te Mātauranga Māori department staff, the student discovered they were able to

create lessons that were culturally safe for a Pākehā to deliver. For example one lesson was built around the concept of travelling back through time and was about how social and ecological landscapes had changed through industrialisation (see figure 4.2).



**Figure 4.2:** Rangatahi engaged in a journey back in time on the Ōpāwaho (Heathcote River)

In another example of collaborative work, BRecEd students worked with the kura staff to create a rock climbing experience where students would continue with their learning about the history of the Port Hills area. The climbing experience was based at Rāpaki, a local cliff of much historical significance. The BRecEd students rigged a cliff-top traverse approximately 40 metres long coupled with optional top-rope ascent and rappel at each end. The experience saw kura rangatahi working their way along the protected traverse collecting colour coded jigsaw pieces that described several different historical accounts relating to Rāpaki. In groups the students then had to recall their account and present it to the rest of the class.

At the end of these projects the BRecEd students were able to reflect that because the kura rangatahi were learning to speak (or were already fluent speakers of) te reo Māori did not mean they were also knowledgeable of local history, legends or place names. This reflection indicated that this experience moved the students to understand the point Royal (2008) and Zink (2007) make regarding the inaccurate

assumption made by many non-indigenous people that indigenous cultures retain their traditional ways of knowing and that they are close-to-nature by virtue of being indigenous discussed earlier.

But there is another important aspect to the question “what right?” posed by the student above that has its roots in the intrinsic / indigenous discussion found earlier in the chapter. Both the BRecEd students and the kura kaupapa rangatahi belong in Aotearoa New Zealand. This is their home, and through these negotiated experiences they can learn to share their place in this land; as equals but with respect for difference. However, this process has not been easy for the BRecEd students. For example, while discussing food gathering on the Ōpāwaho in pre European times, one rangatahi remarked that “we cannot even use the water cress anymore.” The BRecEd student involved reflected later:

“I felt ashamed and guilty, a great burden of responsibility and regret clumped in my belly. The murky waters of Ōpāwaho are such a powerful example of how the culture I belong to has created such great distance between ourselves and the people of this place by the mismatch in value we place upon our resources. What was once a rich food source, a means of transportation between the raupō and tussocks of the Canterbury Plains, has today become a convenient way to sort for waste.” (Excerpt from student report)

For the BRecEd student involved, the realisation was that although Pākehā culture has much to offer, it also has much to learn.

The depth of the commitment of students involved in the kura action has been remarkable. For example the following excerpts describe a fund raising charity dinner in order to take the kura rangatahi on an overnight journey that many could not afford:

**17 May** [the student] brought some scratchies and made a raffle with 50 tickets at \$2 each so we would make \$80 and started organising a charity dinner where our friends would pay \$10 dollars for a 5 course meal.

**22 May** We had the dinner and after spending \$30 dollars on 13 people we made \$100 dollars which was awesome. We had snacks then pumpkin soup, salads, then a roast meal and finished off with dessert. We also drew the raffle that night and had made \$180.” (Excerpt from student report)

What is remarkable here is that the CPIT students working with the kura expanded their community to include some of their friends in a manner that saw those friends actively participate to help achieve the goals of the action. These and other CPIT students have also been called upon to provide additional instruction and supervision support or logistic support as drivers. Through their experience volunteering for the action, some students have been motivated to reflect upon their perceptions of, and relationships with Māori based upon the new experience. For example, one student who assisted with the supervision was so impressed by the experience that they later reflected:

“Why isn’t there a stronger presence of our native culture in outdoor education? ...I believe a good way for those in New Zealand who are not aware of the Māori culture or do not want to be, should learn this information in outdoor education classes. Outdoor education and Māori culture can so easily relate due to the places you visit and the activities you participate in. I feel that in New Zealand the Māori culture is so often swept aside and I feel that it can be included in outdoor education so easily.” (Excerpt from student journal)

This reflection reinforces the idea of becoming who we are in communities (Blewitt, 2006). Here the student became part of the community working with the kura, and that involvement resulted in their reflection on what outdoor education meant for them. The experience saw them challenge what they perceived as a dominant model that lacked the authenticity that the bicultural experience provided. Other actions are more radical.

### ***The protest action***

Over the course of the three years of the degree, a student became progressively engaged in sustainability discourse. The student (Mark) asked for additional readings, asked probing questions, actively engaged in class discussions, made changes to their daily routines such as travel options, and of particular interest, worked on waste management and food choices in their flat together with flatmates. Mark sought out workshops and lectures outside of class and institution and they raised questions at several significant public events. For the action project Mark decided to lobby using a variety of approaches for a need to adopt more sustainable ways of living relating to climate change. Mark wrote letters to local and national politicians, and attended and actively participated in local public meetings. But it was not until the end of the course field trip where students presented the full extent of their actions, that Mark disclosed how he (and

an accomplice) had climbed the Chalice in Christchurch's Cathedral Square at 4:00am one Monday morning and hung a large banner made from two double bed sheets sewn together that displayed the earth in flames and text that read "we need to change to stop climate change" (see Figure 4.3). Mark had also anonymously alerted *The Press* about the protest and a photographer was sent to take pictures.



**Figure 4.3:** Chalice protest action (photo: student contribution)

Mark eventually graduated and left Christchurch, returning to attend the International Conference on Recreation and Outdoor Education held at Lincoln University in January 2008. I presented two papers at this conference based upon my experiences and research on weaving education for sustainability into outdoor education. At the end of the first presentation to about 100 people on problems that I had encountered in my teaching, I was challenged by an American academic that I had simply engaged in "hollow academic theory" without offering a way for students to move forward and could I offer something more constructive. A small number of my ex-students were attending the presentation, and among them was Mark, who asked if he could answer the question. He stood and spoke about his experiences at CPIT and how he now saw

his place and purpose in the world differently. Mark spoke of how the teaching and learning had impacted on him in a deep and personal way. I did not speak after student finished and there were no more questions. Several academics came up afterwards and suggested that the student had demonstrated being deeply moved through learning and that this spoke highly for what we were doing in our programme.

When Mark climbed the Chalice early on the morning of his protest, he demonstrated in a very public way the emerging values that underpinned his identity and how he perceived that identity fits with community. First, it is likely he saw himself as part of a larger international social movement, thinking globally and acting locally to raise awareness about climate change. Second, the way he planned and implemented the protest including the choice of a high visibility site, illegal but not destructive behaviour, and engagement of media demonstrated an alignment with well established protest methodology of social movement activism characteristic of groups such as Greenpeace. Third, Mark was able to engage the assistance of a friend (who was not in the class) in, what must have been known by the friend, was an illegal activity. Here Mark has shown that he has developed his own community beyond the class, a community that shares values and vision of a sustainable future.

What is most interesting about the action taken by Mark is that he has demonstrated how student actions can fall beyond the established legal and policy framework, not because they have been directed to do so, but because they have chosen to do so<sup>11</sup>. This means that engagement with sustainability discourse can result in identity work that moves students to act in a manner that can be considered both counter cultural and subversive. However, given earlier discussion about the conspicuous place of collective action in our own national identity perhaps the Chalice protest, even though it was an illegal action, was not so much carried out with a subversive intent but rather out of an acceptance of the place of social movements in forming our understanding of nation. From this perspective, collective action is normalised as part of nation and fits (if sustainability is considered a social movement as described earlier) with the willed and imagined

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<sup>11</sup> Several other actions undertaken by students have also employed civil disobedience techniques characteristic of social movement and will be discussed in more detail in the chapters that follow.

vision of a sustainable nation that the Prime Minister (Clark, 2007) described (although the intent of Clark's speech was probably not so much to inspire protest behaviour as to create an alternative image of nation). The role that the AROE 700 course has played here in defining what is normal is a critical point and will be explored in the following chapter.

Just how far students should be encouraged or permitted to push these boundaries is an important question with ramifications for the instructor, institution and student. When considering the question of how daring actions should be, Jensen and Schnack respond that "...we should dare a lot, as long as the objectives are of an educational nature!" (1997, p. 10). This is because there is so much at stake and change to new ways of thinking and acting is critical. This raises an important question about the role of education to support or challenge nation, and about the identity of organisations themselves in relation to social change.

Organisations put a lot of resources and energy into fostering institutional and corporate identities based around characteristics such freedom and sustainability (Porter, 2005). Such activity sees organisations actively engaged in practices related to social change on a daily basis through marketing strategies that lead to the association of products with life styles (and therefore investing in the identity of consumers). Increasingly, schools, universities and polytechnics are also positioning themselves in a manner that has sustainability prominently featuring in their corporate identity profile and institutions can be seen to be vying to be 'leaders in sustainability'. For example, early in 2009, Otago Polytechnic had a sustainability link prominently displayed on their web site home page and the institution was actively marketing a profile constructed around sustainability.

When the student Mark responded to the challenge posed by the American academic, he did so by reflecting upon my role as his tutor from the perspective of his experience as learner. The point that he chose to respond at all to the challenge that, as far as I was concerned, was not directed at him, was an indication that he perceived ownership of what it was he thought was being challenged. This suggests that the process of teaching and learning had resulted in student Mark identifying with a community of others (possibly a community built around education for sustainability within the BRecEd), and

that he interpreted the challenge raised by the academic as a personal challenge to his own identity and to the community he identified with.

Over the years, other actions have focussed on positive social or environmental change within CPIT that have acted to draw staff and students together through different mechanisms, and to provide alternative ways to think about how students engage with their community. The following action is a good example of how the student projects have contributed to a more sustainable community.

### *The coffee cup action*

For their action, two students researched the number of disposable coffee cups used by the two cafés in the immediate vicinity of CPIT, together with the privately owned commercial café and student's association café on campus. As a result of their research, they decided their action would try to reduce the demand for disposable cups from within the institution. They sought \$500 financial sponsorship from CPIT's student environmental project fund, sourced a cheap supply of thermos cups, arranged for the cafes to engage in an incentive programme (with every sixth cup free if not purchased in disposable cups), advertised their campaign over the CPIT wide email service, set up an information booth and sold coffee cups in the main ALX building on campus. They sold over 500 cups in the first two days of their action (see Figure 4.4). The programme has since been taken over by the CPIT students association and the CPIT environment manager and the cups are available from the student union, from reception at the Sullivan Avenue trades campus and remain available for purchase at the three cafés.

What was remarkable about this action was the two students were able to mobilise four separate commercial catering organisations (which took a significant effort and very strategic lobbying), the CPIT student's association executive, and the CPIT environment manager, together with other staff involved in supporting roles such as looking after the ongoing sales of cups. Second, all of the people involved then continued to work so that the coffee cup action continued a year after the students graduated (with coordination taken on by the students association and CPIT's environmental manager). This is a good example of a group of people with little in common able to come together to work



towards a shared goal based upon sustainability principles for an extended length of time.



**Figure 4.4:** Action to replace disposable coffee cups (photo: student contribution)

Again the place of organisational identity proved important. In their review of the action, the students described playing one catering company off against another to gain the greatest discount for the promotion, with individual companies not wanting to be seen to be less supportive of the student initiative (and therefore students in general) than the others.

For these two students, and for other students who have undertaken similar actions within CPIT, an important consideration is that they chose to act in a very local way with a vision to transform their lived-in physical surroundings and community. By focussing actions within a local setting as described earlier in the chapter, these students have increased their connection to that place through mechanisms such as enhanced feelings of collegiality with other staff and students; enhanced familiarity with their local context through learning about systems and procedures; giving themselves a positive visible presence in the institution that is of their own doing; and receiving positive feedback from people they do not know (for example the two students involved in the coffee cup action received a lot of positive comments from

enthusiastic staff and students that they had not anticipated). Importantly they have also done something to move the institution towards being more sustainable. This link between local action and the local production of identity as described by Thompson and Fevre (2001) is a very important consideration. It means that education for sustainability should be considered in a manner that is cognisant of local needs of the students and local issues relating to where they live and it should encourage an engagement with both.

### **Summary**

The first part of this chapter explored identity as a complex and multi layered understanding of who we are and has discussed some of the mechanisms by which people assemble their identity. It was argued that national identities are comprised of willed and imagined realities that occur on a number of levels. The second part of the chapter explored how a sustainability identity for Aotearoa New Zealand is being created. This part of the chapter looked to the perpetual process that individuals and communities engage in to construct and reconstruct themselves and explored how sustainability discourse and related community oriented actions signal an emerging collective identity constructed around sustainability. The third part of the chapter explored how education for sustainability in outdoor education creates spaces for students to explore their own identity and can create a new understanding of their sense of place within Aotearoa New Zealand, together with the obligations that sense of place brings.

The next chapter draws the threads of identity and change together in the context of the action research project.

## **Chapter 5: The action research as an agent of change**

### **Introduction**

This chapter builds upon the ideas developed in chapters 3 and 4 and describes the organisation and implementation of the action research project first discussed in chapter 2.

The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part continues with the theme of identity developed in the last chapter through the exploration of education, sustainability and adventure as key identities constructed for the BRecEd. Through these identities, the chapter then revisits key problems for sustainability in outdoor education presented in chapter 3 and developing solutions through constructing a sustainability identity presented in chapter 4. These discussions help contextualise the action research within the BRecEd; as well as within a broader discourse about social change as an action or process, referred to in literature as change agency.

The second part of the chapter will explore the action research itself using principles of change agency theory as discussion points. This part of the chapter will include how the research project was organised; the dilemmas faced by the researcher; and begin an exploration that will continue into chapter six of how the action research group came to grapple with the problems and engage with solutions framed in part one.

### **Part one: Creating an identity for the BRecEd**

In the last chapter, the development of a sustainability identity was established as a key mechanism for students grappling with the challenges of learning about sustainability and what sustainability would mean for them on a personal level. It was also suggested that organisations put a lot of resources and energy into fostering institutional and corporate identities based around characteristics such as

sustainability. This sees schools, universities and polytechnics increasingly positioning themselves in a manner that has sustainability prominently featuring in their corporate identity profile (how CPIT has positioned itself in relation to sustainability and the impact this positioning has had on the research will be discussed in chapter six). Identity profiles can also be observed to be actively created within organisations. For example, within CPIT, the BRecEd can be observed to have a particular identity profile that is actively constructed by staff, students and graduates, together with institutional functions such as marketing and management. However, as the following discussion reveals, an identity profile is not always clear, and can even provide fertile ground for challenging debate.

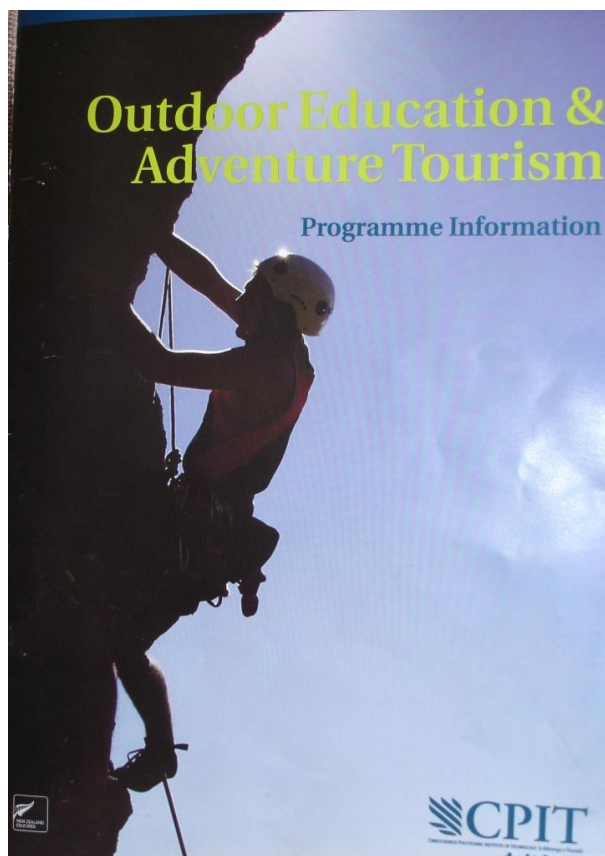
### ***Sustainability identity constructed for the BRecEd***

The BRecEd community is comprised of many different identities such as student, tutor, Māori, woman, and gay. However it is possible to identify three significant identities that are actively constructed and maintained by the community: First there is an identity built around adventure that is strongly embraced by some teaching staff and appears to initially attract many students to the programme. Second there is an identity built around being an outdoor educator and instructor. This identity is strongly embraced by staff and is also likely a key attraction for students. Third there is the identity built around sustainability that is embraced by some teaching staff and increasingly embraced by most students as they travel through the programme.

Useful examples of how these three identities are constructed by the Outdoor Programmes can be found in the Outdoor Programmes promotional video *Going Somewhere* (CPIT, 2002) and the Outdoor Education and Adventure Tourism programme information document (CPIT, 2007b).

An adventure identity is clearly articulated in both promotional video and programme information document. The promotional video presents an adventure identity by way of action packed scenes of adventure pursuit activities (including kayaking, rock and alpine climbing, and rafting) set to contemporary hard-rock music or shouts of enjoyment from participants. Brief reflections from students such as “definitely it is

very exciting” and “adventurous, yea it’s very adventurous” act to reinforce the adventurous identity formed by the visual images. Some of the video footage even includes stock provided by the photographer of people and activities unrelated to the Outdoor Programmes (such as base-jump parachuting, down-hill mountain biking, and extreme skiing) which add to the sense of excitement portrayed in the video. Taking a similar approach to the video, the Outdoor Education and Adventure Tourism programme information document (CPIT, 2007b) depicts a roped rock climber ascending a vertical face on the cover (see Figure 5.1) and the pages within present numerous other images of students engaged in adventure activities. The text within the document reinforces the place of adventure within the Outdoor Programmes in general and the BRecEd specifically by referring to career options in recreation and adventure tourism. The images and messages in both examples convey an adventure identity for the Outdoor Programmes to prospective students, and act to remind current students and staff of the place of adventure in the programme.



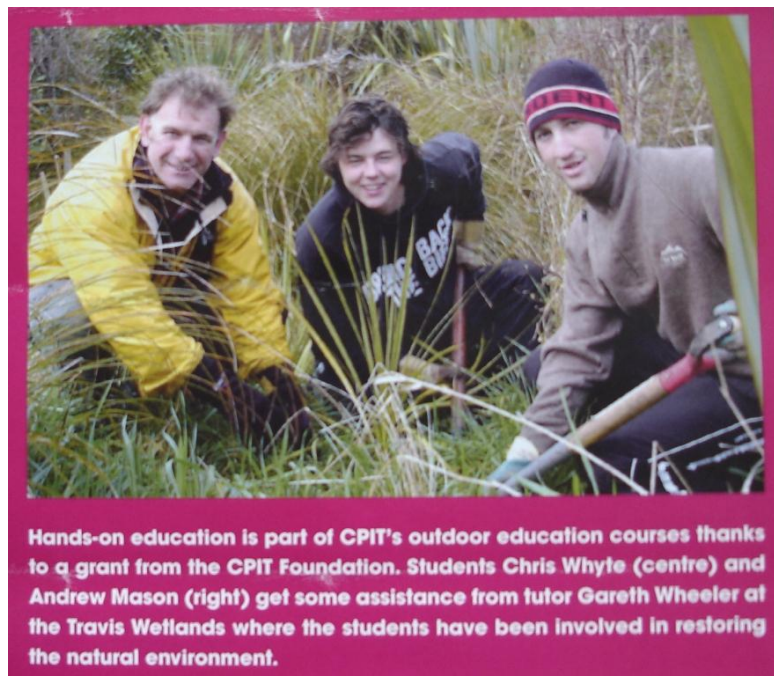
**Figure 5.1:** Cover of the Outdoor Education and Adventure Tourism programme information booklet (CPIT, 2007b).

An outdoor educator and instructor identity can also be clearly found in the promotional video (CPIT, 2002), although this identity has less of a presence in the video than the adventure identity. An educator and instructor identity is depicted through video footage of students working with school groups, and teaching a variety of predominantly activity related skills to other programme students in group settings. The programme information document (CPIT, 2007b) provides a somewhat similar array of pictures depicting an educator and instructor identity, although no interaction of students with school groups has been included. Interestingly, the written description of the BRecEd graduate profile strongly frames a graduate identity of educator and instructor for the reader. For example the profile of future graduate employment opportunities identifies five areas of employment relating to education or instruction with the remaining three areas relating to event management, conservation and adventure tourism (CPIT, 2007b, p. 11).

An identity constructed around sustainability is not immediately apparent in the images contained in the video, or in the images contained in the programme information document. In the video the only footage that could be clearly construed as being related to a sustainability identity depicts students engaged in habitat restoration activity, or in another section (and open to interpretation) observing fur seals while sea kayaking (CPIT, 2002). In the programme information document the only image that could be clearly construed as being related to a sustainability identity depicts a graduate kneeling beside a fur seal on a lonely beach (CPIT, 2007b, p. 10). Interestingly this is the only image on the dedicated BRecEd pages and is of a past student now employed by the Department of Conservation. The sustainability identity that can be interpreted in the image is strongly reinforced by the student's reflection that accompanies the image. The graduate describes how the degree prepared him for his current work, observing: "...This position within DOC enables me to work closely with community groups, schools, Iwi and businesses and empowering them to start looking after their local environs. This degree helped open my eyes to how we can each make a difference for a better future..." (p. 10). The final sentence of the two brief paragraphs introducing the BRecEd also suggests to the reader that the degree is concerned with sustainability. The sentence reads: "In a broader context the degree promotes positive social and environmental values and behaviours which will enhance society in New Zealand and globally" (CPIT, 2007b, p. 10). However depicting

graduate identities constructed around sustainability has not always been undertaken. In the previous 2006 edition of the programme information document, a BRecEd graduate was depicted in an image wearing a climbing helmet while working at a rock climbing area (CPIT, 2006). The move to use the example of the graduate engaged in conservation work in the 2007 edition I believe demonstrates an emerging understanding, coupled with a level of comfort with a BRecEd identity constructed around sustainability.

External agents also contribute to the process of identity construction and the Travis Wetland habitat restoration project is an example of how this has happened. Since 2003, \$11,000 in external grants from the CPIT Foundation has supported students to learn about habitat restoration while they work at a dedicated plot at Travis Wetland. The funding allows for approximately six class visits each year and these have become a timetabled feature of the programme. The photo in Figure 5.2 depicts part of a promotional poster used by the CPIT Foundation in 2009 of Outdoor Programme staff and students at undertaking habitat restoration activity at Travis.



**Figure 5.2:** CPIT Foundation poster of habitat restoration

These posters were placed on notice boards throughout CPIT and the text displayed (see Figure 5.2) clearly links the outdoor education programme to sustainability related learning.

Also of interest is the juxtaposition of the identities within the video and programme information documents. In Chapter three, the dilemma of situating sustainability discourse within a wider dominant perspective was discussed. The discussion cited Jickling (2004) in analysis that identified that students can become desensitised to alternative realities because those realities risk being incorporated and coopted into the cultural context, to be subsumed by the dominant cultural perspective. It seems the description of the BRecEd within the Outdoor Education and Adventure Tourism programme information document (CPIT, 2007b) is also a useful example of Jickling's dilemma. If this is the case, then within the programme information document the emerging sustainability identity of the BRecEd is likely subsumed to some extent within a wider and more visible Outdoor Programme identity built around adventure. Yet there is some evidence that would suggest that in practice, the identity of the degree constructed around sustainability may be competing with the identity constructed around adventure, rather than being subsumed by it.

Since the degree began in 2002, the identity of the degree has likely evolved to contain a greater sustainability presence as a result of different pressures. For example, as described in Chapters three and four, each year the level 7 students undertake social and environmental actions as part of course AROE 700 that have changed the culture of the programme for staff and students in a cumulative way, with successive actions building sustainably focussed systems and traditions into the programme. Systems such as collecting compost waste while away on field trips and returning to deposit the waste in compost bins, or traditions such as actions that run year after year have become an integral part of the BRecEd (and by extension wider Outdoor Programme) identity.

The way students conduct themselves in consideration of their own emerging awareness of a sustainability identity is at times very intriguing. In what might be considered a very poignant example of student traditions becoming aligned with sustainable themes, a Level 7 Aroe700 student reflected in a journal entry that in



2007, students encouraged each other to bring beer to parties in reusable riggers instead of bottles or cans. In another example, in early 2007 the Outdoor Programmes cycle rack where students and staff park their bicycles required additional rack space to cater for the increasing number of bicycles used. However the identities of sustainability and adventure do not always coexist easily for the students.

Tension between the adventure and sustainability identities of the degree is demonstrated by a move by the 2007 third year student group to change the name of the BRecEd. The online discussion on the AROE700 Blackboard created by the students suggested that although the adventure identity is strong amongst students to begin with it may erode as a primary source of identity for many students by the time they graduate. This transition is expressed in the following excerpt taken from the discussion board:

“Talking with others about the name change it was interesting to hear how they (some 2nd yrs) also started off being focussed on pursuits like me before coming to the course and the [BRecEd] name caters to those people. Not all people start off being enviro-hippies, I found that a lot of people started as pursuit junkies before being enlightened with all the good stuff we know now.” (Excerpt from online Blackboard discussion)

Conversely a sustainability identity is likely weak on entry into the degree but builds over the duration of the programme to the point that many students perceive that this newly constructed identity is inadequately reflected in the degree name. The following excerpt demonstrates this well:

“I believe that although adventure and recreation do play a role in our programme, it is detrimental in regards to employment. I would far prefer to present a CV that contained the term 'Bachelor of Environmental and Outdoor Education.’” (Excerpt from online Blackboard discussion)

This name was eventually accepted by the students as the most appropriate name for the degree they had almost completed. However, in an interesting development of the analysis around the name of the degree, a student went further to explore culture and identity. In the analysis the student linked the adventure identity of the BRecEd with a student culture that emphasised heavy drinking. The student wrote on the discussion board:

“I thought of something the other day that I think gives more validity to the argument for changing the name of our degree. I personally find the drinking culture that exists in our programme hard to be around and I often think that the effects it has on peoples studies are a hideous waste of their money and brain cells. I know it's not my study and there is no reason why I should care but I am part of this community and it does affect my time here. I also think being part of a programme that may be known for its drinking culture is detrimental to how our qualifications are viewed by employers.

I'm not saying there is anything wrong with parties. I'm saying that I have issues with the quite serious daily drinking habits that are easily seen as serious addiction issues being role modelled to younger/newer students and outside viewers.

I think a change in our degree name would have an effect on this issue in a number of ways but mainly; students [who like] to booze their money and brains away would be less attracted to a degree of outdoor and environmental education.” (Excerpt from online Blackboard discussion)

This posting attracted a vitriolic response from three students defending both a party culture and the term adventure recreation as a necessary part of the degree name. I then had to intervene and remind students of discussion board protocols. Unfortunately the discussion board process of negotiating identity was not easy for the students concerned and ‘bad feelings’ remained between the students for the few weeks that remained of the academic year. The three students that defended the adventure culture did not attend the final field trip to present their actions for peer assessment, choosing instead to go alpine climbing.

Students remain active players in the construction of a sustainability identity for the BRecEd even after they have graduated. This is because the identity of the degree is a product of how the graduates see themselves, which leads to the type of employment they seek. Type of employment then becomes part of the process of reflection undertaken by academic staff and managers to determine whether the degree is relevant to future employment opportunities. For example a graduate now employed as a secondary school teacher describes the relationship between the BRecEd and employment relating to sustainability in the following email to another academic staff member:

“Teaching life is going well - I can't get over how fast the time flies by though. Third term already! I have written a year 11 OE course for next year, at the moment there is only one year 12 OE class and I am only helping out the other teacher who runs it. Not ideal for me. But it is looking good for next year as I will be teaching the year 11 and the year 12 courses. Will be awesome to re-hash the programmes to how I like. At the moment the OE course here is basically play time and pursuits. I will be incorporating the new EFS (action project) achievement standard into the course, so will be interesting to see how that goes. Keeping the courses local and utilising the awesome environment [this

place] has to offer. I have gained a management unit and I am now the teacher responsible for incorporating EFS into the school programmes - so that is exciting! There is a Year 9 thinking skills class at the mo, I have re-written that course for next year as well - Major focus is based on EFS concepts. We are in the process of going for an Enviroschools award and we gained funding from the ministry to build a recycling shed, which has already been built. I am just trying to sort funding for bins now. So yea a lot has happened in two terms, so not that much time for the awesome missions like I had at CPIT, but the degree has really set me up well, a big thank you to the crew.” (Excerpt from graduate email)

In this email the graduate suggests the degree set them up to take on a leading education for sustainability role in his secondary school. The role of the degree in this process is reinforced by a reply to the graduate from the academic staff member:

“Wow this is great stuff ... you're certainly running with some of the key ideas from the degree – it's great to see. EFS will be a great project for you to develop and hopefully you'll be able to get more staff involved.” (Excerpt from staff email)

However, for other graduates, an adventure identity and sustainability identity appear to clearly coexist. For example, several women who graduated in 2006 were at the time of writing in the process of raising money to establish a women's kayak school in Nepal, with the long term view to create employment opportunities for local women. In this example, the adventure identity of these graduates is juxtaposed an identity constructed around sustainability related concepts of gender equality and global inequity.

The role of academic staff in the interplay of the three key identities of education, adventure and sustainability discussed above is difficult to describe since the compartmentalised nature of the timetable means that the formal interactions between staff and students are not usually visible to other staff. However it is highly probable that all teaching staff work hard to reinforce identity for the BRecEd constructed around education through their own training as teachers, their interactions with students, and the opportunities they create for students to practice instruction. It is also highly probable that all staff identify with an identity for the BRecEd constructed around adventure. For example the staff profiles written by each individual and included in the Outdoor Education and Adventure Tourism programme information document (CPIT, 2007b) includes some form of justification for their involvement in a BRecEd perceived as being constructed around an adventure identity (such as extensive paddling or climbing experience). The role academic staff play in creating

an identity for the BRecEd constructed around sustainability is less obvious. In their interviews, several staff refer to teaching sustainability related themes, selecting local rather than remote teaching locations, participating in student action initiatives such as composting and recycling, or integrating sustainability related experiences such as conservation work into their teaching. These activities suggest that those interviewed are working to create, maintain or enhance a sustainability identity for the BRecEd.

As the previous discussion illustrates, the different identities of the BRecEd are perceived in different ways by different people. This means that any discussions relating to identity of the BRecEd risk becoming polarised and even contested as in the student discussion board example. To get an idea of the complexity of the problem created by BRecEd identities perceived in different ways by different people and how difficult it is for people to negotiate positions in relation to others that allows for common understanding, it is useful to revisit some of the other issues explored in chapter three.

A key issue is related to the development of outdoor education in this country and how contemporary practitioners have been left with a variety of perspectives regarding the purpose and practice of outdoor education. Boyes (2000) suggested there are two general perspectives that dominate outdoor education discourse: EOTC as curriculum enrichment activities across all subject areas; and outdoor education as adventure education with a subtext of environmental education. The latter perspective led Payne (2002) to observe that activities such as climbing and kayaking are “stable features” of outdoor education in New Zealand. The terms EOTC and outdoor education are commonly used in this way, with the example given of promotional material distributed to members and teacher education graduates by EONZ<sup>12</sup> (Thevenard, 2008).

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<sup>12</sup> In this material, outdoor education in schools was described as “adventure based learning as a vehicle for personal growth” and examples given of taking “students on camp, tramps and cycle trips” in order to meet the outcomes specified in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum (Thevenard, 2008, p. 3).

It was also argued that industry groups such as NZOIA have shaped outdoor education through vocational assessment focussed on risk management and technical proficiency in the delivery of practical pursuit activities; and that outdoor education framed in this way has come to define outdoor education in secondary schools through similarly focussed NCEA assessment (Jones, 2005).

Because these two perspectives dictate significantly different teaching and learning content, method and purpose, there are obvious tensions for staff and students on the BRecEd since the construction of education, adventure and sustainability identities draw heavily upon both perspectives. At the very heart of this tension lies the question *what is the purpose of outdoor education?* The history, current professional practice, assessment, and the school curriculum discussed in chapter three make efforts to negotiate a common position regarding this question very difficult.

Another key issue explored in chapter three related to biculturalism in outdoor education. In the discussion, it was suggested that contemporary outdoor education in this country was both part of, and largely a reaction to, broader Pākehā pedagogy that was classroom based and primarily served Pākehā needs. The dilemma posed was how to meaningfully incorporate a Māori perspective into outdoor education without risking the tokenism of cultural borrowings described by Panoho (1992). One person interviewed suggested that meaningful intent meant open and reciprocal partnerships with mutually beneficial outcomes for both Māori and Pākehā.

However to be motivated to create opportunities for reciprocal partnerships, one must first identify the need to do so. Through international sustainability discourse, discussion in chapter three justified the need for biculturalism in outdoor education. Not coincidentally, it has been through education for sustainability classes within the BRecEd that formal Treaty awareness, the exploration of indigenaity and reciprocal partnership occur. These classes have been established by a few staff who identify with a strong sustainability identity for the BRecEd. However if the identity of the BRecEd is perceived by other staff to be more strongly arranged around the adventure activities inherent in the historical concepts of outdoor education discussed above, then the need to create opportunities for reciprocal partnerships will unlikely occur.

The third key issue explored in Chapter 3 was how sustainability has come to mean many things to many people and that the term has become a vague slogan susceptible to manipulation (Jickling, 1994). For this reason Blewitt (2006) has argued that educators of sustainability should think about sustainability as a heuristic, or a method of learning, while Law (2006) suggested key principles that underpin education for sustainability including a strong values base, critical inquiry and reflective learning, future-focused thinking and judgements, how to participate in democratic decision processes, life long learning, learning across the breadth of the curriculum, and transformative learning that includes taking action in a cooperative setting. Most importantly, the PCE argued that education for sustainability has the clear purpose of change towards new behaviours (2002).

However, thinking about sustainability in ways such as those described by Blewitt (2002), Law (2006) or the PCE (2002) requires an engagement with sustainability discourse, and engagement requires both opportunity and motivation. For those people without opportunity and motivation to engage with sustainability discourse, it is likely that sustainability remains a vague slogan that, given the way it has been manipulated, is easy to be cynical about.

Given the variety of perspectives concerning the identity of the BRecEd discussed earlier, it is also likely that there is a variety of understanding about what sustainability means amongst all those concerned with the degree. This range of understanding becomes a problem when considered in the context of the sweeping changes to the formal education system called for by the PCE (2002) and for sustainability to be integrated into all learning situations, a call one year later repeated in the context of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO, 2005).

In the context of the BRecEd, coming to terms with what these changes mean becomes exceptionally difficult when sustainability is not well understood. However, further difficulties arise when changes such as those called for by the PCE (2002) or UNESCO (2005) (or the institution itself) challenge the way an individual perceives the identity of the degree. This is because calls for change suggest that there is something wrong with what has been done in the past that needs to be corrected, and

that process of change produces winners and losers depending on perspective. When sustainability is thought of in terms of winners and losers, othering related to strong and weak stances on sustainability can be observed, as described by Porter (2005) and discussed in chapter four. This suggests that any calls for change to the BRecEd based upon sustainability values will result in defensive behaviours to protect what other individuals perceive as valuable, in order to avoid a sense of loss.

In order to move through the potentially immobilising contradiction described above, discussion in chapter four about transversal politics in social movements was able to illustrate that othering related to identity is not necessarily a barrier to social change. In this discussion, research by Cockburn (1998) was used to show that identity work undertaken by individuals engaged in truly collaborative social action could build upon the understanding that others are equals engaged in the same struggle but holding a different reality. The discussion also explored how this process relied heavily on collegiality, community, transparency, open and honest communication, trust, and shared visioning (Cockburn, 1998; Wenger, et al., 2002).

However, if education for sustainability within the BRecEd is the shared struggle as signalled above by the PCE (2002) and UNESCO (2005) then a vision of furthering the values and behaviours associated with sustainability underpin the collaborative social action. Thus the problem of understanding what sustainability means remains a significant issue for social action that has the agenda of developing education for sustainability within the BRecEd. Yet developing education for sustainability within the BRecEd is the agenda of this action research project so overcoming such problems is part of the process of social change. Thinking strategically about social change as an action or process is called change agency.

### *Change agency*

Because social change takes place in communities, discussion about change agency looks to the way communities adjust and adapt to change, the way individuals and groups form and reform identities around shared beliefs, and the way knowledge is

contested and shared by individuals and groups. Importantly, discussion about change agency looks to learning as a critical element in change process.

Not surprisingly, a significant multi-disciplinary body of literature about change agency has been written over the last sixty years. For example over fifty years ago social psychologist Lewin (1951) wrote about the need to analyse and challenge existing perspectives and understanding before change in social routines occurs. Change agency as a theoretical framework for planning and reflecting upon change in education is also well established. For example Jarrett (1973) wrote about the conditions in higher education that are conducive to change and explored the qualities and characteristics that best enable those who aspire to be change agents.

Following a review of literature and empirical research on change agency, Caldwell (2003) developed a universal model categorising four broad change agents. The categories include leadership models (where influential individuals in an organisation lead change), management models (where managers, particularly middle managers lead change), consultancy models (where usually external 'expert' consultants lead change) and team models (where organisational change is considered a team process as opposed to individual task) (Caldwell, 2003).

Although all of the categories identified by Caldwell are often present in organisational change, he argues that the notion of change agency as a team process has grown enormously since the mid 1990's (Caldwell, 2003). Team process as an agent of organisational change in the tertiary sector is particularly relevant. This is because, despite management hierarchies, team approaches to governance are common (Travis, 2008); the institutions tend to be very large and do not lend themselves to individual leadership models; and "... 'dispersal' of change agency to teams as units of learning can institutionalise behavioural change more deeply while countering employee resistance" (Caldwell, 2003, p. 138). Given these points, the principles of change agency provide a particularly relevant theoretical framework for discussion of the action research methodology that will bring a group of people together with the agenda of political, structural and empirical change within the BRecEd.



## **Part two: Participatory action research**

Part two of this chapter uses the principles of change agency theory to discuss the change process as it has unfolded through the planning undertaken throughout 2006 and early 2007 and implementation of the action research project beginning August 2007 and running throughout 2008. Discussion will first describe the methodology of the action research, then move to explore a range of ethical dilemmas that challenged those involved with the research. Discussion will also begin to explore the process of change experienced by the action research group in their efforts to weave together outdoor education and education for sustainability within the context of the BRecEd, but will continue in a more substantial way in the next chapter.

It should be noted that although the principles of change agency theory have been applied in reflection contained in the following discussion, the principles discussed were not part of the initial informing and planning process for the action research. Also, the discussion that follows is not in a strict chronological order, but rather follows themes in order that deeper analysis of interrelated issues can occur.

### ***Background***

The action research project discussed below was indicated but not described in detail in the initial PhD research proposal approved by CPIT, and approved and registered by the University of Canterbury in September 2004. The University of Canterbury did not require further detail of the action research project beyond what was initially signalled in the initial proposal. However CPIT required a second proposal to be submitted for approval before the action research project could begin since the study would involve staff and students from the institution. The process of attaining approval from CPIT spanned some five months. The primary reason for this appeared to be that the institution did not have a history of action research (and particularly action research that involved students) successfully taking place within the institution. For example, research policy that explicitly provided for action research directly involving students did not exist at the time of application (an issue discussed more

thoroughly later). Consequently the process of getting approval for the action research was frustrating, exacerbated by three changes of chair of the Ethics Committee, where each chair had a different understanding of what was required for a safe action research to take place.

Much of the discussion in the following section about methodology and ethical considerations is taken from the action research proposal submitted to CPIT and subsequent requests for additional information that occurred.

Discussion in part two will first revisit the overall purpose of the PhD research discussed in chapter two (since the action research project both informs and is informed by engagement with the wider research context) and then move to discuss the action research project in more detail.

### ***Methodology***

The first part of this section will briefly recall discussion presented in chapter two before exploring the action research project in more detail. The purpose of this PhD study is to add to the body of knowledge relating to the current and potential contribution outdoor education makes to contemporary culture within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. More specifically, it is anticipated that the research will assist the practice of outdoor education to move towards being a more effective medium for sustainability education. Firstly it is proposed it will contribute to an increased understanding of the tensions created through sustainability education juxtaposed to traditional subjects, teaching methods, and institutional structure that act to normalise neo-liberal and colonial values; and secondly, it would explore mechanisms to rectify these issues.

Two objectives to the research were identified. These were:

1. To contextualise political, social and cultural issues relating to outdoor education and their historical and theoretical analysis.
2. To develop a knowledge base through interviews, document analysis and an *action research project and evaluation*.

The research was based on the assumption that in order to create a more conducive environment for sustainability education to occur within the context of outdoor education, there needs to be a clearer understanding of the causes of tensions that are encountered, coupled with an exploration of the means to resolve these issues.

To meet the objectives of the study, the following research questions were proposed:

1. What is sustainability education within an outdoor education context and what does it seek to achieve?
2. What is currently happening regarding the delivery of sustainability education within outdoor education?
3. What is the social context of outdoor education in Aotearoa New Zealand?
4. What can we learn from overseas theory and practice?
5. What can we do to make teaching sustainability education in an outdoor education context more effective in Aotearoa New Zealand?

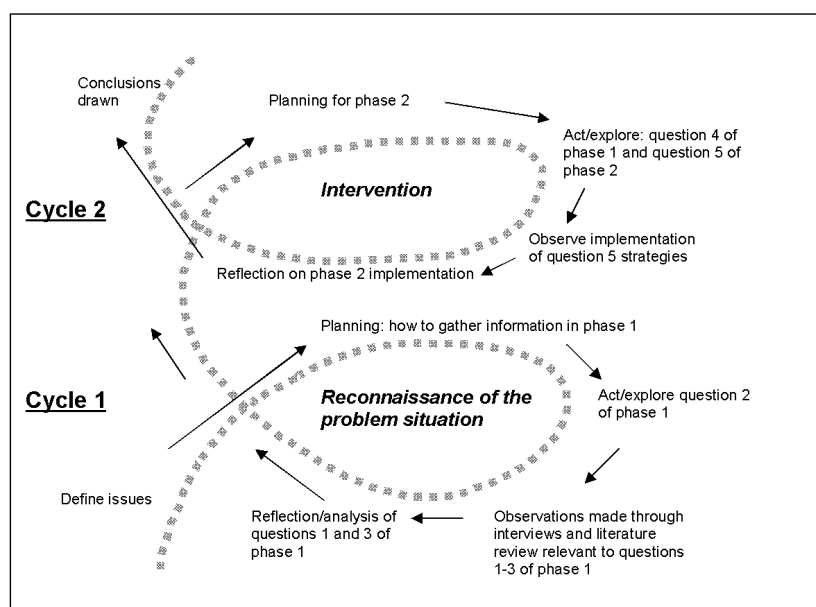
The five research questions were incorporated into two different phases of the participatory action research. Phase one was associated with research questions one through four and research methods employed comprised of literature search, interviews, student work, and autoethnography. Phase two was associated with research question five, and the research method employed comprised of an action research project.

The research plan encapsulating phase one and two is based loosely on the work of Cardno and Piggot-Irvine (1994). This model of action research involves cycles of sequential activity; these being reconnaissance, intervention and evaluation. Each of the cycles contains the four stages of plan, act, observe and reflect. How the research questions of phase one and phase two are distributed through the two-cycle model is presented in Figure 5.2.

It is important to note that although Figure 5.3 depicts a corkscrew containing two cycles, phase one and two of the research are not aligned sequentially with cycle one and cycle two of the model. The two phases are mutually supportive, entwined together and inseparable with the literature review and interviews providing a

theoretical basis supporting the action research and the action research providing a framework for the literature review and interviews.

The idea of blurred boundaries between sequential spirals of action research is supported by authors Kemmis and MacTaggart (2005) who observe “stages overlap, and initial plans quickly become obsolete in the light of learning from experience. In reality, the process is likely to be more fluid, open, and responsive.” (p. 563)



**Figure 5.3:** The conceptual model of the research plan based loosely on the work of Cardno and Piggot-Irvine (1994).

The reflection contained within phase two (the action research) is important. This is because, as Chapman (2004b) suggests, there is a failure of educators to actually be critical of the context of research into environmental education programmes. He observes:

“The initiatives celebrated ... often ignore the causal issues of power and uneven access to wealth. Neither do they engage at the political level. They generally restrict themselves to the micro level and only occasionally consider organisational change” (Chapman, 2004b, p. 102).

This failure is linked to the tendency for environmental education efforts to be limited to small-scale initiatives such as nature studies and recycling while the relevance of

deeper underlying social values and assumptions escape reflection and critique. This approach has failed to bring about any significant change in the way people live, demonstrating a “failure of our field to yet develop approaches that work” (Chapman, 2004b, p. 102).

In order to draw more effectively on critical theory and to bridge the gap between social theory and practice (a key focus of critical participatory action research (Kemmis & MacTaggart, 2005) described in chapter two), Chapman (2004b) employed triple loop reflection comprised of empirical, material and deep social reality reflection. Empirical reflection, suggested Chapman, was reflection upon daily practice while material reflection was reflection on the rules, organisations and structures that support or constrain teaching and learning. Deep social reality reflection he suggested was reflection upon the drivers or mechanisms defining the context, which according to Chapman, are nearly always political and economic.

If issue analysis, action and reflection were to be undertaken on three levels then the implication for the action research would be that the second cycle of intervention presented in Figure 5.2 would become a triple strand of empirical, material and deep social reality perspectives. However, examining and reconstructing basic cultural assumptions is not an easy task, made even more difficult when those undertaking the action are fully immersed in the culture under scrutiny.

Acknowledging this difficulty, it was proposed that a focus on empirical level analysis and action would be less complicated than a focus on structural and political analysis and action. However, the structural and political context was considered to be of critical importance. For example, in her study investigating problems for education for sustainability in a university setting, Moore (2005) observed that universities are over managed by CEOs rather than led by intellectual and moral leaders, with a growing tendency to be run like businesses. The concern for the action research demonstrated by this example was that some issues would be rooted in a broader sociological context beyond the reach of the action research project. A logical way around this dilemma was to focus on the structural and political influences relating directly to the empirical analysis and action centred on the BRecEd, and to utilise other mechanisms such as CPIT’s Environment Committee

(which has a wider and mandated political influence within the institution) when needed.

As researcher my focus has been on the process of reflection and intervention encapsulated in the action research as opposed to the outcomes that the action research may or may not produce. This is because by having the research focus on process, the research would hopefully produce a clearer understanding of the change agency signalled in research question five<sup>13</sup>. However, this would not mean that other people involved in the action research were subjects of the study either, for these people would be collaborative researchers also reflecting upon and making changes to the work they are engaged in. The focus would be on the process of reflection and intervention to teaching method, assessment, and curriculum which means that the institution of CPIT itself would be the focus of the study.

There exists some uncertainty about the necessity for institutional or organisational consent if that institution or organisation is the subject of the research. Casey (2001) suggests: “an organisation may be regarded as having subject status and may give informed consent when the organisation itself – that is, the activities, structure, technologies of production, behaviours of organising, managing, remunerating, training etc. specific to that individual organisation – is the subject of study” (p.135). The CPIT Ethics Committee makes decisions on research for the institution, and research approval would be considered as organisational consent to act as a subject of research (personal communication, Kent, 22 January, 2007). However there would still remain a need to provide people involved with the action research information that would allow them to make informed decisions relating to the action research. Information sheets were used in conjunction both formal and informal with opportunities for those involved in the action research to seek clarification on issues related to the research whenever needed.

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<sup>13</sup> Research question five: What can we do to make teaching sustainability education in an outdoor education context more effective in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Although the focus of the research would be on process, it was anticipated that the action research would also add value to the BRecEd. First it was proposed the action research would help connect the social environmental papers with other papers where little connection was thought to exist. Second, it was proposed the action research would move the programme towards a more participatory model of biculturalism, encouraging mutually beneficial relationships and exploring ways of educating for biculturalism in the outdoors. Thirdly, the action research would facilitate the development of more robust and coherent models for assessment related to sustainability education. Lastly, it was proposed the action research would help to build a more supportive community that rewards student's efforts to bring about change.

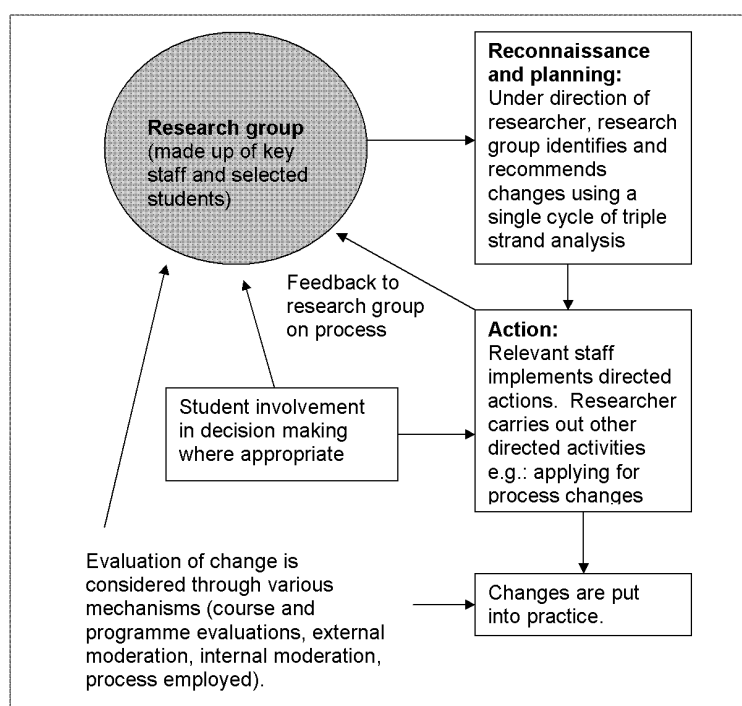
To achieve these goals, it was proposed that research question five would be viewed by those involved in the action research on a practical level within the context of the BRecEd and that to answer the question, the following additional questions would need to be considered:

1. What ways can the research group develop to meaningfully integrate the social and environmental themes of the AROE 500, 600, and 700 papers into other core and elective papers?
2. What approaches and teaching methods can the research group develop to further bicultural partnerships and perspectives across the BRecEd?
3. What assessment models can the research group develop to better assess reflective, creative, political or action based assignment work related to social and environmental themes?
4. What paradoxes within the BRecEd cause significant tension for staff and students, and what mechanisms can the research group introduce to reduce these?
5. By what means can the research group improve the community of the BRecEd to better support and reward students who undertake social and environmental change on a personal level.

It was proposed that an action research group would be formed to consider the action research questions, to plan and facilitate actions relating to those questions, and to evaluate the outcomes relating to those actions.

How the research group would be established would prove an important part of the planning process. However as discussed earlier in this chapter, perspectives relating to the BRecEd are not always shared which means any efforts to draw people together to participate in the action research project could prove problematic.

Because of this, much consideration was given to how the action research group would interact with each other and engage with the action research project. The anticipated relationship mechanisms are presented below in Figure 5.4.



**Figure 5.4:** Relationship mechanisms of the action research group

Underlying the relationship mechanism presented in Figure 5.4 was that the action research was based upon a model of voluntary participation (where members are free to leave the group should they wish) and emancipation (where the group was independent to act in a manner defined by the group). Importantly, emancipation means that the group would be allowed to define its own reality, and would be empowered to frame and resolve the problems encountered.



Emancipation would be a critical aspect of the methodology since a Māori dimension to the research could not exist while the researcher maintains a position of power in relation to the participants. Therefore, in line with Bishop's analysis of Kaupapa Māori research method, the study aimed to "reduce researcher imposition in order that research meets and works within and for the interests and concerns of the research participants within their own definitions of self determination" (Bishop, 1996, p. 223). A Māori 'perspective' within the research meant Māori being able to formulate the needs of Māori based upon the reality of Māori, not on the reality of Māori mediated by the researcher, research group, or students and tutors working with Māori.

The members of the action research group needed to be able to make decisions effectively, which meant establishing how the group would operate. For example, the group might have chosen to prepare a contract to establish ground rules relating to the conduct of members (such as timeliness, or communication between members); ownership of the outcomes of the research (such as who has the right to authorship of the findings of the action research); and group decision making strategies such as the those proposed by Hunter, Bailey and Taylor (1992). Simple ground rules relating to conduct, ownership, and group decision making would help to encourage equity and openness within the group and more importantly between the researcher and the research group. These rules would be established by the group before the action began and added to as the need arose. However, the action research group decided against a contract opting instead for rules agreed upon through meeting minutes and added to as necessary. For example one key ground rule established by the group was that members should declare sources of information introduced into discussion. More specifically, this ground rule urged members to disclose whether they were presenting their own ideas, or the ideas of others.

However, emancipation would not happen because the researcher said it would. A single member of the research group after the first meeting (held on the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2007) would observe by email to the group:

"I think there are some issues with the participatory model when knowledge, understanding, commitment and power within the group is so diverse. I also think that you have answered your own question by framing it through the five further questions ... given the degree of work you have already done that is not surprising ... but again it

doesn't feel like equal participation more of a group that will support most of your conclusions and maybe dabble around the edges.”

Discussed at the next meeting (held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2007), this argument would result in a statement included in the negotiated minutes noting that members of the action group “felt that Dave had defined the focus of the research group by providing the five questions contained in the information letter” and therefore limited opportunities for emancipation to occur. Here, the power of the researcher to define the research and the direction I thought it should take was imbedded in the planning for the action research, and was considered an act of power by the action research group members. As researcher, I have also been reminded of the position of power occupied by myself in other ways.

The first was pointed out by a member of the action research group early in the study when it was observed that as researcher I was likely better informed on the subject of sustainability which allowed for well articulated explanations while other members were still forming ideas on the subject. By sharing explanations with the group, the world-according-to-researcher was felt to become the key consideration for the group rather than a more open exploration of the issues. This view places a researcher in an awkward position because the preparation of briefing papers could potentially speed up group learning and awareness, yet exacerbate the perception of the researcher leading the group. This is both a necessity, since the researcher is trying to complete the study in terms defined by the researcher; and a shortcoming, in that the choices of the research group are limited. Wilkinson (2001) observes that having a transparent method and full disclosure of information will help with power related to this imbalance of knowledge, but as Schratz and Walker (1994) note, the researcher can never occupy a position of either objectivity or neutrality. Compounding this problem is that as researcher I have also felt more highly motivated in the area of study, a motivation which was probably not shared by other members of the action research group.

It is also likely that positions of power within the action research group would also result from the established relationships between individual members of the action research group. Such relationships would exist as a result of personalities or where political tension resulted from vertical hierarchies of leadership and seniority.

Because of these things, the trustworthiness of the study would be important and members of the research group have helped promote trustworthiness simply by acting to keep each other and the researcher honest. A key mechanism in promoting trustworthiness is maintaining a recognisable reality which Maykut and Morehouse (1994) describe as reality negotiated by the research group rather than interpreted by the researcher. For example meeting minutes are important realities that need to be agreed upon. However although negotiated realities might promote trust, there are limits to the ability of negotiated realities to reduce power disparities. For example, a group member pointed out that as author of action research group minutes or other group documents, the researcher cannot help but frame the group reality from the position of their perspective. This is because even though the other group members would have input into the final version that input is contextualised within what has already been said.

As a result of the above discussion and initial confrontation regarding the action research questions, the action research group elected to move at a slower pace and create their own reality with the frequency and duration of meetings agreed to and monitored by the action research group. But this took time and energy, and for busy teachers both are difficult to find for activities beyond lectures and other programme related duties. For this reason, another member asked whether the action research group would not better function as a support group, limiting their reflections and actions to those defined by the researcher. However, such a move would see the agent of change drift from the intended group process towards more individual and less effective styles of change agency. Of particular concern would be that that learning would not be shared across wider group membership as effectively and change would more heavily depend on charismatic or driven leadership (Caldwell, 2003).

The likeliness of people to embrace change is not constant, for some people adapt to change faster than others. This is an important concept because in any group of people, there will be some people that will be more able to work together to bring about change than others. In extensive research on this subject, Rogers developed the Adoption of Change Model (Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971) that describes people in

terms of five different types of adopters of change. These are: the innovators (who are people willing to take risks and tend to initiate new ideas); the early adopters (who are respected people who reduce uncertainty about adopting new ideas by adopting those ideas themselves); the early majority (who comprise the larger group that follows the early adopters of change); the late majority (comprising the slower moving groups of people that wait to see what happens before moving to embrace change); and laggards (who are people sceptical of change to established patterns of behaviour and that may need to be forced to embrace change).

Applying this model, it seems that any researcher initiating an action research project involving others would be categorised as an innovator, since the aim of any action research that they have initiated is change to the status quo. Therefore, effort to reduce power-over relationships this person has with others through emancipatory strategies could be interpreted as an effort to move from the influence of innovator towards lesser informed or motivated group realities. This highlights the problem that because different people embrace change with different levels of enthusiasm and at different speeds, the way that teams are constructed to undertake action research projects impacts on the effectiveness of those teams as change agents.

Recognising that different people would engage with the action research with different levels of enthusiasm, a degree of pragmatism would be required in order that the action research would not become: (a) stalled through loss of direction by attempting to spread the action over the whole programme at once; and (b) overwhelmed by a wide variety of perspectives relating to sustainability which would likely result in inaction, or even attempts to undermine process. Taking a consultative yet pragmatic approach, a group of people who already had some teaching responsibility for outcomes relating to critical thinking, environmental education and sustainability education, as well as teaching in other papers that were seemingly unrelated, were approached. This approach would mean the research group would more likely include individuals who were innovators, early adopters and early majority adopters, as opposed to late majority adopters or laggards. The pragmatism behind this selection included reasoning that if initiatives could be successfully implemented within, and across, a few papers, then that model could then be expanded across the wider degree structure if, or when, the benefits of the action were

more clearly visible. Consequently, the research group drawn together from the BRecEd would initially comprise of four teaching staff and two senior students. The staff members represented male and female perspectives, ranged in age between 40 and 60 years, were trained teachers with significant secondary and tertiary experience, were experienced centre based outdoor education instructors, held an array of national industry awards and tertiary qualifications to Masters degree level, and all had worked in a number of countries for extended periods of time. The previous chair of CPIT's ethics subcommittee and strong advocate of action research, although not a member of the research group would act as an advisor on process and method should that need arise.

### *Student members of the research group*

Students needed to be represented on the research group if the action research was to be participatory, reflexive, and relevant to the community within which the action was based, since without the input of students, their perspective could not be expressed in an equitable manner. However, student membership raised several ethical issues.

The first issue related to how the students would be selected. This was an issue because if an invitation was extended to particular students, it could be perceived by other students as identifying favourites within the student body. To address this issue, students attending the final year of the degree were asked to come up with a nomination or election process and then through this process asked to put two students forward to be members of the action research group<sup>14</sup>. This process saw the power associated with the selection process passed to the student themselves.

The second issue related to students on the research group was that those students would inevitably be enrolled in papers delivered by academic staff members also on the research group. This presented problems for assessment of those students, particularly those in my own classes. A range of options to deal with the problem

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<sup>14</sup> Had no one wanted to participate, then a mechanism to include a student perspective would then have needed to be designed in collaboration with the same group of students.

including moderation and external marking of assessments would be explored by the action research group.

However, the research group did not perceive assessment of students on the research group as a significant problem. This was because there was no requirement or coercion for students to join the research group, or to participate in any other way, and student members were free to leave the research group at any time. Also, the students expressed that they would prefer not have their work graded or moderated by others because they felt such an action would challenge the trust and respect they had built with staff over the duration of their study. Taking these factors into account, the research group decided that if any member of the research group had any concern that staff-student relationships had been compromised, then the research group would discuss alternative assessment options relevant to that situation.

The third issue related to the power inequity between staff and students is that group discussions and decisions could be influenced by students acting to give staff what they thought they wanted. For example, Thomas (2005) noted that a power inequity worked to produce research data that was possibly unreliable in an action research project conducted in outdoor education in Australia. He observed:

“Some of the limitations of the study included the fact that many of the participants were students that I taught and they may have felt pressure to provide certain answers perhaps even subconsciously. Data derived from the student writing may not be an accurate depiction of the participants' experiences, thoughts or feelings as the responses provided may have been given to satisfy assessment criteria.” (Thomas, 2005, pp. 34-35)

It was hoped that the work of the research group in focussing on emancipation would mitigate this dilemma because the students' perspective (regardless of how that perspective fits with the perspectives of others on the research group), would be relevant to the research group.

The very nature of action research based on participation and emancipation makes resolving issues such as those arising from student involvement difficult because the researcher should not pre-empt any decisions the research group might make about those issues. This dilemma was acknowledged in the CPIT Academic policies and procedures manual (human ethics) section 2.5 (c) that states:

“Staff do not usually involve students as subjects/participants in their research projects if they are currently (or likely to be) teaching or assessing those students as well. An exception is made when the standard methodologies associated with ‘action research’ are used, and all students are aware of the purpose of the research, are full participants and have input into the conclusions drawn.” (CPIT, 2007a, p. 5)

This more recent addition to CPIT Academic policies and procedures clearly accepts that ethical issues arising because of student involvement are mitigated through the principles of participation and emancipation that underpin action research.

### ***How a Māori perspective will be incorporated***

Discussion in Chapter 3 revealed that biculturalism in outdoor education is the meaningful presence of Māori perspective through mutually beneficial partnerships, and the critical place of indigenous knowledge in any effort to develop education for sustainability within outdoor education. Chapter 4 also explored biculturalism and the importance of partnership, but looked to the importance of recognising what Laidlaw (1991) described as borrowings, the unique influence of Māori culture in the formation of Pākehā identity. The research group would require assistance when considering the research question relating to developing bicultural partnerships and perspectives. This was because nobody on the BRecEd staff had the mandate to speak for Māori, and therefore risk defining biculturalism in terms of dominant ‘Western’ ideals. This dilemma for researchers looking to involve Māori perspective is described by Irwin as follows: “Where a stance, taken in the name of kaupapa Māori, is not unequivocally Māori, particularly in the context of research at this time, support cannot be guaranteed” (as cited in Cram, 2001, p. 41).

When discussions relating to bicultural partnerships and perspectives take place, it is critical that partnership with Māori is part of the method as well as part of the outcome. Given the importance of such discussions, maintaining a Māori perspective on the action research group would be always a high priority.

Previous collaborative work with Te Kura kaupapa has involved much consultation about how and what will be undertaken and it was anticipated this relationship would

continue. For other discussions, the Director of Māori research and development at CPIT was approached to assist the research group with a Māori perspective. This person later agreed to be a full member of the research group (as opposed to acting as an advisor to the group as originally arranged). This move would hopefully see discussions contextualised within a Māori perspective.

As researcher, I had had an ongoing relationship with the Director of Māori research and development since the research began in 2004. Primarily I had relied on this person for guidance in establishing relationships with local Kura kaupapa discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, but just as importantly they had also advised students about appropriate teaching strategies for Pākehā instructors working with Māori students before working with Te Kura. Through this developing relationship, Outdoor Programme staff and students had also helped with the programmes that the Director of Māori research and development ran when they required additional assistance for activities such as sea kayaking and tramping. I appreciated the reciprocal nature of the relationship and I felt that I was not just asking for assistance for my own teaching projects but was also able to offer assistance to the Director of Māori research and development. However maintaining a consistent Māori perspective on the action research group would prove difficult over the long term.

In January 2008, the Director of Māori research and development left Christchurch but remained actively involved with the action research for a while by email. However, as their role with CPIT diminished over the first term of 2008, their ability to remain an active research group member declined. In their absence, they recommended another staff member of CPIT's Te Maturanga Māori to act as a sounding board for students working with Te Kura and as a possible replacement on the action research group. This person was contacted and students involved with Te Kura consulted with that person regarding concerns they had.

However this person was not approached to join the action research group. This was because by the time it became apparent that the Director of Māori research and development could no longer participate fully in the action, I had already been directed by the group to become involved in the development of the sustainability workshop and I began to work collaboratively with the environmental manager and



Staff Development representative. Together the three of us identified the Dean of Te Maturanga Māori as the appropriate person to approach to be involved in the project (or to be given the opportunity to delegate another to be involved) because this person was now the most senior Māori representative at CPIT.

The process of the Director of Māori research and development leaving CPIT (and the action research) can be looked at in a number of ways. First, the relationship with this person had been constructed over time and was, from my perspective, built upon a reciprocal relationship and mutual understanding. Time taken to establish and nurture the relationship was important and could not be simply passed to another because there was not the grounding to allow the relationship to carry on.

Second, the Director of Māori research and development had for their own research been exploring teaching kaupapa Māori by taking students into the outdoors, and this had obvious common ground with my own efforts to draw a Māori perspective into outdoor education at CPIT. Therefore, a replacement for the Director of Māori research and development might replace a Māori perspective, but not replace their understanding of the synergies that exist between Māori and outdoor education that this person, my students and I have discovered and have been discussed in Chapter three.

The combination of these key things resulted in my feeling a sense of loss when the Director of Māori research and development left. The loss was not so much for the Māori perspective that they represented, for as demonstrated above, this could be gained through the participation of others. The loss that I felt was really about the loss of the future potential to further develop the synergies that the Director of Māori research and development, my students, the staff and students of the Kura, and I had discovered and had started to build upon. As described in Chapter 4, relationships built around the purpose to create, expand knowledge and to develop individual capabilities are called communities of practice (Wenger, et al., 2002) and that the passion, commitment and interest of the parties involved holds them together. The loss that I felt was really about the loss to this process because I had had a glimpse of what might be possible through the actions and reflections of the students involved.

### *Changes to membership of the action research group*

As discussed above, membership of the action research group did not remain the same over time. This was largely because the action research did not remain contained within just one academic year. Student representatives to the action research group changed as those preceding them graduated and left CPIT. Several staff have also come and gone as the papers they taught changed between 2007 and 2008 (resulting because staff membership on the action research group was established according to the papers they delivered). One staff group member also joined the group when one outcome relating to the Treaty of Waitangi and biculturalism was moved to a paper he was teaching, thus drawing a sustainability thread into a previously unrelated paper.

There was one significant problem that arose from changing action research group members. The problem was that new group members either lacked understanding of the research that longer serving members had, or they did not share the perceived need for change that was the underlying purpose of the research. These problems were highlighted by the arrival and subsequent departure of a new action research member after only one meeting. Very little interaction between that member and the group occurred, and the meeting minutes would later show that the new member was confused about what sustainability meant and how relevant it was to the BRecEd.

Using the Adoption of Change Model provided by Rogers and Shoemaker (1971) discussed earlier (where five types of adopters of change were described including innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards) it is useful to think about the position taken by action research group members in relation to others in the group. It is likely that teaching staff who inherited rather than selected sustainability related courses may not necessarily embrace sustainability. Therefore, it is also possible that staff could have found themselves on the action research group who were reluctant to engage with the action research group project, late adopters or even laggards regarding sustainability. Thus, membership in the action research group, a team with the purpose to initiate change based upon sustainability in the BRecEd, would be destined to be problematic.

It is difficult to have a clear understanding of how this person felt and how they were affected by the interplay between discussions within the context of the action research project and wider discussions around sustainability occurring at the time. As discussed in the last chapter, Thompson Day and Adamson (1999) suggest that people look to their day-to-day lived experiences to remind them who they are and to their communities to define who 'we' are and how 'we' are different from 'them'. In the situation described above, it is likely that because the newcomer to the action research group did not share a perceived identity constructed around sustainability, they felt they were not part of the group, that the group was 'them' and he was different, a theme that will be explored further in the next chapter). Porter (2005) has also argued that with regard to sustainability, othering leads to the creation of winners and losers. This occurs because individuals cast themselves or their organisations as being more, or less, sustainable than others, what Porter calls the "strong-versus-weak sustainability divide" (2005, p. 10). The newcomer may have felt anxiety because of a perception that others in the action research group perceived he was not as committed to sustainability as the other members of the action research group. In the same way, members of the action research group may have located the newcomer on a strong-weak sustainability continuum and related to him in this way.

However, the students seemed to be able to make the transition onto the action research group with ease and I think that was because they understood the discussions as a result of exposure to sustainability themes in their classes over the previous three years. This understanding allowed them to actively participate in discussion and to introduce their own perspective as students. This was an important mechanism and on several occasions the points that students raised enabled the action research group to find common ground. This occurred because the students could synthesise what they had learnt in different classes from different staff and find common ground by effectively reducing the distance of perspectives between staff caused by teaching in a compartmentalised setting, a factor that Moore (2005) suggests both characterises tertiary education and acts as a barrier to education for sustainability.

Sustaining interest over the duration of the action research would also prove to be an issue for longer serving members. This was because much of the early process was focussed on the group members grappling with philosophical discussions relating to

sustainability within an outdoor education context. This focus eventually saw one action research group member remark in a meeting: “I need to do something practical”. The comment was made out of frustration, and signalled a change in focus for the action research group from reflection through discussion to planning for action.

This progression from discussion to action highlights that the action research can be considered in two ways. First, the action research can be considered from the standpoint of generating material for the research in order to satisfy the requirements of the study. Second, the action research can be considered as a mechanism for the action research group to undertake developing sustainability within the BRecEd in ways deemed constructive by the group. Each standpoint has ramifications for me as researcher and ramifications for the action research group.

By my having a focus of generating material in order to inform the research itself, less input is provided by me to actually achieve action outputs. This is because material gathered from the action research is generated by analysis of the process the research group engages with. However too much focus in this direction could leave the group in the position of making little constructive headway and likely be a discouraging experience since the group would see little evidence of change for their efforts. Conversely by my having a more substantial focus on the action research as a mechanism to undertake change, as researcher I ran the risk of over-looking or over-manipulating the processes employed by the action research group and thereby limiting the potential to investigate the process in a meaningful way.

Therefore, the research would need to produce both tangible outputs for the group that would enhance education for sustainability in the BRecEd, as well as gathering enough material from the action research to generate meaningful analysis of the process the research group engaged with. However trying to maintain such a balance would see a tension develop between structure of the degree and structure of the action research.

### ***Tension between the structure of the action research and the structure of the BRecEd degree***

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the degree has been constructed around the three key identities of adventure, education and sustainability. These identities have been demonstrated to be woven throughout the BRecEd and are identified in marketing materials, curriculum, and delivery strategies. Teaching staff have also been shown to align themselves to particular identities within the BRecEd and to defend these positions through their own actions.

In relation to the sustainability identity, the reader was reminded in Chapter 3 that the BRecEd was designed with an emphasis on critical thinking and contained a very strong social/environmental core. Compulsory papers AROE 500, AROE 600 and AROE 700 are dedicated to sustainability education and all teaching and assessment work within these papers is related to education for sustainability. These papers account for 45 credits out of a total of 360 credits (giving 12.5% content). Many other papers (approximately 20) contain outcomes and assessments that integrate themes related to sustainability education such as cultural diversity, social and environmental values and ethics, philosophy, exploring sense of place, and thinking critically about human-nature relationships.

However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the three identities of adventure, education and sustainability do not always sit easily with each other and can result in contested spaces for both students and staff involved in the BRecEd. For example discussion in chapter three cited Jickling (2004) when discussing the dilemma of drawing sustainability discourse into a setting that juxtaposes that discourse to the dominant perspective. In this case, the dilemma was that if not challenged, the paradoxes created by sustainability discourse would likely be subsumed by the dominant perspective.

This raises the dilemma that if sustainability discourse within the BRecEd is imbedded within more general curriculum that has a purpose of exploring (but not rigorously questioning) the dominant world view, then the paradoxes raised by education for sustainability would likely be overlooked or subsumed. The paradoxes

would remain invisible and therefore easier to live with; identities would not be challenged.

Yet the action research has been formed with the intention of developing the identities of sustainability and education in-so-far as it relates to sustainability. This means that through the process employed by the action research group, members have likely been alerted to the paradoxes. For example, group discussions have discussed the tension between a focus on high end technical pursuits, long distance travel and education for sustainability. Such an exploration has likely increased levels of discomfort for people who have managed to overlook what has previously been invisible for them.

In chapter three, I argue that the point of education is to place people into the position of wrestling with the issues relating to sustainability and refer to one of the central tasks of education for sustainability as being to create paradoxes in people's minds that hopefully would lead to tipping points. These factors were at the heart of research question five that asked the action research group to consider what paradoxes within the BRecEd cause significant tension for staff and students, and what mechanisms could the research group introduce to reduce these? As researcher I made the assumption that increased levels of discomfort would challenge perceptions of identity for the BRecEd that would need to be reconciled. However, a research group member responded "Should we be reducing paradoxes or valuing them and learning to accept them?"

This question posed by the group member was an important question for the research group and well illustrates the point Cockburn (1998) makes in discussion about transversal politics discussed in chapter four. Here Cockburn describes a how a focus on collaborative action within a safe and transparent group setting can see individual group members holding different and even conflicting realities but individuals and the group owning rather than projecting their fears. From this standpoint, the question posed by the action group member was about moving the group towards recognition that not all research group members shared the same reality.

### ***Recording transcripts and producing meeting minutes***

My focus as researcher in the action research project has been on the process of reflection, analysis and intervention of the action research group, and particularly the way that the action research group has come to terms with the sustainability identity constructed for the BRecEd. This has meant that I have had to consider the way the group has come together as a collective comprised of individuals, and the interplay between those individuals and the reality of the collective.

However thinking and writing about individuals on the action research group and the role these people have played in forming a collective identity has not been an easy undertaking for me. This is because even though the action group has been informed that the focus of the research is on process, I continue to feel a degree of connivance thinking and writing about the role played in that process by the individual action research group members.

For example, using names in analytical memos that described the reactions of people in different situations, and then sharing these reflections with my supervisors suggested to me that my co-researchers had become subjects. That raised ethical questions about the direction my research had taken because action group members had never consented to be subjects. Yet, the focus on the role of the individual within the collective was necessary because collective reality of the action research group is negotiated between individuals and becomes visible through the actions and statements of individuals in the group context.

Negotiated reality provides a way to protect group members becoming subjects. This is because the necessary research focus on individuals can occur without the risk of group members becoming subjects as long as it does so within the boundaries of negotiated realities. For example the negotiated minutes of meetings that document discussions, decisions or actions, or open email communications to the group from members of the group that reflect an individual position relating to a group reality provide open and transparent mechanisms to consider the role of the individual in the forming of a collective identity. Framing my own writing about individuals within the context of negotiated realities alleviated my feelings of being conniving and

awkward about analysing others motivations and change. This approach also prevented me using the transcripts of meetings as a source of material that could be taken out of context, since the minutes and the perspective presented within them were open to be challenged by the group.

### *Summary*

Chapter five has explored education, sustainability and adventure as key identities constructed for the BRecEd. Through these identities, the chapter revisited key problems for sustainability in outdoor education presented in chapter three, and solutions developed through constructing a sustainability identity presented in chapter four. These discussions have contextualised the action research within the BRecEd; as well as within a broader discourse about social change as an action or process, referred to in literature as change agency.

The second part of the chapter explored the action research itself using principles of change agency theory as discussion points. This part of the chapter included how the action research project was organised; the dilemmas faced by the researcher; and began an exploration that will continue into the next chapter of how the action research group came together as a team to grapple with the problems and engage with solutions framed in part one.

As discussed in chapter four, teams of people working together are complicated by both internal and external identity construction processes. The next chapter will explore how these processes have impacted on the action research group itself and to influence the nature and scope of the actions undertaken. By having a clearer understanding of these processes discussion can address the key questions underpinning the chapter: First, what is the efficacy of the action research project as an agent of change in creating opportunities for education for sustainability in the BRecEd? Second, and more fundamentally, what can be learned from the experience of undertaking to increase the focus on education for sustainability within a polytechnic tertiary organisation using principles of change agency theory?



## **Chapter 6: Evaluating the action research project as an agent of change**

### **Introduction**

In the last chapter, principles of change agency theory were used to discuss the organisation and initial implementation of the action research project. In this chapter discussion will continue to explore how the action research group came to grapple with problems and engage with solutions in order to draw conclusions about the efficacy of the action research project as an agent of change.

The chapter is divided into two parts. Part one continues with the theme of identity developed in earlier chapters with a view to exploring how a team model of change agency is complicated by both internal and external identity construction processes. First discussion will explore the development of individual sustainability identities inside the action research group and suggests this process, although time consuming, is unavoidable in the emancipatory setting of action research and the eventual construction of a collective sustainability identity that must take place before collective action can be undertaken. Second, it will explore the development of CPIT's organisational identity constructed around sustainability; reflect on how this identity comes to be mediated by managers; and how an organisational identity constructed around sustainability created opportunities for the action research group. Lastly, discussion will explore the formal review of the Outdoor Programmes as a mechanism that has drawn these threads together to both contextualise and politicise the action research project.

The second part of the chapter will explore two significant outcomes of the action research group: the design and delivery of a CPIT two-day staff development sustainability workshop; and the preparation of a submission to the formal review panel. Discussion will continue to draw from principles of change agency theory in order to explore the wider implications of these outcomes and to draw conclusions about the efficacy of the action research project as a change agent in creating opportunities for education for sustainability in the BRecEd. Threaded throughout

this final discussion will be reflections upon what can be learned using principles of change agency theory applied to the action research experience that was aimed at increasing the focus on education for sustainability within a polytechnic in Aotearoa New Zealand.

### **Part one: The development of individual sustainability identities**

Chapter four explored how identities are formed through our understanding of the place we inhabit and the communities we belong to, and promoted the idea that membership of social movements influences the way people view themselves. Social identity was portrayed in a fluid way, and that people could enter into identity work according to the needs of the setting encountered and groups engaged with. In this way, identity was conceptualised as a process, and follows the position taken by researchers such as Castells (1997, p. 130), Cockburn (1998), Polletta and Jasper (2001) and della Porta and Diani (2006). For example, Castells (1997) defines identity as "The process of construction of meaning on the basis of a cultural attribute, or a related set of cultural attributes that is given priority over other sources of meaning" (p. 6). In chapter four it was also argued that sustainability as a social movement could provide a sense of belonging and community for students and that undertaking action projects enhanced this process.

Understanding the interplay between the identity of individuals and the collective identity of groups they associate with (and by implication don't associate with) is critical if one is engaging in any form of change agency within an organisation. Although much varied literature exists on the subject, reflection on identity scholarship in organisations has led Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas (2008) to suggest that three broad theoretical perspectives exist. These perspectives are: social identity theory (a prominent feature in the study of organisations for explaining the interplay between individual and group identity); identity work (where individuals engage in an identity construction process as discussed in chapter four); and identity regulation or control (where identity is not a matter of personal choice but regulated or even enforced). These perspectives will form the basis of the following discussion in an effort to better understand how the individuals involved in the action research have

formed and reformed identities within the context of the action research group, and the action research group within the context of CPIT.

The development of individual sustainability identities experienced by action research group members appears to be the result of several mechanisms. These mechanisms include the impact of actively engaging with sustainability discourse over time on the perspective of group members; and the internal struggle to position contrasting identities experienced by individual group members. This process of identity work, where people undertake a process of reconstruction to align identity with changing community contexts (Cockburn, 1998) can occur for a range of reasons. Alvesson et al. suggest that conscious identity work is driven by a realisation of a mismatch between how a person understands their context, and the context itself.

“Conscious identity work is ... grounded in at least a minimal amount of self doubt and self openness, typically contingent upon a mix of psychological existential angst and complex or problematic social situations. This may be due to a mismatch between self-understandings and the social ideals promoted through discourse. Alternatively, it may rise from encounters with others that challenge understanding of self” (Alvesson, et al., 2008, p. 15)

The following discussion explains how these mechanisms appear to have impacted on group members and how the outcomes of the process have impacted on the whole research group.

The length of time involved actively engaging with sustainability through thinking, talking and acting appears to be a key driver in the construction of a sustainability identity for action research group members. What this means is that as the action has progressed, the group members have increasingly shown evidence of emerging sustainability identities, and the longer the group members have been involved in the action and with sustainability discourse, the stronger their sustainability identity appears. Evidence for this can be found in the way group members articulate their understanding of sustainability, a growing confidence to defend a personal position relating to sustainability, and a willingness to engage in action relating to sustainability. This process of socialisation over time was aptly summarised in the influential writing of Ashforth and Mael (1989) who suggested that "...socialization effects identification, which in turn effects internalisation" (p. 27). Internalisation

here refers to the incorporation of values associated with the group within the individual as guiding principles or beliefs.

The way group members articulate their understanding of sustainability can be traced through the negotiated minutes of the action research group over time. The minutes of initial meetings in late 2007 and early 2008 (as well as group emails outside of the meetings) were characterised by challenging discussions about what sustainability meant, and encompassed a wide range of perspectives that found little common ground. However, at the fifth action research meeting (held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2008), a significant change in discourse occurred. At this meeting, the minutes would record how discussion had moved from what sustainability meant to how sustainability was relevant to the BRecEd. For example discussion included the following statements:

“perhaps we should jump in with both feet and that education for sustainability should become the underlying purpose of the degree” and “education for sustainability clearly fits with the strategic goals of the institution and initiatives taken by the wider community such as the College of Education, and also provides a greater level of credibility and a clearer purpose [for the BRecEd] than current statements” (Negotiated minutes, action research meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2008)

Clearly, the focus of the speakers presented above had shifted over time from trying to come to terms with what education for sustainability meant to what education for sustainability might contribute to the BRecEd. However group membership was not static and the introduction of new members sometimes resulted in discussion returning to address what sustainability meant. For example, the negotiated minutes from the action research meeting on the same day that the above statement was made would record a new group member commenting “sustainability – whatever that was”.

The reaction of the new group member here is puzzling, given that social identity theory researchers Ashford and Mael (1989) suggest that new members to a group tend to gravitate towards the collective identity of the group, resulting in one to “expect attitudinal and perceptual agreement with group members” (p. 29). However as discussed previously, social relationships are complex and shifting and although Ashford and Mael have suggested one way that new members might behave, there are likely to be other reactions as well. For example, some people are more independent than others and do not experience the same pressures to conform to group settings. It

is also possible that time is an important factor and that the new group member might not have experienced sufficient exposure to the group for the process of gravitation to begin. (The function of time is important for a number of reasons and will be discussed again later in the chapter).

The students on the action research group have constructed sustainability identities through a different process. Besides participating on the action research and being exposed to the discussions of the group, the students have also been attending education for sustainability classes since their first year of the degree. This means they have had time to read, think about and discuss sustainability and more time to construct a sustainability identity (if they chose to do so). Consequently it appears the students in the group had developed a confidence in their identity and enough understanding to defend their perspective of sustainability. For example, in response to an action research group staff member who expressed doubts about the aims and underpinning philosophy of sustainability, a student member responded:

“... for me sustainability is about looking forward to the future for new ways of doing things. Because some people, some ecosystems, some animals (and potentially future life on earth) don't currently have a very good quality of life.

... from my student perspective, sustainability education is about challenging students to think critically about their place in the world. That can mean many things to many students, and I think in the context of this project is probably going to be the easiest thing to discuss.”

To challenge a staff member over their position on sustainability was no small matter given the power inequity inherent in student-teacher relationships, and so it is likely the student had a high degree of confidence in their beliefs and the position they expressed. This action was similar to that taken by the student that stood to speak in defence of education for sustainability within the BRecEd at the Confluence Conference discussed in chapter four. These examples likely mean that the additional time spent engaged in education for sustainability has the students that chose to do so, construct stronger opinions, perceptions and identities relating to sustainability.

Research group members engaged in the construction of a sustainability identity are vital to the progress of the action research. This is because the emancipatory nature of the action sees individuals on the action research group negotiating with other

individuals to define the group's reality. If the process of individual construction had not occurred, the proposal "to jump with both feet" would not have been made, and the creative and analytical discussion that resulted in the decision to develop the two-day Sustainability Workshop for CPIT's Staff Development (discussed later) would not have taken place. Thus, the development of sustainability identities is directly linked to a willingness of individuals to engage in sustainability related collective action.

However members of the action research group can also be observed to experience an internal struggle to position contrasting identities when an emerging sustainability identity is perceived to challenge other identities. (However, Ashforth and Mael (1989, p. 29) point out, "...it is not the identities per se that conflict, but the values, beliefs, norms, and demands inherent in the identities"). For example, following a lengthy discussion in an action research group meeting about positioning education for sustainability as the key focus of the BRecEd instead of adventure, recreation and outdoor education, the members of the group talked about how such a move would require a shift in understanding what outdoor education is about. Part of this discussion would be summarised in the negotiated meeting minutes as follows:

"... it is hard to switch off our current paradigms and embrace new thinking [and] ...that change was easier if you felt you were moving to something more valid than what you have. If you are moving to something less than the present, then it is hard to embrace that." (Negotiated meeting minutes, 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2008)

This statement was made by a new group member who attended one meeting and missed the following two. When asked if they would like to continue to be involved with the action research project, they replied via email:

"I am quite over all the talking about sustainability in the degree...sustainability in outdoor education, sustainability of our programmes, there are other key areas to focus on also. In many ways I don't think 'other' voices are being heard and if one isn't heard then why be involved and how can the research be robust if it misses out others voices... I'd like to be involved in discussions about outdoor education but not if it only goes on about sustainability issues." (Excerpt from staff email)

This response describes the frustration of being in a context where education for sustainability had come to dominate discourse. However, since this person only attended one action research meeting lasting two hours, it is likely they were referring

to discourse taking place beyond the action research meetings. If this is an accurate assumption, then the comments relating to the inability of the study to take into account “other voices” may actually be speaking about wider discourse. For example the formal review of the Outdoor Programmes (discussed more fully later in the chapter) has observed that education for sustainability is the “point of difference” for the BRecEd when compared to other similar qualifications (2008b). If the new member did not identify with this observation, then those values they did identify with became the “other” and they would feel (by their exclusion) marginalised.

The position encapsulated in the new member’s statement is also not dissimilar to the observation of anti-identity made by Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) in their in-depth study of work place influences on individual identity. They observed what they called “not-me” positions taken by employees in work situations when those individuals did not identify with role expectations asked of them. It is possible the new member was likewise expressing a “not me” observation in relation to their own identity position within the context of the action research group.

At this point it is interesting to reflect upon the change agency role that the action research has had in influencing wider discourse about sustainability beyond the action research group itself. Caldwell (2003) notes that “change in one area of an organisation can often have an important impact on other areas” (p. 138). Therefore it is likely that discourse and change produced by the action research group has emanated beyond the constraints of the research itself to provoke wider discourse and reflection. Although in the case above this process has led to a perception of alienation for the speaker, it also signals a process of engagement by others. This unplanned and uncontrolled horizontal diffusion of change among near peers is an important part of change agency and is characteristic of team sponsored change according to Rogers (2003). He called this process decentralised diffusion and observed “innovations often bubbled up from operational levels of a system with the inventing done by certain lead users. Then new ideas spread horizontally via peer networks...” (Rogers, 2003, p. 395).

Members experiencing an internal struggle between the close association with BRecEd identities of adventure and sustainability discussed in the last chapter may

also help to explain why the action research group has been able to succeed with actions that lie outside of the BRecEd but failed to clearly identify actions within the BRecEd itself. Ashforth and Mael (1989) maintain that internal struggles between identities tend to be “cognitively resolved by ordering, separating, or buffering the identities” (p. 30). What this means is that when people are placed in positions that expose them to conflicting identities, they develop strategies that allow them to reduce the conflict. For example, identities can be hierarchically arranged with the most salient identity given most regard; certain identities can be avoided in certain circumstances; identities can be cognitively decoupled to avoid the perception of conflict; and identities can be sequentially adhered to, to avoid conflict (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Any attempt to undertake action within the BRecEd would undoubtedly see identities in conflict, and it is likely that all of the above strategies were employed by one or more action research group members at some point. This is likely because if the sustainability identity is not sufficiently strong for all members of the action research group, it fails to provide an adequate base from which the deconstruction of the adventure identity can occur. These themes will be explored further in part two of this chapter.

It is useful now to consider the individuals within the action research group coming to share a collective identity and purpose that distinguishes the group from other groups. As with individual identities, collective identity is also commonly referred to as a process but is considered much more complex and lacks consensual understanding (Saunders, 2008). In order to generate clearer thinking about collective identity, Saunders argued for collective identity to be “regarded as a possible outcome of a *group-level process* leading to shared beliefs and a sense of ‘we-ness’, which may shape individual participants’ personal identity” (2008, p. 232). She suggests this perspective leads to the important notion that “If a group’s collective identity encompasses the individuals involved, they will more closely behaviourally conform with others in their group than they will to societal norms, and the group’s demands and beliefs will strongly resonate with them, resulting in solidarity” (2008, p. 232).

A useful example of this perspective was included in discussion earlier in chapter four where the protest action project of a student was described (where the student climbed the Chalice in Christchurch’s Cathedral Square and hung a banner protesting climate



change). In this example, the social norms (and Christchurch City Council restrictions) prohibiting climbing on the Chalice were disregarded in favour of protest action on behalf of the activist community they perceived they belonged to. A strong level of solidarity was demonstrated by that same student when they stood at the Confluence Conference to defend what they considered a challenge to the group (in this case the BRecEd social environmental action class) to which they belonged. Saunders argues that “Strong solidarity exists when individuals within a collectivity have shared behaviours that differentiate them from other groups and from societal norms” (2008, p. 228).

It is more difficult to think about a collective identity for the action research group in these terms. This is because although action research group demonstrated solidarity through the outcomes of the sustainability workshop and the submission to the formal review discussed later in this chapter, solidarity was difficult to achieve when the group discussed the possibility of change within the BRecEd. This suggests that each member of the action research group likely held a different albeit developing perspective on the purpose of the group which resulted in the collective identity constantly being constructed and reconstructed. As a consequence, solidarity in the context of the action research group would prove a fluid rather than a constant state. This fits with the idea that collective identity is indeed a “reflexive, dynamic and never settled process”; and most importantly, that “collective identity is not a static thing, but instead, something that is consistently being defined and redefined by the actors involved” (Melucci as cited in Saunders, 2008, p. 230).

### ***Sustainability identity constructed by the organisation CPIT***

Organisations also construct identities through association with particular images, discourse, and actions, and do so for many reasons. Influential authors Ashforth and Mael (1989) observed that “...in crediting a collectivity with a psychological reality beyond its membership, social identification enables the individual to conceive of, and feel loyal to, an organisation or corporate culture” (p. 21).

Exploring the different ways that future research might attribute agency for organisational identity, Alvesson et al. (2008) identified that inquiry via relationships between individuals, elite groups such as senior managers and the systems they design, organisational discourses, and broader social discourses was most promising. However they also note that the identity of an organisation is not precise, but rather a “chaotic presence of concurrent and conflicting self-images” (Alvesson, et al., 2008, p. 14) because different individuals gathered into different groups conceive of and hold loyalty to different aspects of the organisation. For example, as a teacher and researcher engaged in education for sustainability at CPIT, I look to the characteristics of the organisation that act to validate my own identity, and the identity of *my* group within CPIT. In other words “social identity is the cognitive mechanism which makes group behaviour possible” suggests Turner (as cited by Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 21).

The emergence of an organisational sustainability identity for CPIT has been a recent development and can be explained using the agency attribution approach suggested by Alvesson et al. (2008) above. First, the emergence of an organisational sustainability identity for CPIT can be traced through systems such as the annual strategic planning documents of the institution. In Chapter Three, discussion revealed that in 2005, the Sustainability Review (CPIT, 2005) presented to staff by CEO John Scott predominantly focussed on economic factors in future planning and was mostly concerned with strategies for perpetuating the growth of student numbers. The review had no link or reference to ecological, social or cultural sustainability. However in June of 2008, the CPIT council and management ratified the Statement of Intent: sustainability and environmental awareness (CPIT, 2008c) as part of the CPIT strategic plan. The guiding principles contained in this statement are as follows:

- “Minimising CPIT’s ecological footprint
- Increasing the quality and quantity of education for sustainability
- Growing CPIT community support for sustainability by raising levels of awareness, knowledge and skills
- Building practical partnerships for sustainability” (CPIT, 2008c)

The formation of the statement of intent relating to sustainability signals a policy direction that is not widely represented in the tertiary sector. For example, in doctoral research Williams (2008) found a general absence of both substantive policy and

coordinated leadership relating to education for sustainability across and within the university sector in this country. Challenging the absence of both substantive policy and coordinated leadership, the Chief Executive of CPIT argued in a keynote presentation titled *Leading for Sustainability at the Australasian Campuses towards Sustainability Conference* (1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2008) that "Tertiary education institutions need to redefine what they stand for", that "This definition should include a position on sustainability", that "Statements about institutional approaches to sustainability need to be backed up by specific actions and resources", and that "Measures of progress and success need to be identified and publicly reported" (Barnes, 2008, pp. 15-16).

However, there is a difference between producing strategic policy statements in the area of sustainability and witnessing organisations adapt to align corporate structures and functions with the intent of those statements. At CPIT, the guiding principles of the statement of intent are implemented by way of strategies prioritised each successive year. Some of the strategies, such as waste minimisation, have become very visible within the institution. One example of a highly visible waste minimisation initiative is that waste must be separated into separate colour coded bins for recycling and disposal throughout the institution and individual rubbish bins have been removed from offices.

Such initiatives have an impact on staff, highlighted at the action research meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> May when one group member commented that an increased focus on education for sustainability within the Outdoor Programmes would "fit more into the big CPIT picture". This statement implied that CPIT had moved to construct an organisational identity that included sustainability. Further, it was also suggested by the same person that being more overt about education for sustainability in the BRecEd would move the degree along a path that fitted with the Strategic Plan.

It is difficult to describe how the group member's own position was influenced by the organisational sustainability identity constructed by CPIT. It is possible that the person felt comfortable about disclosing an emerging sustainability identity because this was seen as being congruent with the identity espoused by CPIT. This reaction fits with Williams' (2008) observation that a strong link exists between organisational

commitment to sustainable practices and an increased ease for staff and students to engage with those practices. On the other hand as Porter (2005) has suggested, the group member may have felt motivated to strengthen their own position because they felt alienated by the clearly emerging sustainability identity of their employer.

However, constructing a sustainability identity for an organisation like CPIT is problematic in that it produces internal conflict in a similar fashion to that experienced by individuals within the BRecEd discussed in chapter 5. For example, CPIT's Barnes (2008) discussed the challenge for governors and managers within the tertiary sector in the following way: First, often the primary consideration of management is economic viability. Courses and programmes unable to show economic viability are unlikely to continue for long<sup>15</sup>. Second, although the core mission of the tertiary sector is described as education and research, performance of managers and organisations is often judged on financial reporting. Third, environmental sustainability is often seen by managers as desirable (but not critical) to institutional performance. Finally, national funding and national policy tend not to support sustainability initiatives (Barnes, 2008). As Moore (2005) found, this situation is compounded by academic staff with particular areas of expertise and interests that represent a wide array of perspectives, and as a consequence, defensive positions maintained across an institution. In this way organisational identity and individual identity could either collude or collide over sustainability, depending on identity alignment.

However Ashforth and Mael (1989) identify another significant challenge. They suggest that as an organisation moves to occupy societal positions that are distanced from the mainstream, increasing levels of organisational intervention are required to encourage individual identification with that position. For example, prisons, military services and religious schools all require particular behaviours and penalise deviance, positions that see these organisations “orchestrating the regulation of identities” (Alvesson, et al., 2008). Ashforth and Mael observe:

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<sup>15</sup> For example Law (personal communication, September 4, 2008) suggested the elective secondary teacher training course Education for sustainability at the University of Canterbury's College of Education was discontinued in 2008 for this reason.

“...internalization of organisational values depends largely on the extent of identification with the organization, subunit, or role. Indeed, the more the organization's identity, goals, values, and individual role requirements deviate from the societal mainstream, the greater the need for organizationally situated identification.” (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 28)

It has been strongly argued in previous chapters that sustainability is a counter cultural social movement. Therefore in establishing an organisational identity around sustainability it is likely that many people envision CPIT as deviating from the societal mainstream. However unlike prisons, the military service or religious schools, CPIT cannot require conformity with an organisational identity from staff or students. Conformity can only be encouraged, albeit strongly. For example both staff appraisal and promotion processes at CPIT require academic staff members to report on how they are incorporating the strategic goals relating to sustainability into their teaching and practice<sup>16</sup>.

However, if sustainability is considered a counter cultural social movement and those working within CPIT to encourage a sustainability identity are considered activists, the importance of identity imposed through regulation needs to be balanced against the impact on organisational identity provided through grass roots activism. Saunders (2008) observes “Activist groups that build and support their collective identity from the bottom up tend to have more solidarity than organizations that furnish activists with a pre-formed ideology filtered top-down” (p. 233). For CPIT, this means that although regulation might raise the expectation of a sustainable presence and expose an emerging sustainability identity, activists working at a grass-roots level will experience a stronger solidarity for the cause.

Middle management plays a significant role in the formation of an organisational identity for CPIT through their role as leaders of schools, faculties, and facilities. This is because through these roles, the policies of the institution are interpreted and implemented according to the preference of the individual. In this way the relevant middle managers have significantly impacted on the context within which the action research group organised themselves. For example, approval to undertake the action

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<sup>16</sup> How staff perceives sustainability in the context of documenting their supporting evidence for appraisal and promotion is an important issue. The action research group experience would suggest a wide range of perspectives relating to sustainability is present across the institution.

research had to be granted by the Head of School as part of the application process to conduct the research at CPIT.

It is useful to consider management discourse to explain the positioning of the middle managers in relation to sustainability. Over the time leading up to and including the announcement of the formal review meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2008 (discussed in more detail later in the chapter), the two managers overseeing the Outdoor Programmes consistently used the term sustainability to mean financial viability. This was unsurprising since use of the term sustainability to mean financial viability, as discussed in Chapter 3, was common among the management of CPIT, and institutional policy documents such as the Sustainability Review (CPIT, 2005) predominantly considered economic factors in future planning for the institution.

However within a month of the formal review meeting, both managers had demonstrated an awareness of sustainability in the broadest sense, and expressed a commitment to the development of education for sustainability at CPIT. For example awareness and commitment was demonstrated by both managers through discussions and subsequent approval of a sustainability workshop developed by the action research group for CPIT's Staff Development department.

Based upon Porter's (2005) analysis of sustainability, identity and organisations, it seems likely that the managers were acting to realign themselves with the emerging organisational sustainability identity of CPIT. The Statement of Intent: sustainability and environmental awareness (CPIT, 2008c) released on 11<sup>th</sup> June was likely a key driving force in that it created an expectation that managers would demonstrate decisions supporting CPIT's emerging sustainability identity. Reflecting on the realignment process of managers within organisations with emerging sustainability identities, Porter observes that "ultimately it is the fear of identity loss, rather than economic profit or scientific rationality, that underlies management discourse on sustainability" (2005, p. 1).

Importantly, these managers occupied key positions as chair and panel member in the formal review of the Outdoor Programmes. This saw the managers drawn into a position of having to research the Outdoor Programmes in detail, read external

analysis of interviews conducted with academic staff, and approve the future involvement of Outdoor Programme staff in wider education for sustainability efforts within the institution instigated by the action research group. This process has required the managers to come to terms with what sustainability means, how it is incorporated into the BRecEd, and how the BRecEd relates to broader CPIT policy statements, and what educational opportunities can be found in teaching education for sustainability. This saw the threads of the formal review, the action research project, and the emerging organisational identity constructed around sustainability drawn together in both political and practical levels. These threads will be discussed later in the chapter.

### ***The formal review of the BRecEd and the action research***

The formal review of the Outdoor Programmes at CPIT was announced on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2008 and signalled the beginning of a process that would decide the future continuation or discontinuation of individual programmes of study (including the two diplomas, certificate and the BRecEd degree) as well as individual courses within each of the programmes. At the heart of the final review decision would be strategies to increase the economic viability of the Outdoor Programmes by reducing costs, increasing student numbers, and increasing staff to student ratios across all courses.

The scope of the review was to:

“Determine the level of viability that is acceptable to CPIT to continue with the provision of recreation programmes; and

Identify programme design alternatives available to CPIT to provide for sustainable and educationally sound provision of recreation training and education in the future that meets regional and national needs” (CPIT, 2008b, p. 1)

The formal review changed the context the action research group was working in because the review process drew an external consultant, an array of CPIT managers and union delegate into the review process based upon the scope outlined above. This had a number of ramifications for the action research, but the most significant ramification was that the action research group was prevented from making any substantive changes to the BRecEd while the formal review process took place. In

negotiated minutes (23<sup>rd</sup> May 2008) action research group members expressed feelings of hiatus, of needing to wait and see what would happen and that thinking of change was pointless when the future of the BRecEd was now in the hands of the review panel.

At this meeting the group also expressed significant frustration at the limited understanding within the institution of what the BRecEd degree was about. There was particular concern that the degree was characterised by a narrow range of adventurous pursuits and the social and environmental values and critical social theory associated with sustainability present in so much of the degree remained invisible to outsiders (including managers directly responsible for the programmes). It was felt that this was largely because a decade of constant restructuring at CPIT had resulted in a high turnover of managers overseeing the Outdoor Programmes, coupled with the constant rearranging of schools and faculties that resulted in a tendency for programmes to operate as silos within the institution.

After considering these issues in the wider context of the formal review, the action research group decided upon two significant actions. First it decided that if the programme could be involved in the development of education for sustainability within the wider institution, it would enhance the way the Outdoor Programmes were regarded. Importantly, such involvement might also provide additional teaching loads for academic staff, and contribute to a stronger presence of education for sustainability at CPIT. Secondly, it was decided to critique the formal review draft report from the collective perspective of the action research group and to submit a formal response to the review panel. These actions will be discussed further in the next section.

The reflection and discussion undertaken by the action research group through this period became very strategic and moved to employ material and deep social reality reflection identified by Chapman (2004b) and discussed in the last chapter. This saw one action group member reflect poignantly that the formal review and the action research had been drawn together. The action research group considered both how to engage with the formal review panel, and how to manoeuvre around the constraints imposed by the formal review process. These two distinct approaches had the result

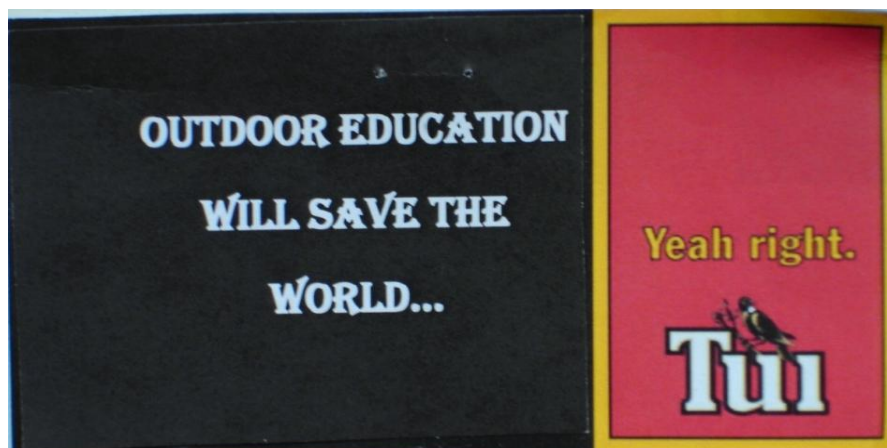


of producing actions that would engage the action research group in a political and strategic way both within the review process and within the wider context of CPIT.

Another way that the formal review changed the context that the action research group was working in was that it has intensified the perceived tension between the BRecEd, the wider Outdoor Programmes and the action research. This increase in tension occurred because the political and strategic actions undertaken by the action research group demonstrated a deepening engagement with education for sustainability that not all academic staff on either the BRecEd or the Outdoor Programmes necessarily supported or had a say in developing. This created what Saunders (2008) referred to as we-ness and they-ness, or what Ashforth and Mael (1989) refer to as in-groups and out-groups, where collective identity and action has made a group of people and the agenda they promote distinct from other groups around them.

However I am unsure if the perceived tension in this instance is as cleanly catalogued as Saunders or Ashforth and Mael maintain. For example one action research group member suggested that the tension was different for different people at different times depending how they felt about the identities of the BRecEd, the Outdoor Programmes and the role sustainability might play across the Outdoor Programme portfolio. This position is similar to my own perception that people move between occupying positions of in-group (advocating education for sustainability) and out-group (protecting the status quo) under different conditions inherent in different situations, and that it might even be possible to occupy both positions at the same time (for example advocating for education for sustainability into the wider Outdoor Programmes while simultaneously protecting the status quo of the BRecEd).

My own experience of developing of education for sustainability through the action research has been one of increasing tension and even at times feelings of alienation. A staff member made me the following banner (see Figure 6.1) - a very humorous example of the cynicism that underlies this tension:



**Figure 6.1:** Outdoor Education will save the world.

The tension expressed here cuts to the key question underpinning this action research project: *what purpose outdoor education?* It is likely that the formation and reformation of a collective identity producing we-ness or they-ness or in-groups and out-groups in the context of this project can be reduced to constantly moving positions taken around this fundamental question. These positions include consideration of the complexity of the sustainability dilemma described in chapter three related to living in the developed world while engaging with the impacts that that living precipitates, coupled with the obligation to deliver an historically contextualised vocational training while at the same time engaging in education for sustainability. Tension related to othering is unavoidable, for individuals are constantly reminded of their position as in-group or out-group.

The process of othering in relation to community was also discussed in chapter four and it is useful to reflect upon how the formal review process and the political and strategic engagement of the action research group has acted to create others. In an interesting example of othering, in the final report (CPIT, 2008b) the review panel described education for sustainability as being the point-of-difference for the BRecEd in relation to other similar tertiary outdoor education programmes. Although this statement attributed positive value to the BRecEd in relation to other programmes, it could also act to other those staff not perceiving the BRecEd in this way. Such individual perceptions of being the other would likely be exacerbated by expectations of cutting yet un-named unprofitable curriculum and the associated threat of redundancies implied by this process.

Part one of this chapter has discussed the construction of individual sustainability identities inside the action research group, how the emerging organisational identity of CPIT has created opportunities for the action research group, and lastly how the formal review of the Outdoor Programmes has created an unexpected and highly politicised context for the action research. Part two of this chapter will explore what the action research group was able to achieve.

### **Part two: Outcomes of the participatory action research project**

The action research group produced two significant outcomes: the design and delivery of a two-day CPIT staff development sustainability workshop (see appendix 8 for details of outcomes and an outline of the course); and the preparation of a submission to the formal review panel (see appendix 7 for details of the submission). Discussion will continue to draw from principles of change agency theory in order to explore the wider implications of these outcomes and to draw conclusions about the efficacy of the action research project as an agent of change in creating opportunities for education for sustainability in the BRecEd.

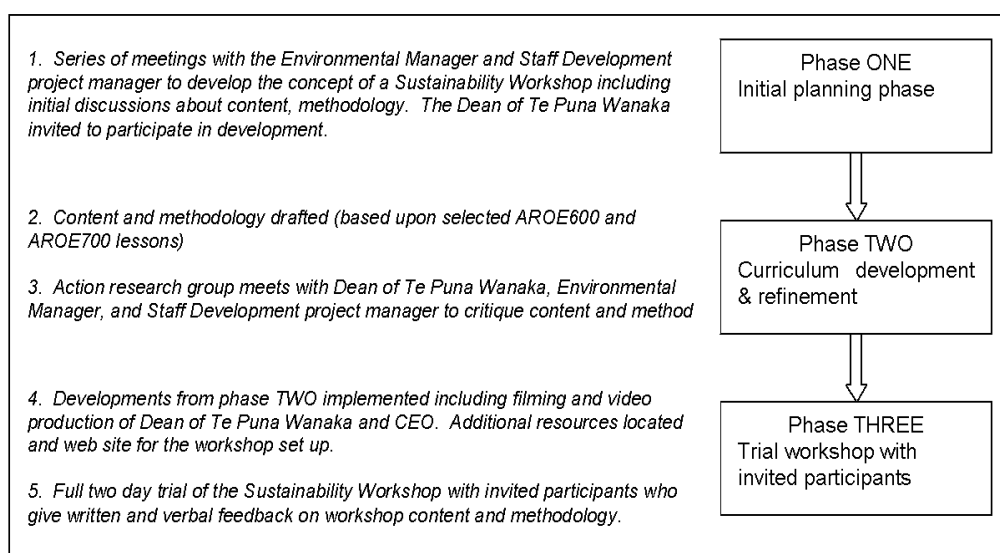
#### ***Action: CPIT two-day staff development sustainability workshop***

The design of the two-day staff development sustainability workshop<sup>17</sup> as an outcome of the action research group proved to be pivotal. This was because the project had ramifications for the group itself, for other staff of the Outdoor Programmes, for relevant managers, and for CPIT. Also, as already discussed, the development of the sustainability workshop also became a thread that was drawn into the formal review of the Outdoor Programmes.

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<sup>17</sup> The idea for the sustainability workshop originated with the Environmental Manager, with responsibility for the development and future delivery of the workshop residing with Staff Development within Human Resources. I had earlier been offered the role of developing the course by Staff Development in a paid capacity but had declined the offer in order to focus on my study. Under the direction of the action research group, development of the workshop became a function of the action research group.

The workshop was challenging to develop because as with the action research methodology, the development of the workshop had to reflect a wide spectrum of perspectives and employ a CPIT community approach. Three phases to the workshop development (see Figure 6.2) included: an initial design phase with the environmental manager, staff development manager and myself; a secondary design phase including members of the action research group and Dean of Te Puna Wanaka; and lastly a workshop trial with nine senior CPIT staff (with Design and Architecture, Community and Adult Education, Staff Development, Library and Learning Services, Health and Sciences, and allied staff represented) and three Outdoor Programme staff and members of the action research group who would be involved in the future delivery of the workshop. These people allowed for a wide variety of perspectives to be drawn into the workshop that would later be visible in the delivery methodology and content.



**Figure 6.2:** The design phases of the sustainability workshop

The people approached to participate in the phase three trial of the workshop were approached with the same pragmatism that was used in the selection of the members of the action research group. That is, the staff approached had already participated or committed to engaging with sustainability on some level at CPIT. This meant that these people were likely early adopters or early majority adopters according to the Adoption of Change Model (Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971). Selecting early or early majority adopters meant that the phase three trial was not concerned with convincing

participants of the need for the course, but could rather focus on critiquing the content and delivery of the course itself.

A particular challenge of the development process was how to present a Māori perspective on issues relating to sustainability. To create opportunities for a Māori perspective to be present where facilitators were unable to speak for Māori, three short DVD recordings of the Dean of Te Puna Wanaka speaking about the issues for Māori were produced (with filming and production undertaken by senior students from the School of Broadcasting).

A key factor that allowed this action to progress was that it was concerned with change beyond the BRecEd, and therefore avoided the contested identities of adventure and sustainability that characterise discourse and imagery associated with the BRecEd. This allowed the group to come together and work collaboratively (and with the solidarity described by Saunders (2008) discussed earlier) to develop the workshop in the knowledge that what was being developed was safe. This is not surprising, for change theorists such as Rogers (2003) acknowledge the difficulties in diffusing innovation into strongly valued cultural and social contexts. The workshop was safe and allowed solidarity because it would not directly impact on the identities or values of staff involved with the BRecEd or the BRecEd itself but look to innovate through the creation of a completely new product. In this way, the strongly valued identities associated with the BRecEd would not be challenged.

The development of the sustainability workshop had a range of ramifications. First, the development of the workshop gave the action research group members a concrete example of how the core education for sustainability subject material from the BRecEd could be used to form and inform a stand-alone sustainability focussed course independent of the outdoor education context that it come from. However, more importantly, it also demonstrated this to the managers responsible for the Outdoor Programmes. This was an important outcome in terms of change agency, for as Rogers (2003) explains, observation of an innovation speeds diffusion, the rate by which it is adopted.

I suspect that through the development of the two day course, threads were being drawn together in a practical way that allowed members of the action research group, but particularly the managers, to see visible connections developing between the BRecEd, education for sustainability, organisational identity, and education (and therefore economic) opportunity. However, the development of the sustainability workshop also required the managers to take action to support the project (thus allowing for ongoing staff involvement in the delivery of the course through 2009). Taking action allowed the managers the opportunity to develop their own level of engagement with the emerging CPIT sustainability identity and importantly with the strategic goals of the institution discussed earlier.

The development of the workshop (with seven occurrences timetabled and budgeted for 2009 and another twelve planned for 2010) also confirmed that education for sustainability had become a key function of the Outdoor Programme capable of generating additional work and revenue. Without a doubt this initiative also generated a degree of prestige for the Outdoor Programme in that the programme had now become associated with staff development within the institution. Ashforth and Mael (1989) argue that prestige is an important element in the formation of self-concept for a group, and because people want to be associated with winners, are likely to join the 'bandwagon'. Successful innovation provides a mechanism of influence because success is popular. Being associated with success makes people feel good.

Development of the sustainability workshop also influenced more general discussions between all the staff about future images and identity that would portray the Outdoor Programmes. In useful examples, the Outdoor education and adventure tourism programme information document cover image was changed from a rock climber (see figure 5.1) to a number of less adventurous images including scenic images; and strategic planning undertaken by the Outdoor Programme staff that included education for sustainability as a key pathway for future development.

On a broader level this action project has raised the possibility that education for sustainability within outdoor education can be used as a point of departure for change within an organisation that is concerned with the development of education for sustainability. This idea will be discussed further in the next chapter. The second

significant outcome of the action research group was to prepare a submission to the formal review panel.

***Action: Submission to the formal review panel***

The formal review panel released the draft report *Review of the Recreation Programmes*<sup>18</sup> (CPIT, 2008a) for consultation on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2008. The opportunity for the action research group to become involved in the consultation process through the preparation of a submission to the review panel was identified through an informal ‘beside-the-photocopier’ discussion between several of the group members (excluding me). A meeting to discuss the preparation of a submission was convened on the 29<sup>th</sup> August and the negotiated minutes would later record a group member suggesting that the review was a “hell of a good opportunity ... to introduce some new ideas to enhance our programmes ... and make us more financially viable”.

The minutes would identify a number of key points to include in the submission. The key points were:

- The strong alignment of education for sustainability in the Outdoor Programmes with the strategic goals of CPIT;
- Exploring education for sustainability as a “point-of-difference” (CPIT, 2008a)
- Undertaking market research in relation to education for sustainability;
- Enhancing collaboration with other organisations such as the U.C. College of Education; and
- Financial implications of the Sustainability Workshop.

Preparing the submission<sup>19</sup> to the formal review panel proved an important outcome for the members of the action research group for a number of reasons. Most importantly the submission saw the action research group enter into reflection and undertake action in a strategic and political way, identified by Chapman (2004b) and

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<sup>18</sup> It is of interest that the staff refer to “Outdoor Programmes” while CPIT management refer to “Recreation Programmes”. Efforts by staff to change the name have spanned several years and have made little headway with managers.

discussed in the last chapter as a key function of action research concerned with sustainability in the education sector.

The submission helped to draw the action research group together and to encourage them to think very strategically about the future of the BRecEd and what role sustainability would play in this future. Members of the group had to think about the future on a multitude of levels that had been discussed over the last seven months including future costs involved in delivering the BRecEd and other associated outdoor programmes, future student and community needs, programme and institutional identity, and consideration of the local, national and global context. This discussion required a high degree of synthesis because these issues could not be considered in isolation. This process led to a cohesive response from the action research group to the formal review panel on the future viability of the BRecEd and associated programmes from a sustainability perspective<sup>20</sup>.

Returning to principles of change agency, the submission drew together elements of the innovation-decision process, these being knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation (Rogers, 2003). The submission became the vehicle that demonstrated the action research group had explored knowledge and gained understanding through discussion over an extended period of time. The submission also allowed the group to draw on the example of the sustainability workshop to demonstrate what could be achieved, and empowered the action research group to support education for sustainability to the formal review panel in a persuasive way. The submission was positive and forward looking, and by using the sustainability workshop as an example of innovation, was able to clearly signal a financially viable future direction to the review panel. In this way, the managers could be considered recipients of the innovations proposed by the action research group.

Recipients of innovations (as opposed to the innovators themselves) play an important role in the successful diffusion of innovations within an organisation. This is because where recipients perceive value in an innovation, they are more likely to adopt that

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<sup>19</sup> The submission to the formal review panel is contained in the appendices.



innovation and recommend it to others (Rogers, 2003). This was demonstrated through the inclusion of key themes from the submission into the final report of the formal review panel. For example the report contains the following comments:

“The value of the Recreation/Outdoor education offering needs to be better defined and the uniqueness of the offer understood by the marketplace if the programmes are to be sustainable. The review panel believe the current point ... of difference exists in the sustainability focus of the degree...

...There seems to be a key area in which there is a tension between following industry by meeting the current needs in terms of graduates, and leading industry in terms of guiding development toward broader and more sustainable themes.” (CPIT, 2008b, p. 4)

The external consultant would observe in the same report:

“The theme of sustainability is important, and in this respect the programmes seem to be at the leading edge of thinking in the discipline” (CPIT, 2008b, p. 19)

This inclusion would likely ensure that education for sustainability would be a key consideration for any future development of the Outdoor Programmes and signal that diffusion of education for sustainability had occurred into the formal review process. However, Ashforth and Mael (1989) would also maintain that another important function of the inclusion was to provide a form of social validation for the action research group, in that the values incorporated into the statements above validated those values that underpinned the collective identity of the action research group.

Diffusion of education for sustainability into the formal review process was unforeseen. Initially the formal review created significant frustration for the action research group because the formal review prevented action involving the BRecEd while the review process was taking place, yet this was the purpose of the action research. However, diffusion of education for sustainability by way of the submission into the formal review of the Outdoor Programmes ensured that the goals of the research would be considered in a wider context. More precisely, the goals of the action research, stalled by the formal review, were picked up by key members of the formal review panel and became important threads of the review process itself.

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<sup>20</sup> By comparison, the general staff submission to the formal review panel tended to be less cohesive in that it tried to meld together a diverse range of individual perspectives and what appeared to be defensive positions arranged around programme and curriculum areas.

### *Evaluation of the action research as an agent of change*

In order to evaluate the efficacy of the action research as an agent of change for the BRecEd, it is useful to recall that social change takes place in communities, that discussion about change agency looks to the way communities adjust and adapt to change, the way individuals form and reform identities around shared beliefs, and the way knowledge is contested and shared by individuals and groups. Importantly, change agency looks to learning as a critical element in change process. The following discussion about the efficacy of the action research as an agent of change for the BRecEd draws upon these themes.

Chapter four looked to establish that social change takes place in communities and that a significant global framework such as Agenda 21 existed to support local community driven sustainability related initiatives. In this discussion, the term community implied groups of local people undertaking local initiatives relevant to a local context. It was also established in the same chapter that global initiatives (such as The Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO, 2005)) look to education as a powerful driver of social change within communities. Yet according to researchers such as Williams (2008) and Moore (2005), initiatives for social change have gained little traction in the tertiary sector because it is characteristically compartmentalised and fragmented within and across organisations. Discussion in chapter 4 also established that students working to adopt sustainable attitudes and behaviours needed to feel they were part of a like minded community that rewarded their efforts if they were to avoid feelings of isolation and loss.

The action research that has unfolded has demonstrated the capacity to break down silos, to build links between individuals, and to create community. Importantly the community is able to draw students, teaching staff, managers, and people from other faculties into a setting that enhances collegiality and awareness of others efforts towards sustainability within the institution. For example students on the action research group were able to bridge across a compartmentalised curriculum for academic staff unable to do so, and the third development phase of the sustainability

workshop brought together staff from a range of faculties across CPIT to contribute to the formation of the sustainability workshop.

The action research group can also be thought of as a team, and according to influential authors such as Senge (1990), Rogers (2003) and Caldwell (2003) teams are a particularly effective mechanism at diffusing change horizontally within large diverse organisations. An example of diffusing change horizontally can be found in the way the action research project has acted as a mechanism to develop peripheral relationships with people who are not members of the action research group. Because these people on the periphery of the action research have also contributed to the project, they too have become part of the community associated with the project but not members of the team. In this way, the community enters into what Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) might call a community of practice, a fuzzy or loosely coordinated group of people that gravitate together with a purpose shared by the group, in this case developing education for sustainability within CPIT. Within project oriented communities of practice, there exist opportunities for Māori to participate on their own terms and in a meaningful way. Such participation was well demonstrated with the Sustainability Workshop action, and contrasted the difficulty of maintaining a Māori perspective on the action research group over the long term and discussed in chapter five.

The action research project has proved to be a useful mechanism to facilitate change within the team and community associated with the project. One of the key reasons for this is that the action research work spanned more than a year, which gave group members time for what Rogers (2003) calls the innovation-decision process to occur. This means that individual action research group members had time to come to terms with sustainability as a concept, what it meant for them personally and professionally, to develop sustainability related actions that would impact on their local environment, and finally to advocate for these innovations to a wider audience. The importance of time was most apparent when a new member joined the group and occupied a different place in the innovation-decision process than the longer serving members.

That a change in discourse within the action research group and the associated community could be traced over time indicates an increasing understanding of

sustainability within the context of the BRecEd and the wider arena of CPIT in general. An increasing understanding or learning within a community such as the one formed around the action research fits with the influential concept of the learning organisation (Senge, 1990, 1999). This concept promotes the idea that change within large organisations is primarily driven by groups of people who work collaboratively, share ideas and learn together.

As discussed, team and community models of change require effective leadership. However in the case of the action research project, leadership exhibited by the researcher challenged the ideal of emancipation of the research group members that underpinned the project. This was because as researcher I could not help but frame the reality of the project from my perspective. When researchers are considered as innovators and research projects are considered as sources of innovations, the ideal of emancipatory action research is problematic and this was unforeseen during the planning phase of the research. The action research group came to terms with this problem through the learning and understanding that occurred over time, negotiated realities, and as researcher, realising that the research would have to be allowed to adjust to the reality of the group if it was to progress. This meant that progress was much slower than I expected, but more importantly, that when actions were decided upon, it would be so because of collective decision process and not because I as researcher had promoted them at the onset.

As a result of this conflict, there emerged a blend of researcher as innovator (working by myself under the direction of the action research group to produce outcomes) and researcher as member of an emancipatory action research project (one of many negotiating collective realities).

The action research project also proved flexible and adaptable when the context changed. The most significant change in context was the formal review of the Outdoor Programmes, which prevented actions being undertaken within the BRecEd. The action research group was able to side-step the formal review and engage in the development of the sustainability workshop, and at the same time become involved in the formal review on a political level. Both of these outcomes were unforeseen in the original research questions, but as already discussed, these outcomes would lead to

increased education for sustainability opportunities. That the action research group was eventually able to achieve these outcomes suggests that the structure of the action research was particularly suited to long term innovation where flexibility could occur as opposed to short term innovation where flexibility would be less likely to be a feature.

In the tertiary sector, research is held in high esteem and the action research project appeared to gain leverage because of this. The action research had a structure and reason for existence but at the same time lay outside of the political framework of the institution and therefore was not restricted by it. Consequently the action research group was able to position outcomes on political as well as structural levels. Advantage was also gained from being able to position argument from a philosophical perspective informed by research on a political level. For example the formal review panel incorporated the central points of the submission from the action research group into their final report because those central points were creditable in a political context.

An important element of the action research group was that discussion and outcomes relating to education for sustainability were characteristically solution focused and forward thinking. These characteristics appeared to be particularly valuable in the formal review process given the tendency of the wider academic staff to defend the status quo rather than look to change.

Much discussion in previous chapters has focussed on identity and how as individuals we look to those around us for a sense of belonging. In this way, communities play an integral role in individual identity construction; for as Blewitt (2006) observes, "We become who we are in communities" (p. 96). The action research group has over time provided members with the opportunity to re-think individual identities and to explore ways that look to sustainability as a common thread within the group. Discourse increasingly supportive of sustainability concepts as traced through the negotiated minutes in the last two chapters has demonstrated the evolution of this thread. As individual identities have moved to increasingly embrace sustainability, so has acceptance of a sustainability identity for the BRecEd, the Outdoor Programmes, and for CPIT increased.

The pragmatism behind deciding how members of the action research group would be selected has increased the opportunities for the action research group to find common ground. This is because *some* common ground existed within the action research group members from the onset of the project. It is perhaps doubtful that the common ground would have been found if selection of group members had not occurred based upon the criteria outlined in chapter five, and this was demonstrated by new membership to the action research group that did not last beyond a single meeting.

New membership to the group also highlighted the way knowledge is contested and shared by individuals and groups and how time is an important factor in negotiating common understanding. One of the key problems encountered by the action research group was that because the group was undertaking work that spanned two separate academic years, membership of the group changed. This meant that while a common understanding was established for longer serving members, new members to the group had yet to establish their understanding relative to the other members.

This undoubtedly created a tension for the action research group, for although the group welcomed new members, new members required the group to reinvent themselves as a result of that inclusion. In this situation it would seem that both of these functions are vital and that the inclusion of new members could be seen as an opportunity for the group to re-articulate their journey in order to sweep the new member along.

The idea of learning together through the action research project has also required that as researcher, I place myself in a position to also learn from the rest of the group, to challenge but also to be challenged. This experience highlights the close parallel between the action research project as it came to be and education for sustainability pedagogy discussed in chapter four. Sustainability pedagogy suggests the teacher is also the learner while the learner is also teacher. The action research group members, as in education for sustainability, were participants in learning about problems, strategising solutions, and acting to bring about change. In the end, the action research project became the very thing that it set out to foster – education for sustainability.

Watson (2008) has argued against what he regards as an overly simplified approach in research concerned with the relationship between discourses and self in identity construction. In order to better acknowledge the complexity of identity construction he has suggested a three step view of the process that includes reference to the multiplicity of socially available discourses, the multiplicity of socially available social identities, and a self identity comprised of multiple individual identities. Identity work, suggests Watson, is the process that lies between the last two of the three steps and is both internally and externally focused. Watson explains:

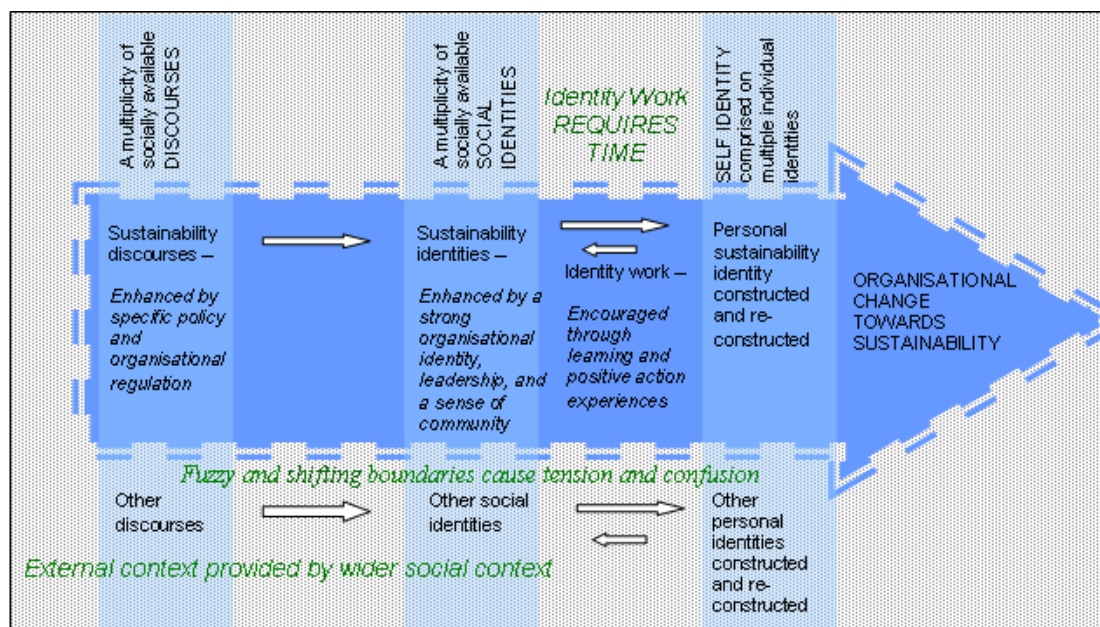
"The identity work that people do is not most usefully understood as primarily an 'internal' self-focused process. Instead, it is better understood as a coming together of inward /internal self-reflection and outward/external engagement - through talk and action - with various discursively available *social identities*." (Watson, 2008, p. 130)

Although Watson's discussion was focused on management, much can be learned by considering his three step view in the construction of personal sustainability identities and the role that organisations moving to establish sustainability identities play in this process. The following paragraphs use Watson's concept as a starting point to explore the juncture of personal and organisational identity change processes. Discussion refers to the diagram presented in Figure 6.3 that depicts the juncture.

Figure 6.3 depicts a multiplicity of socially available discourses; a multiplicity of socially available social identities; and a self identity comprised of multiple individual identities as three shaded columns imposed over organisational change towards sustainability indicated by the arrow. Within the arrow, the role of the organisation in individual identity construction and the role of the individual in organisational identity construction become entwined.

Watson portrayed self identity as comprised of a multitude of individual identities, while Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) describe individual and self as partly overlapping terms that need to be distinguished from each other. Sveningsson and Alvesson argue that self identity is deeper, more personal and less accessible than individual identity, which is more concerned with the struggle to answer the question 'who am I' in different situations (and is more linguistic and social in nature). From

this perspective, elements of individual identity are located within the organisation where that individual is employed while self identity, although influenced by identity formation processes that occur in the organisational sphere, lies beyond the boundaries of the organisation.



**Figure 6.3:** The inter relationship between discourse, identity and organisational change

As discussed in earlier chapters, a multitude of social discourses are available to the individual. For example discussion in chapter four identified that global discourses were interpreted locally to produce what Evans (2007) called “glocalisation”, a pastiche of local interpretations of what has gone on before (Evans, 2007, p. 173). As discussed in this chapter, the prominence of sustainability discourses can be enhanced by organisations in a number of ways and several key mechanisms were identified. These key mechanisms included the development of specific policy relating to sustainability and regulation within the organisation relating to sustainability. These processes signal to individuals within the organisation (and particularly academic and allied staff members) and on the peripheries of that organisation (such as other tertiary organisations or industry groups) the importance of sustainability discourse to that organisation, thus encouraging individuals to engage with sustainability discourses.

Likewise, a multitude of social identities drawn from the multitude of discourses are available to the individual. Organisations can enhance the sense of value of an



individual sustainability identity by establishing a strong organisational sustainability identity, displaying strong leadership in the area of sustainability and as discussed in chapter three, creating a strong community that values and rewards sustainability. In the absence of leadership, these things are less likely to take place. This was evident in PhD research by Williams who noted “where leadership support is lacking, those [sustainability related] initiatives fail to flourish” (P. M. Williams, 2008, p. 250).

The boundaries of the arrow in Figure 6.3 are broken to depict the fuzzy and shifting nature of identities. For example as discussed earlier, self identities are comprised of multiple individual identities and at times these identities may not complement each other, and may even contradict each other. This contradiction provided the tensions explored in chapter three and in the first part of this chapter. The organisation is likely to contribute to these tensions, requiring contradictory responses from their employees at different times.

The time it takes for identity work to occur is also included in Figure 6.3. This is because, as already discussed, identity work is a process driven by exposure to influences that encourage that identity work to take place.

Reading management literature, it would seem that the prestige given to sustainability within an organisation is critical because people want to identify with a winner. This literature (for example see Ashforth & Mael, 1989) presents the argument that if sustainability can be presented as a winner through mechanisms such as active support from the senior management coupled with real development opportunities and reward mechanisms, then growing popular support for sustainability related innovation within the organisation might be created. This snowballing uptake of any innovation was called the bandwagon effect by Ashforth and Mael (1989) and is an important aspect of diffusion with ramifications for both the organisation and the individual. The organisation can support increased individual uptake of change through supportive management, policies and systems, and increased individual uptake of change leads to increased change for the organisation.

However this position appears somewhat simplistic when considering identity and social movement literature referred to in chapter four. In this chapter it was argued

that change is a very complex process and change within values laden contexts causes tension and conflict. From this perspective, even though leadership might play an important role in change, there is likely to be resistance to change on a multitude of levels that cannot be solved by only thinking that people want to associate with winners.

Identity work as depicted in figure 6.3 occupies the space between socially available discourses and identities, and self identity. As discussed in earlier chapters, identity work can be thought of as processes requiring constantly shifting understanding and knowledge relating to different perspectives. Mechanisms that allow for such negotiation processes to occur have been called “boundary objects” by Star and Griesemer (as cited in Simpson & Carroll, 2008) and can take many different forms. Simpson and Carroll summarise boundary objects as follows:

“Boundary objects act as intermediary vehicles for the translation and interpretation of meanings in intersubjective collaborations between knowledge domains; they provide anchors for with-domain knowledge and bridges to construct between-domain understandings; and they are both concrete and abstract, robust and plastic, and permit the coexistence of heterogeneity and cooperation.” (Simpson & Carroll, 2008, p. 36)

It is interesting to reflect upon how organisations create boundary objects (both inadvertently and on purpose) that encourage individuals to negotiate the space between. Simpson and Carroll (2008) have argued that the multiplicity of roles required of people in an organisation (for example manager, team leader, or teacher) should be considered boundary objects and that “roles provide an anchor for identity that sustains a sense of continuity over time” (p. 44). A multiplicity of roles is important as a boundary object because different and even contrasting roles require some form of rationalisation by the individual.

For example, providing academic staff with the opportunity to develop education for sustainability beyond the context of their normal roles and curriculum areas is more likely to produce successful outcomes. This is because it allows for people to develop dual roles; meaning individuals can engage in the cognitive processes of role separation, developing a hierarchy, and buffering to keep those roles separate. For as Ashforth and Mael note, it is “Only when individuals are forced to simultaneously

don different hats does their facility for cognitively managing conflict break down" (1989, p. 31) and produce conflict.

However, as already discussed, different hats can produce what Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) called anti-identity, where a "not me" response was provoked by role expectations for employees that lay beyond their understanding of individual identity. Organisations need to ensure they provoke a "yes that's me" reaction to expectations of role when it comes to sustainability; for there is no place for "not me" if sustainability is to underpin all aspects of an organisation, as signaled by the strategic goals of CPIT. The action research was able to help members to identify with "yes that's me sentiments"<sup>21</sup>.

Opportunities for staff to learn about sustainability, such as the Sustainability workshop developed for CPIT staff can also be considered a boundary object. This is because though the creation of opportunities to learn about and explore sustainability on a personal level, participants are encouraged to engage in a reflective process that can lead to re-evaluations of who they are. Opportunities to engage in action oriented learning also allows individuals to explore what these new identities mean for them in behavioural terms. Actions can also enhance sustainability culture and behaviour within an organisation, as demonstrated through the student actions discussed in chapter 3 and the outcomes of the action research group discussed earlier in this chapter.

Another important boundary object encountered in this action research project has been the formal review. I have considered the formal review a boundary object because the goals of the review were to evaluate the programme in the light of CPIT organisational kaupapa and strategic goals, and together with consideration of wider social discourse, look for opportunities to reinterpret the identity of the programme and by extension the staff involved. This process has encouraged the staff involved including the members of the review panel to consider many different perspectives presented through interviews and submissions. In this way, a formal review can be

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<sup>21</sup> For example at least two members of the action research group used involvement in the action research as evidence of engagement with sustainability at CPIT in their appraisal or promotion in 2008.

seen as a facilitated opportunity for identity work on organisational and individual levels.

### **Summary**

The first part of this chapter explored how a team model of change agency found in the action research project was complicated by both internal and external identity construction processes. Discussion showed that the development of individual sustainability identities of members in the action research group, although time consuming, was unavoidable and that the eventual construction of a collective sustainability identity had to take place before collective action could be undertaken. Discussion also explored the development of CPIT's organisational identity constructed around sustainability and discovered that this development created opportunities for the action research group.

The second part of the chapter explored outcomes of the action research group (the design and delivery of a CPIT two-day staff development sustainability workshop; and the preparation of a submission to the formal review panel) and explored the wider implications of these outcomes in order to draw the conclusion that the action research project was successful as a change agent in creating opportunities for education for sustainability in the BRecEd. Using this discussion as a starting point, the chapter concluded with general and theoretical analysis of the intersection of individual and organisational identity and argued the two processes were not only interdependent, but that individual and organisational identity informed each other.

The next, and final chapter, presents the conclusions of the study as a weaving together of the threads of education for sustainability and outdoor education.

## Chapter 7: Weaving the threads together

### Introduction

The purpose of this PhD study has been to add to the body of knowledge relating to the current and potential contribution outdoor education makes to contemporary culture within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. More specifically, it was anticipated that the research would assist the practice of outdoor education to move towards being a more effective medium for sustainability education. Firstly it was proposed the research would contribute to an increased understanding of the tensions created through sustainability education juxtaposed to traditional subjects, teaching methods, and institutional structure that act to normalise neo-liberal and colonial values; and secondly, it would explore mechanisms to rectify these issues.

The research was based on the assumption that in order to create a more conducive environment for sustainability education to occur within the context of outdoor education, there needs to be a clearer understanding of the causes of tensions that are encountered, coupled with an exploration of the means to resolve these issues.

The central theme of the thesis has been about paradigm shift towards sustainability described through my experiences as a tertiary outdoor educator at CPIT. These experiences have included interactions with students and graduates of the BRecEd, and interactions with staff primarily through interviews and an action research project. As a result, much discussion has focussed on identity construction; how individuals have grappled with the tensions and conflicts that arise when paradigms are challenged and shifted. This chapter will draw together and summarise the key findings of discussion relating to these central themes contained in earlier chapters and will clearly outline how this research project contextualised within the BRecEd has met the goals described above. The chapter is divided into three parts.

In the first part, discussion returns to the interrelationship between discourse, identity and organisational change described in the latter part of chapter six. To begin, the model of change encapsulated in diagram 6.3 will be used to provide an interpretive

framework in order to begin to weave together a summary of the problems presented by sustainability contained in chapter three with the solutions provided through identity construction processes contained in chapter four; and to create tangible links with the action research project presented in chapters five and six. The student actions initially discussed in chapter four are revisited in order to explain the more complex interactions relating to identity and change taking place. Part one will also revisit the discussion about framing introduced in chapter three and continue to develop it as a central dynamic to explain the relationship between those themes drawn from earlier chapters. The BRecEd will continue to be used to both ground and contextualise discussion as it has in previous chapters.

Part two of the chapter revisits the research questions presented in chapter two. Discussion summarises the findings of the research in terms that address the specific issues raised by the questions. Part three of the chapter presents concluding thoughts and reflections that I have had regarding the research project, the concept of sustainability, and the role that outdoor education might play in a future of rapid social and ecological change.

### **Part one: Weaving the threads**

To begin it is important to recall discussion in chapter three that described contemporary outdoor education in this country as a result of now historical developments. The key points of the discussion included observations that outdoor education was characterised by particular activities, professional pathways, concerns with risk management practices and in-school assessment that framed outdoor education within dominant ways of thinking very much linked to Victorian ideals and colonisation processes. It was argued that generally, outdoor education was and remains part of the dominant paradigm. It was argued that this backdrop forms the wider outdoor education context for the BRecEd at CPIT.

In chapter five, discussion revealed that the BRecEd was comprised of three distinct and sometimes competing programme identities: sustainability, education and adventure. It was established that for many students an initial fascination with the

adventure identity characteristic of earlier outdoor education experiences drew them to the degree. However, it was also established that over the duration of the degree, the initial singular fascination with adventure was replaced by a perception shared by many students that although the sustainability identity was not openly disclosed in promotional material, it had a high profile as a core subject stream. Students also demonstrated that they perceived the sustainability identity of the degree to be of greater value to them upon graduation than the adventure identity that had originally attracted them to the programme. Based on this perception of value, some students even argued to change the name of the degree to a bachelor in outdoor and environmental education.

At this stage, it is useful to recall the concept of framing that was introduced in chapter three (used there to help explain the different ways people perceived and defined both sustainability and outdoor education). Framing was described as a verb employed by social movement scholars to signify the work undertaken in the generation of particular interpretations of events with the purpose of inspiring and legitimating collective action (Benford & Snow, 2000). The term counterframing was also introduced to describe oppositional framing activity, for interpretive framing occurs both within social movements and in the wider social context. However framing activity can also be considered as work related to the identity construction process introduced in chapter four and explored further in chapters five and six because framing is articulation of perspective.

Chapter five explored how the strong framing of adventure projected through marketing initiatives such as the promotional video (CPIT, 2002) and programme information document (CPIT, 2007b) constructed adventure as the dominant identity for the BRecEd. When this framing activity is considered in relation to the pervasive contextual framing of outdoor education beyond the degree, it is not surprising that marketing activity for the BRecEd has framed the degree in a manner that aligns with the popular notion that outdoor education is mostly concerned with adventure pursuits and the management of risk.

However, the framing of the BRecEd was also described as a process of constant change, and framing activity linked to an emerging sustainability identity for the

BRecEd was also identified. For example, in chapter four student actions were presented as a way for students to engage with sustainability, but can also be considered as framing activity. This is because staff and students at CPIT and the wider community interacting with the BRecEd through the student action projects come to associate direct action with the degree. In the coffee cup action described in chapter four, framing activity can clearly be identified in posters that promoted the action. These posters (see Figure 7.1) depict the students' concern over the 100,000 disposable coffee cups used each year at CPIT that cannot be recycled.



**Figure 7.1:** Action to replace disposable coffee cups – Students with posters outside the Library at CPIT. (Photo: Nathan Watson)

The coffee cup action portrayed the BRecEd students as being concerned about the issue of waste generated using disposable coffee cups. Because the project was of the students' own choosing, it can also be implied that the BRecEd created an environment for this concern to be explored by students. The posters illustrate how the actions constitute framing activity that articulate a sustainability identity for the students, and by extension the BRecEd. However in chapters three and six, framing of outdoor education within the degree was shown to produce tension and confusion.

Tension and confusion resulted from juxtaposed conflicting identities of adventure and sustainability. Individuals identified with different collective frames at different times and in different situations and boundaries between discursive frames were never



static. For example in chapter six, it was demonstrated that framing of outdoor education by members of the action research group was confused and shifting and was related to a general inability of staff working for the Outdoor Programmes at CPIT to agree over *what purpose outdoor education?* For some, the purpose lay with the moral imperative for social change associated with sustainability, while for others, purpose was found in the traditional framing of outdoor education in terms of overcoming challenge and building individual confidence and self esteem.

Action research group members were shown to align with different discursive frames at different times and even to align with different frames simultaneously but apply them to different actions they were involved with. In chapter six, the example was given of members advocating an action that would strengthen the sustainability identity for the BRecEd, while at the same time the same members lobbied to protect the status quo of the degree. These observations lead to the important conclusion that any framing of sustainability that might occur within the BRecEd is heavily influenced by the wider social, vocational and political framing of outdoor education and sustainability that occurs beyond the programme, and how individuals identify with that framing. It also raised the possibility that change towards sustainability has a greater chance of traction in contexts where those involved in the change process do not have a high level of emotional investment in the organisational structure being changed<sup>22</sup>.

Difficulties associated with what sustainability actually means were discussed in chapter three and are related to framing contests over the term. In discussion it was established there exist many different interpretations of what sustainability means and that the term has been widely coopted into dominant discourse and redefined. For example, CPIT's Sustainability Review (CPIT, 2005) used sustainability to describe economic viability. This means sustainability is defined in different ways within the BRecEd, and externally across contexts such as those provided by CPIT or outdoor education in general.

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<sup>22</sup> Although this conclusion is drawn in the context of this research, it is acknowledged that this may not always be the case.

These contested frames create confusion for people learning about what sustainability means, and diffusion of interpretations that result in sustainability losing the meaning attributed to it by organisations such as UNESCO (2005) and discussed in chapter three. The impact of contested framing of sustainability was very evident for members of the action research group. In this example, negotiated minutes of meetings recorded discussions that revealed members grappled with a variety of meanings and challenges that eventually led to transformations in the way sustainability was framed over time.

The idea that the context in which framing occurs provides for particular discursive opportunities is vital to understanding the dynamics of any social movement. This means that the way a problem or situation is expressed, and subsequently interpreted, is dependant on the context in which both expression and interpretation occurs. For example Ferree (2003) clearly demonstrated that the social context provided opportunities for collective action framing to produce both resonant frames that are more likely to be adopted within the wider context, and non-resonant frames that are more likely to be viewed as radical. Different contexts provided for different resonant and non-resonant frames.

The student actions described in chapter four provide a useful example of resonance and radicalism within the context of a tertiary institution like CPIT. Actions such as the coffee cup project were well received within the institution and resonant with institutional expectations of student activist behaviours fostering community and collegiality. That the institution, the students association and one of the cafes involved continued to sell the cups the following year signalled the strength of that resonance.

Following the same rationale, the student action that saw a protest banner placed on the chalice in Cathedral Square described in chapter four might be interpreted as radical in the context of institutional CPIT. This is because climbing the chalice is an activity that CPIT could not be seen to condone and the action could have caused problems for the student, me as tutor and the institution, should the student have been caught in the act of climbing the chalice, or been injured falling from the structure.

Yet the student submitted the chalice protest as an integral part of his action project. This means they likely perceived the protest as an appropriate undertaking for the assessment or they would not have undertaken it or if they had undertaken it, not submitted it as part of the assessment. From the student's perspective, it is therefore likely that the chalice protest was resonant with their perception of what was permitted for the assessment.

Likewise, as tutor I accepted the chalice protest as an integral part of the action project undertaken by this student. This means the chalice protest was resonant with my own expectations of the types of activities that were acceptable for students to engage within the context of the assessment. Therefore what could be considered radical activity in the context of institutional CPIT (that is activity that would not be considered as part of the normal functioning of the institution) found resonance (or acceptance) within the assessment of the AROE700 paper within the BRecEd.

Resonance of social movements with the wider context that they are situated in is important because the greater the resonance the greater the chance of adoption. Benford and Snow (2000, p. 621) explain the concept as follows: "Hypothetically, the more central or salient the espoused beliefs, ideas, and values of a movement to the targets of mobilization, the greater the probability of their mobilization." However, this means that efforts to produce resonance in a social movement can be paradoxical to more radical efforts (within the same social movement) to challenge hegemony within the wider context.

Reflecting on my own position as tutor, I have clearly placed the moral imperative for social change expressed in chapter two as central to my decision making in the way I have developed this paper and portrayed the learning outcomes to the students. In chapter two, discussion about the moral imperative to act drew sustainability down to a personal level carrying personal responsibility and that there was no choice but to try to live in a less destructive manner. It was argued that sustainability carries a moral obligation arising from the value placed upon healthy environments and communities that sustain us. In my teaching, the moral imperative for social change had taken precedence over my consideration of what might be acceptable student assessment from an institutional perspective, and was already well established by the time the

chalice action took place. For example, some years earlier, a student had submitted a series of critical mass cycle protests for assessment, only on this occasion I had known about the action prior to it being submitted and had offered advice on how to approach the action. Several staff from the BRecEd including myself participated in the protest rides; the staff themselves complicit in the action by their involvement. The engagement of the staff in the critical mass ride suggests that some normalisation of civil disobedience within the BRecEd has occurred.

In chapter three, much was made of ‘walking the talk’; of needing to turn discourse into action, but that such changes were argued to be extremely difficult because of the developed world we live in. This includes the difficulty of incorporating action relating to sustainability into outdoor education as it has traditionally been framed. However what the students have demonstrated here with their actions and reflections is that changes in behaviour such as those described above signal authenticity and can create both rewarding learning environments and encourage self reflection. Such mechanisms relating to identity construction have prompted Stainton Rogers to suggest that “Authenticity just might be the key to empowering people to change their lives” (2009, p. 30). Authenticity here means encouraging people to be true to themselves and to act out their values. This does not negate the importance of dialogue, for chapter six well established the value of dialogue in exploring identity; but it does signal that moral positions underpinning practical decisions influence those around us.

The examples of the coffee cup action and the chalice action aptly demonstrate an important characteristic of resonance and radicalism; that different individuals within a movement will be drawn to frame their position in different ways. This concept was well described by Ferree (2003) as follows: “Although resonant ideas appear mainstream and offer conventional forms of success, such as winning popular support and elite allies, radical ideas are attractive to movement actors who seek a restructuring of hegemonic ideas and the interests they express and support.” (2003, pp. 305-306) Although I am using the definition more broadly than Ferree probably intended, the concept remains important. The students have demonstrated that framing work arising from a particular context does not prescribe resonance or preclude radicalism. Ferree (2003) notes that both are attractive to individuals

engaged in collective action for different reasons. An interesting extrapolation of this discussion is to consider the differences discursive framing offers between the contexts of different programmes. For example discursive framing of sustainability within a business degree would likely produce different resonant and non-resonant activity than those described in this study contextualised in outdoor education.

It is also interesting to consider the discursive framing and actions of the action research group described in chapter six in terms of resonance and radicalism. For example minuted discussion cited in chapter six suggested that making education for sustainability within the BRecEd more visible would provide greater alignment of the degree programme with CPIT's statement of intent relating to sustainability (CPIT, 2008c). In another example, both actions undertaken by the group (the sustainability workshop and the submission to the formal review panel) found resonance with the statement of intent and would not have been perceived as radical in that context. Both of these examples demonstrate the high degree of willingness to seek resonance with the institution in order to maximise opportunities for favourable outcomes to the formal review taking place.

Resonance and radicalism were terms introduced in chapter six to discuss the synergy of values and behaviours with the context in which they occurred. (The terms were attributed to Ferree (2003) but discussion in chapter six applied them somewhat broadly). The tendency of employees to seek resonance with their employer draws attention to the critical need for clearly articulated leadership regarding sustainability within an organisation. In chapter six, the role of clearly articulated leadership was shown to have a significant impact on managers and the context for the BRecEd those managers had influence over. For example, discussion also included the observation that managers had reframed how they used the term sustainability following the release of CPIT's statement of intent relating to sustainability (CPIT, 2008c), underlining the importance of clear and measurable policy relating to sustainability.

Returning to the student action that placed the banner on the chalice, the very act of climbing the sculpture was a public and political act of defiance. The student had engaged in the usual mechanisms for public participation provided through the Resource Management Act 1991 such as writing letters and attending public meetings

leading up to the placing of the banner, but moved beyond these mechanisms when he climbed the chalice. This move beyond the legal and policy framework might suggest the student may have felt frustration with the system and that frustration justified defiance (a challenge to the power and hegemony of the city council in regard to a lack of progress in the development of policy relating to climate change). However, it is also possible the student had come to view the imperative to act in response to climate change as so critical that it lay beyond what the legislative framework had been designed to engage with.

This perspective offers an alternative explanation to Jickling's dilemma (Jickling, 2004) discussed in chapter three. The dilemma drew attention to the flattening out of oppositional concepts when sustainability was co-opted into the dominant social context. I believe that this means that where social movement activists focus on resonance, such a focus likely results in radical challenges to hegemony being overlooked. This suggests that Jickling's dilemma discussed in chapter three provides serious impediments to education for sustainability within outdoor education (and for sustainability as a wider social movement). This is because finding increasing resonance for sustainability within a dominant context will only ever be capable of producing social change aligned with the weak sustainability model described in chapter one (where more fundamental systemic changes such as changes to economic models of growth are avoided). From this standpoint, attention to non-resonant discourses that highlight oppositional concepts must be retained, and I believe this is a key concept for education for sustainability in an outdoor education context. The personal identity construction processes discussed in chapter four have been shown to play an important role here.

All action projects including student actions and the outcomes of the action research group allow the participants to engage with sustainability in real terms of their own choosing. This means participants get to associate themselves with sustainability behaviours, or as Stainton Rogers (2009) describes it, to stake a claim to an identity through action.

The importance of the individual identity construction to collective identity change was discussed in chapter six and the intersection of these processes presented in figure

6.3. These processes were shown to take place not in isolation but as part of a web of interaction that promotes interpretation and re-interpretation of reality, and are essentially disputes over the collective framing of reality (Benford & Snow, 2000). A good example of such a dispute over reality was described in chapter five where a group of students lobbied to change the name of the degree in the face of opposition from a smaller group of students.

Individuals should be thought of not only as participants but as instigators and drivers of this process, as discussions about the role of innovative individuals and leaders in change agency in chapter six revealed. This is important because this concept encapsulates the idea that as individuals we engage in identity work that includes taking action and the impact of such work can help others to reflect on their own identity. Within the BRecEd, tutors have been shown to play a significant role in assisting students to think about ‘who they are’ and ‘what they believe’ in relation to sustainability and examples of this process such as the Te Kiekie Mt Somers experience were given in chapter four. However the role of students as agents in identity formation of the BRecEd should not be underestimated.

In chapter five, a growing presence of sustainability within the BRecEd was demonstrated to increase over time as a result of accumulated student culture and programme-related traditions such as student actions. Student parties that required beer to be provided in refillable riggers was viewed as an indicator of change towards sustainability within the student culture.

The actions of students following graduation also needs to be considered. For example, the type of employment graduates seek constitutes work that helps define identity for the BRecEd. One graduate wrote in an email following graduation:

“Anyway ... since you inspired me to try and work outside this dominant social paradigm of ours, I have been looking at trying to work for ethically sound, values based companies that challenge the way society runs.” (Excerpt from student email)

As a result of their study, the graduate expresses the desire to stake a claim to a sustainability identity through employment (and eventually they found employment in conservation tourism). In chapter five it was argued that such decisions by graduates

impact upon both marketing and curriculum development because employment of graduates is a factor that underpins both. The degree also framed by graduates when they explain to others what the BRecEd was about. For example, another graduate came up with the following explanation for the degree during an interview for employment:

“... during the interview I used the word sustainability to help define what the degree in outdoor education meant. The interviewer asked me to define the term and I used the simple yet effective “meeting the needs of today without compromising the needs of the future”. He said it was the best damn definition he has heard so far and thanked me for not blowing smoke up his ass. I am pretty sure that is what got me the job!! ☺ I am now a biodiesel batcher ... making biodiesel ... produced from canola oil.” (Excerpt from student email)

This raises the possibility that students and graduates might also be agents of change for outdoor education in a manner that challenges the paradigm of outdoor education described in chapter three. Students undertaking action projects of their own design establish new ground of what is acceptable activity for outdoor education. For example links between social movement activism and outdoor education have been created by students through their action projects.

Graduates actively engage as agents of change for outdoor education through the way they interpret their role as outdoor educators in schools. This is because once in schools and placed in autonomous positions, graduates are able to design courses for their students in their own way. For example, a graduate employed as secondary teacher communicated by email:

“The board have just approved an outdoor education course for the year 12’s next year and so I am in the planning stages for that. One of my focuses for the programme is to have it run in as much as possible in a way that is sustainable. I also want to include an environmental project in the course which will run throughout the year.” (Excerpt from student email)

This communication suggests that graduates are shifting the focus of outdoor education to incorporate themes relating to education for sustainability. However, chapter three identified that outdoor educators need to occupy a position where sustainability has a central position to their teaching and then look to grasp fragments of outdoor education that they are familiar with. This is a daunting prospect, for the



tendency is to remain entrenched in the dominant position and grasp fragments of sustainability that fit with our traditional understanding of outdoor education.

Evidence that paradigm shift was occurring was identified in chapter 5, where discussion revealed that a graduate employed as a secondary teacher was in the process of constructing NCEA assessment for senior school outdoor education using generic Ministry of Education sustainability achievement standards.

Secondary outdoor education teachers also teach into other curriculum areas, raising the possibility for graduates to design and deliver education for sustainability outside of outdoor education as well. For example, another graduate employed as secondary teacher communicated by email:

“...I have been teaching a philosophy course, but this term I wanted a change and I have written a social action course instead. So it’s all been pretty exciting and lots of fun and I have found that the social action courses I did with you have been really helpful and helped spark my interest in teaching this topic ...” (Excerpt from student email)

These anecdotes from secondary teachers and graduates in other employment indicate that the BRecEd is being reframed by graduates in terms of a sustainability identity. Further, these anecdotes from graduates who are now teaching raise the intriguing prospect that outdoor education provides a mechanism for graduates to become advocates for sustainability within schools from their position as outdoor education teachers. In chapter five the example was given of a graduate outdoor education teacher who had been awarded a management unit in respect of their overall responsibility to integrate education for sustainability into the wider school curriculum. Remarkably the management unit was awarded to the graduate in their second year of teaching.

For many students, their enrolment on the BRecEd has seen them embark on a journey of engagement with sustainability. That graduates have continued to engage with sustainability after graduation is important and it is interesting to reflect on the role of the action projects in this process. The student engaged in the critical mass protests later communicated that the action had given her the confidence to stand for office with a national organisation and following graduation, to instigate change in

her place of work. However it is likely that time engaged with sustainability discourse over the three years was also critical in forming a lasting engagement with a sustainability identity.

In chapter six, time was shown to be an important factor in explaining the work of individuals in forming individual and collective identity frames around sustainability. For example students on the action research group described in chapter six who had engaged with sustainability discourse over the duration of their degree showed a high level of awareness about what sustainability was, and confidence in expressing that awareness to others, while some staff engaged with sustainability over a shorter time demonstrated difficulties coming to terms with what the term meant. This suggests that the rate of sustainability related change to the BRecEd depicted by the arrow in Figure 6.3 will occur at a rate reflected by the identity work of individual staff members.

The action research was important in this process of engagement of individuals over time because membership on the research group immersed staff in sustainability discourse over a period of some seven months. This allowed for identity work to take place and in chapter six teaching staff was shown to have increasingly engaged with sustainability over that period.

The following discussion summarises the key findings in terms of the specific research questions proposed in chapter two.

### **Part two: Revisiting the research questions**

To meet the objectives of the study, five research questions were proposed. The following discussion encapsulates the key findings presented in the previous chapters in order to summarise how these questions have been addressed.

**What is sustainability education within an outdoor education context and what does it seek to achieve?**

In chapter three it was argued that education for sustainability is a political action aimed at alerting students to the numerous social and ecological crises related to population growth and the widespread adoption of dominant cultural values, and encouraging the adoption of alternative localised ways of knowing and behaving.

Within outdoor education this means that critical pedagogies (Brookfield, 1987) underpin learning experiences and that students are encouraged to personally engage with and act upon social and ecological problems that are meaningful to them.

This means that education for sustainability within outdoor education occurs locally, using teaching approaches (such as the outdoor activities selected) that suit the local environments, in a manner that engages with local communities and knowledge, and enhances relationships on a local scale.

In chapters four, five and six, much attention was given to the importance of personal identity construction processes, and education for sustainability within outdoor education creates the space and time for identity work to occur. Space that is not dominated by the teacher is needed for students to reflect and explore how they perceive others and the environment, while time is required to develop a sense of belonging to a local place and community, and to understand what sustainability actually means to them on intimate attitudinal and behavioural terms.

Chapter four established that developing notions of community are critical for social movements because collective action requires awareness of the collective in relation to others. This means that education for sustainability within outdoor education is concerned with building sustainable communities, interacting with sustainable communities and fostering sustainable community consciousness amongst students.

**What is currently happening regarding the delivery of sustainability education within outdoor education?**

In chapter three it was argued that outdoor education in Aotearoa New Zealand has developed as adventure pursuits with a subtext of environmental education. This situation has created polarising tensions within the field because the underpinning values of adventure pursuits and environmental education are not closely aligned. For example, chapter five highlighted competing programme identities (of education, adventure and sustainability) constructed for the BRecEd led to confusion and even conflict between staff and students.

It was also argued that vocationally based NCEA assessment coupled with industry awards that focused on minimising risks in a range of adventurous pursuits have entrenched this perspective of outdoor education in secondary schools and the tertiary sector. Industry organisations have strengthened this perspective through the definition of outdoor education they have promoted and through the pursuit focus of instructor certification schemes that have become benchmark qualifications for outdoor education teachers and instructors.

The common response of people interviewed was that outdoor education does not easily support education for sustainability and that there was not a significant presence of education for sustainability within outdoor education in this country. The responses suggested this was because teachers and instructors had neither been provided the tools, nor have they been given time within an already crowded timetable, to develop these topics.

However, in chapters three and four, a number of examples were given of teachers and programmes that were shifting outdoor education from a pursuits and vocationally focused model to embrace aspects of social or environmental sustainability. It was also observed that the recently developed education for sustainability achievement standards created alternative assessments that would support an increased focus on education for sustainability in senior high school.

### **What is the social context of outdoor education in Aotearoa New Zealand?**

It was argued in chapter four that the widely accepted model of outdoor education in Aotearoa New Zealand is part of the dominant culture underpinned by myths that inform national identity. These myths include the cult of scenery and notion that people in Aotearoa New Zealand are close to nature; that we live in a ‘clean and green’ landscape; that Māori are closer to nature than non Māori; and that colonisation is a historical rather than contemporary issue.

It was also argued that formal outdoor education in secondary schools and the tertiary sector generally fulfils a normalising function whereby participants are encouraged to conform to society rather than challenge the inequitable and unsustainable structures and functions that exist.

However, in chapter three, the international framework that has been established to encourage sustainability on national levels (such as UNCED, 1992; UNESCO, 2004, 2005) has influenced national policy frameworks such as the school curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007b) and organisation policy such as CPIT’s statement of intent (CPIT, 2008c). This framework, coupled with an increased public discourse around sustainability such as the Prime Minister’s state of the nation speech (Clark, 2007) have signalled that there is a growing expectation for education for sustainability to be incorporated into formal education.

### **What can we learn from overseas theory and practice?**

Discussion in chapter three established that the term sustainability is very confusing for many people and that the term has been commonly coopted into dominant discourse without attention to the paradoxes that the juxtapositioning of the different philosophical positions create. A key paradox was that students learning about sustainability are faced with difficult dilemmas such as those posed by the Tragedy of the Commons (Hardin, 1968) and the Free Rider (Poundstone, 1992), and that education for sustainability can lead to feelings of loss.

It was also found that social movements and the communities that support them provide critical mechanisms for learners to explore their personal identities and to find a space for identity work associated with sustainability. Key pedagogical approaches to support this process were found in action competence (Jensen & Schnack, 1997) developed through action oriented projects; critical outdoor education (Martin, 2005) that challenged dominant world views of human relationships with nature and encouraged obligation to the land; providing time for students to explore (Payne & Wattachow, 2008); and place based learning (Wattachow, 2005) that fostered a sense of knowing and enhances belonging.

However, the key message from overseas theory and practice is that there is no single model or recipe to integrate education for sustainability into the context of outdoor education. For example Nicol (2002b) observes that in Scotland there is no clear understanding of what constitutes outdoor education; and authors such as Blewitt (2006) and Brookes (2002) argue that local pedagogies need to be developed to meet the needs of local students and local environs within local cultural contexts.

**What can we do to make teaching sustainability education in an outdoor education context more effective in Aotearoa New Zealand?**

The solution to this dilemma was found in chapter six where it was argued that having a clearly articulated organisational identity constructed around sustainability was critical in the development of individual sustainability identities.

To make education for sustainability more effective in outdoor education for senior students in secondary schools, it was suggested that NCEA assessment from other curriculum areas (including education for sustainability achievement standards) be incorporated into outdoor education programmes. In chapter four, it was demonstrated that moving the focus of tertiary outdoor education experiences from technical skill development to developing a better understanding of a local environment in cultural, historical, geographical and ecological terms, coupled with peer assessment models and time for students to explore and reflect can enhance a

sense of belonging to that place. In chapter four it was also demonstrated that by providing students with opportunities to develop action projects, a sense of identity relating to sustainability was enhanced and a sense of being part of a social movement experienced. Actions also gave the students the opportunity to stake a claim (Stainton Rogers, 2009) to a sustainability identity, and to be a part of a community of like minded others.

Discussion in chapter three also established that the development of the dominant perspective of outdoor education in Aotearoa New Zealand was a largely Pākehā initiative. It was argued that to create a more effective medium for education for sustainability within outdoor education, partnerships with Māori need to be developed in order to explore what biculturalism means in outdoor education.

## **Recommendations for future research**

There are many directions that future research might take, and as a qualitative researcher, I recognise that readers will have most certainly identified opportunities that I have not considered. However, the discussions that have taken place have signalled several key opportunities for further research relating to the general development of education for sustainability. These key opportunities for further research are:

- Explore how a high emotional investment of staff in a programme, curriculum area, or particular pedagogy is an impediment to organisational change towards sustainability in the tertiary sector, and develop strategies to deal with this.
- Consider the implications of context related discursive framing across different programmes in relation to organisational change in the tertiary sector.
- Explore the efficacy (particularly how much time, and how best that time be used) for individuals to come to terms with what sustainability means for professional practice, since this understanding drives future professional development initiatives.

### **Part three: Concluding thoughts**

This research has spanned some five years and it is interesting to reflect upon my own learning. In chapter two I clearly established for myself a normative position around sustainability and in the course of the research at no time have I questioned this position. I remain convinced that we must change the way that we live, and the research has focussed on how to move towards more sustainable ways of living rather than whether sustainability is a valid concept. I also remain convinced that outdoor education has an important role to play in educating for sustainability and the research has clearly shown that this is the case.

Reflecting on the methodology that emerged, I think that what eventuated provided a very useful foundation for the research. The participatory action research that formed the over arching framework is now well established internationally across the education sector as an effective medium for transformation and proved so in this case. The participatory action research methodology engaged the BRecEd staff, managers, and students in change that grounded the research in the reality of practice, politicised the research, and produced tangible outcomes. However, as I have described in chapter six, action research as I defined it sees the researcher pass much power to the action research group. This transfer of power sees the researcher with less control over their research and I found this somewhat daunting at the time. The focus on action research group process rather than outcome was very insightful and has produced interesting discussion on organisational change process.

Participatory action research allowed for a variety of research methods to be incorporated into the study. Of particular note, utilising student work (and particularly journal reflections) provided a powerful insight into the challenges of paradigm shift and helped inform the pedagogy of social change discussed. Their work (particularly their action project work) was also influential in defining what the programme was about and challenged the idea of outdoor education as it had been defined at CPIT. Also of note was autoethnography, and although used in a conservative manner, anchored me within the research and saw me reflecting on that position in a critical way. This was particularly important with regard to reflection on



the action research project where 'me' as researcher became 'us' as action research group.

From my perspective in terms of research efficacy in this particular setting, the participatory action research coupled with the research methods employed worked well. The emphasis placed upon emancipation and participation, coupled with a methodology that was allowed to unfold over time were key elements of that efficacy. It would be these elements that I would recommend to others looking to engage in participatory action research in an education setting.

In the autobiography in chapter two I reflected that I found myself in a position of being intellectually pessimistic but emotionally optimistic about the future. I still find myself in this position, but I have drawn much hope for the future from the research. First, and possibly with most impact, I have found hope for the future through seeing graduates of the BRecEd venturing out into the world and making a difference. These people are now employed as secondary school outdoor and environmental education teachers, primary school teachers, outdoor education instructors, conservation workers, volunteer aid workers, counsellors for youth at risk, and the list goes on. But it is not what these graduates are doing for work that matters so much as what they are doing in their work that provides hope for the future. These people are now also making changes towards sustainability in their own way, exploring how to integrate sustainability into their places of work. I have discovered that the exponential reach of education is quite remarkable and is indeed the vehicle of social change that the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development holds it to be. This is hopeful.

The second reason I hold hope for the future is because the sustained focus on education for sustainability derived from the research has had an impact on the outdoor education programme and the wider institution at CPIT. For example, at the time of writing, external consultants reviewing the Outdoor Programmes in separate reports to CPIT recommended the name of the BRecEd be changed to a Bachelor of Outdoor and Environmental Education, and that a centre for sustainability be established at CPIT that would make use of the Outdoor Programme staff to develop and deliver curriculum across the institution. The staff development sustainability workshop developed as part of the action research continues to get high praise. These

initiatives are good examples of the idea promoted in this research that outdoor education can be used as a hub or stepping stone for education for sustainability in schools and tertiary organisations, as long as outdoor education is framed around sustainability. This experience I have had at CPIT has also been encountered by several graduates initially employed as secondary school outdoor education teachers but who have also been awarded responsibility for implementing sustainability education within their respective schools.

However hope has been tempered by the tension that change has caused in my working relationships with peers. Change is not easy for people to adjust to and can cause friction within teams of people working in environments such as that of the BRecEd where there is a high level of emotional investment. I have not found conflict easy to deal with but neither have I withdrawn from the normative position that has caused the conflict. I am convinced that the moral imperative to act has increased since I began the research since the problems arising from overpopulation, species extinction, climate change, and peak oil continue to intensify.

While many relationships with my peers appear to have deteriorated; a few relationships have become stronger. Some of my peers are now comfortable teaching education for sustainability within the staff development sustainability workshops, in the business degree, and some staff are now engaged and planning for a future that involves their participation in education for sustainability in some way. It is with these people that the foundations of community have been established within the Outdoor Programmes, and these people have developed a sense of belonging. I have come to recognise the important links between identity and pedagogy and that as Snook (1999) maintains, the two cannot be disentangled.

Hope has also been tempered by my experiencing change as incremental and resonant with context rather than fundamental and radical by nature. This has been an important finding because incremental change towards sustainability that seeks resonance is only ever likely to produce weak versions of sustainability. Paradigm shifts in the status quo require fundamental and radical changes and as such are more difficult to embed within an institutional setting such as CPIT. This observation

carries significant obstacles for the developed world trying to move towards sustainability because change will always tend towards incrementalism.

As a concluding statement I can think of none better than Mahatma Ghandi's "We must be the change we wish to see in the world." This statement not only weaves together the threads of identity, sustainability and paradigm shift, the three key themes of this research, but also draws upon the idea of authenticity, of trying to be true to your self. It draws paradigm shift towards sustainability down to a personal level, and is about making changes within one's own sphere of influence. However being how you want the world to be is not always easy, and my family, the peers I work with, and the students I have taught have attested to this in their reflections. I sense this is because, as another of the world's great philosophers Kermit the frog remarked in song, "It is not that easy being green."

## Glossary of terms

kai	food
kārearea	bush hawk or native falcon
kapā haka	fierce dance and chant with people arranged in rows
Kaumātua	elder
kōhanga reo	language nest (Māori language immersion kindergarten)
mihi	greeting
Pākehā	non - Māori, European
pōwhiri	welcome
rangatahi	youth or teenagers
raupō	bullrush
tapu	sacred
Te Kura Kaupapa Māori	tikanga (customs or principles) Māori immersion school
te reo Māori	Māori language
Wānanga	learning (refers to Māori tertiary education organisation)
whānau	family
whakatenatena	encouragement

Source: Ryan (1989); and the online Māori dictionary: <http://www.maoridictionary.co.nz>

## Acronyms

BRecEd	Bachelor of Adventure Recreation and Outdoor Education
CPIT	Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology
EONZ	Education Outdoors New Zealand
EOTC	Education Outside the Classroom
IUCN	World Conservation Union
NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NZOIA	New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Association
MP	Member of Parliament
PCE	Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

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## Appendices



## Appendix 1: Adult interview information sheet

### UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Department of Education

#### INFORMATION SHEET

You are invited to participate as a subject in the research project:

*Weaving the threads of outdoor education and sustainability education.*

The aim of this project is to improve understanding of how outdoor education can be used to teach people about living sustainably in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Your participation in this project will involve describing your understanding of, and experiences relating to, teaching and learning about sustainability within an outdoor education context. The interview will take about an hour and will be based around several general questions. You can withdraw from the project at any time, including withdrawal of any information provided.

The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation: the identity of participants will not be made public without their consent. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, only the researcher will have access to the data.

The project is being carried out as part of PhD research by me, David Irwin, under the supervision of David Small and Anne Scott, who can be contacted at the University (phone 366 7001; David ext. 6268; Anne ext. 3801). Should you have any questions or concerns regarding your involvement in the project, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisors.

The project has been reviewed **and approved** by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee and the CPIT Academic Research Committee.

Please note my contact details below:

*David Irwin (researcher)*  
*32 Campbell Street*  
*Sumner, CHRISTCHURCH*

*Phone home (03) 326 7632*  
*Phone work (03) 940 8175*  
*Cell phone 021 215 4090*  
*Email: [irwind@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:irwind@slingshot.co.nz)*

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Dave Irwin  
PhD research October 2004

## Appendix 2: Adult interview consent form

**UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY  
Department of Education**

**CONSENT FORM**

*David Irwin (researcher)  
32 Campbell Street  
Sumner, CHRISTCHURCH]*

*Phone home (03) 326 7632  
Phone work (03) 940 8175  
Cell phone 021 215 4090  
Email: [irwind@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:irwind@slingshot.co.nz)*

*Research project:*

*Weaving the threads of outdoor education and sustainability education.*

I have read and understood the description of the above-named project presented on the *Information Sheet* and understand that I have the right to ask further questions at any time.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my name will not be used without my permission.

This information will be used only for this research and publications arising from the research project.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being audio-taped. I also understand that I have the right to ask for the audiotape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

I understand also that I may decline to answer particular questions and at any time withdraw from the project, including withdrawal of any information I have provided.

NAME (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dave Irwin  
PhD research October 2004

## Appendix 3: Student interview information sheet

### UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Department of Education

### STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

Your student group are invited to participate as a subject in the research project:

*Weaving the threads of outdoor education and sustainability education.*

The aim of this project is to improve understanding of how outdoor education can be used to teach people about living sustainably in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Your student group will be asked play an adventure based learning game and then to describe their understanding of, and experiences relating to, teaching and learning about sustainability within an outdoor education context. The group game and discussion will take about an hour and a half and will be based around several general questions. Students can withdraw from the project at any time, including withdrawal of any information provided.

The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation: the identity of participants will not be made public without their consent. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, only the researcher will have access to the data.

The project is being carried out as part of PhD research by me, David Irwin, under the supervision of David Small and Anne Scott, who can be contacted at the University (phone 366 7001; David ext. 6268; Anne ext. 3801). Should you have any questions or concerns regarding your involvement in the project, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisors.

The project has been reviewed **and approved** by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee and the CPIT Academic Research Committee.

Please note my contact details below:

David Irwin (researcher)  
PO Box 17 666  
Sumner, CHRISTCHURCH

Phone home (03) 326 7632  
Phone work (03) 940 8175  
Cell phone 021 215 4090  
Email: [irwind@xtra.co.nz](mailto:irwind@xtra.co.nz)

---

Dave Irwin  
PhD research October 2004

## Appendix 4: Student interview consent form

**UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY  
Department of Education**

**STUDENT CONSENT FORM**

*David Irwin (researcher)  
PO Box 17 666  
Sumner, CHRISTCHURCH]*

*Phone home (03) 326 7632  
Phone work (03) 940 8175  
Cell phone 021 215 4090  
Email: [irwind@xtra.co.nz](mailto:irwind@xtra.co.nz)*

Research project:

*Weaving the threads of outdoor education and sustainability education.*

I have read and understood the description of the above-named project presented on the *Student Information Sheet* and understand that I have the right to ask further questions at any time.

I agree to participate in the group game and group discussion with the researcher on the understanding that my name will not be used without my permission.

This information will be used only for this research and publications arising from the research project.

I agree/do not agree to the discussion being audio-taped. I also understand that I have the right to ask for the audiotape to be turned off at any time during the discussion.

I understand also that I may decline to answer particular questions and at any time withdraw from the project, including withdrawal of any information I have provided.

NAME (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

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Dave Irwin  
PhD research October 2004

## Appendix 5: Permission to use student work information sheet

### UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

#### Department of Education

#### INFORMATION SHEET: PERMISSION TO USE ASSIGNMENT WORK

You are invited to participate in the research project:

*Weaving the threads of outdoor education and sustainability education.*

The aim of this project is to improve understanding of how outdoor education can be used to teach people about living sustainably in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Your participation in this project will involve allowing a short extract taken from your written work (including assessed and non assessed work) to be used as an example of how, as a student, you have interpreted issues relating to sustainability education presented to you through assignment work within an outdoor education context.

All students, whose work the researcher intends to use will be asked for permission, receive an information sheet and consent form. Students will be shown the particular sentences, and they will have the right to withdraw any or all the work if they desire. Neither accepting nor declining to participate will impact on the academic progress of students approached by the researcher. If students change their minds and choose to withdraw their work after having given permission to use it, they will need to notify the researcher within four weeks of signing the consent form.

The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation: the identity of students whose work is used, the courses those students attended, or the year of those students attendance will not be made public. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, only the researcher will have access to the data.

The project is being carried out as part of PhD research by me, David Irwin, under the supervision of David Small and Anne Scott, who can be contacted at the University (phone 366 7001; David ext. 6268; Anne ext. 3801). Should you have any questions or concerns regarding your involvement in the project, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisors.

The project has been reviewed **and approved** by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee and the Christchurch Polytechnic Academic Research Committee.

Please note my contact details below:

David Irwin (researcher)  
32 Campbell St,  
Sumner, CHRISTCHURCH

Phone home (03) 326 7632  
Phone work (03) 940 8175  
Cell phone 021 215 4090  
Email: [irwind@cpit.ac.nz](mailto:irwind@cpit.ac.nz)

---

Dave Irwin  
PhD research July 2007

## Appendix 6: Permission to use student work consent form

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY  
Department of Education

**CONSENT FORM: PERMISSION TO USE ASSIGNMENT WORK**

David Irwin (researcher)  
32 Campbell St,  
Sumner, CHRISTCHURCH

Phone home (03) 326 7632  
Phone work (03) 940 8175  
Cell phone 021 215 4090  
Email: [irwind@cpit.ac.nz](mailto:irwind@cpit.ac.nz)

*Research project:*

*Weaving the threads of outdoor education and sustainability education.*

I have read and understood the description of the above-named project presented on the *Information Sheet* and understand that I have the right to ask further questions at any time.

I agree to provide extracts of my written assignment work (including assessed and non assessed work) to the researcher for use. I understand anonymity and confidentiality will be assured as neither my name, year of study or course occurrence will be revealed.

This information will be used only for this research and publications arising from the research project.

I understand also that I may decline to provide any work and withdraw from the project, including withdrawal of any or all information I have provided. I also understand that neither accepting nor declining to participate will impact on my academic progress. Should I choose to withdraw my work, I will do so within four weeks of signing this form.

NAME (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dave Irwin  
PhD research July 2007

## Appendix 7: Submission from the action research group to the formal review panel

BRecEd action research group  
17<sup>th</sup> Sept 2008

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**Submission made to:** chair of Outdoor Programmes formal review panel

**From:** Action research group members

**Background:**

The action research group is involved in action research that is part of an ongoing PhD research project investigating education for sustainability within outdoor education in New Zealand. The action research group is specifically concerned with education for sustainability within the BRecEd. It is the intention of the action research group that the following submission provides the review panel with critical feedback on the draft report from the perspective of education for sustainability within the BRecEd and the Outdoor Programmes in general.

The following comments are offered as additional points for the review panel to consider.

**Submission:**

*Point 1: The Outdoor Programmes, and particularly the BRecEd, are strongly aligned with CPIT's strategic goals relating to education for sustainability.*

Although the draft review notes "the programmes exhibit the values of the Kaupapa", the action research group recommends that the review panel take into account the strong alignment of the Outdoor Programmes with CPIT strategic goals relating to education for sustainability.

*Point 2: The Outdoor Programmes become more closely associated with the provision of education for sustainability at CPIT.*

The review panel refers to education for sustainability as a "point-of-difference" that could be developed.

Development could occur into other areas within CPIT, such as with the recent development of the two-day staff Professional Development workshop, or promoted outside of CPIT with the development of new courses to attract students with an interest in education for sustainability currently not catered for.

Although not directly related to the formal review of the Outdoor Programmes, in discussion Murray Bain has identified the absence of a 'centre of learning' for education for sustainability within CPIT. If such a centre were to be developed within the Faculty of Commerce, it is submitted that Outdoor Programme staff have experience of curriculum development and delivery that would allow them to contribute to a centre in a very meaningful way.

The above initiatives would see the Outdoor Programme staff integrated across the institution through a wider array of courses and training. Importantly, this

BRecEd action research group  
17<sup>th</sup> Sept 2008

move would reduce the current level of isolation experienced by the Outdoor Programmes within CPIT.

It is important to note that although education for sustainability was identified by the review panel as the “point of difference” for the BRecEd, this curriculum area could also be developed to be a point of difference for the diplomas. This is because the adventure tourism industry that the diplomas are preparing graduates for is moving into sustainability as both a management approach and integrated into the experiences sought by clients. Significantly, a change in focus for the diplomas to including more education for sustainability could see a reduction in costs of delivery.

*Point 3: Market Research should be targeted*

The action research group supports the undertaking of market research to inform the formal review process. However it is noted that market research also carries the risk that those approached are ill-informed about social and environmental trends and therefore potentially in a poor position to make accurate suggestions about future tertiary training opportunities in education for sustainability. Therefore, and in consideration of the suggestions made in Point 2, the following recommendations are made:

Market research should occur but should include a broader range of instructional situations and experiences relating to education for sustainability as well as outdoor education.

Market research should occur both within and outside of CPIT. This is because opportunities to develop education for sustainability exist both within the institution and outside of the institution.

Market research should canvass a wide range of opinion (that includes tertiary academics, Ministry of Education, secondary school teachers, outdoor education centre staff, managers from local and national government, tourism companies and past students as to the potential market of education for sustainability and outdoor education.

That market research pay particular attention to how generic NCEA Assessment Standards in education for sustainability introduced in 2008 will impact upon the expectations of prospective outdoor (and other) students, and what school based careers advisors know about that in relation to CPIT's Outdoor Programmes. Market research should also investigate the uptake of these assessment standards in secondary outdoor education programmes.



BRecEd action research group  
17<sup>th</sup> Sept 2008

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*Point 4: Collaboration with other tertiary organisations*

Opportunities likely exist for greater collaboration with other TANZ members in general, and U.C. College of Education in particular, in the areas of education for sustainability and outdoor education. For example, attention could be paid to establishing clearer pathways for CPIT graduates into post graduate study in the areas of education for sustainability and outdoor education.

*Point 5: Broad approach to formal review*

While the action research group has focused on education for sustainability within outdoor education as a perspective from which to inform the review panel, the action research group recommends that the panel take into account all possible areas for development in the future. This is because there are likely other areas of delivery within the Outdoor Programmes that could also be developed in the same way that reflects content expertise and delivery experience (for example health and education).

*Point 6: The impact of delivering the Sustainability Workshop on future staff requirements*

The action research group encourages the review panel to consider the impact of delivering the Sustainability Workshop for the Staff Development department on staffing requirements for the Outdoor Programmes.

For 2009, 12 two day courses have been planned for and budgeted by Staff Development and will be over seen by [senior staff member]. It is currently planned that [three Outdoor Programme staff] will provide for the delivery of these courses.

## Appendix 8: Outcomes and outline of staff development sustainability workshop

28<sup>th</sup> Jan 2009

### Sustainability Workshop for academic and allied staff at CPIT

#### Background:

In the *Statement of intent: sustainability and environmental awareness*, CPIT has committed to move towards being a sustainable campus. In order to achieve this both academic and allied staff will need to understand what sustainability means and be able to integrate values, attitudes and behaviours associated with sustainability into their professional practice (such as teaching content and method; or decisions relating to the management, structure, and daily operation of CPIT). To meet this need, CPIT has identified as a key strategy for 2009 to: *Develop, promote and deliver relevant education focused on specific aspects of sustainability.*

#### Purpose:

To provide academic and allied staff with an opportunity to explore sustainability in environmental, social, political, cultural, and economic terms; and to expand this exploration to the implications sustainability has for personal lifestyles, community, and work at CPIT.

#### Outcomes:

1. Analyse and discuss patterns of human civilization and investigate some of the factors that contributed to their success or decline.

*This gives participants the opportunity to consider and reflect upon the patterns of thinking that underpin historical civilizations and how these patterns have led to sustainable and unsustainable practices that have caused that society to endure or collapse.*

2. Analyse and discuss how main stream cultural myths obscure the reality of unsustainable values and behaviors (including economics and free market, consumerism, equality, globalisation, colonization).

*This gives participants the opportunity to engage in analysis and discussion about our own cultural myths such as "clean and green" and to challenge these myths by finding out what is really happening.*

3. Predict the future given a range of current trends (including utopia and dystopia)

*This gives participants the opportunity to think carefully about the implications of key trends in their lives (such as the declining availability of resources such as oil or fish, or the overuse of water in Canterbury) and to extrapolate these into the future. Predictions should include consideration of both positive and destructive trends*

4. Analyse and discuss the mechanisms behind a successful social movement to bring about change in NZ (note: suggest anti apartheid movement but nuclear movement also an option)

*This outcome allows participants to realise that the values and behaviours of society are not fixed but can be changed. The second purpose of this outcome is to consider how change occurs and the role individuals play in social change.*

28<sup>th</sup> Jan 2009

5. Reflect upon personal impact on the environment and develop a strategy for minimizing that impact.

*This outcome is intended to be transformative in that participants are engaging on a personal emotional level and committing to behavioral changes in their lives that moves them to a more sustainable way of living.*

**Teaching methods`**

Teaching methods should include elements of:

- Games and experiential learning
- Group work, role play, discussion, debate, collaboration, presentation, participation
- Integrated approach to problem identification and problem solving
- Critical inquiry, reflection, thinking of the future, discovery, generating solutions
- Generating commitment to taking personal action (time constraints preclude personal action being part of the course but should be committed to while on the course)

**Resources:**

- Videos, sound tracks, readings, images

**Cultural considerations for class discussions:**

Encouraging different cultural perspectives in class discussions is important since one of the underlying foundations of education for sustainability is cultural diversity.

This is because the complexity of sustainability is beyond a single cultural perspective (particularly the dominant cultural perspective), and that local indigenous cultures have developed unique knowledge and practices over time.

This means the perspective of Maori is of particular significance to discussions about sustainability in Aotearoa NZ.

**Pre course letter**

Course participants will receive a letter from Staff Development included with their email confirmation of attendance from Lyn Russell. This letter will explain the course, include a course calendar, as well as provide the URL address for *The Story of Stuff*. Participants will be encouraged to view this 24 minute video prior to the course. Participants will be encouraged to visit the staff sustainability web site on Moodle.

28<sup>th</sup> Jan 2009

DAY ONE		
	content	method
5 hr	Introductions Teaching methods Goals	Meet and introduce each other using the cocktail game (encourage questions and sharing of knowledge) Video: introduction from Hana and Neil (15 minutes) In groups identify goals Takatsuki cartoon (behind the scenes) and discuss Video: environmental sustainability from Pachamama
1 hr	Rise and fall of civilizations (outcome 1)	Listen to Ronald Wright (10 minutes approx from Disc 3 track 2 and first 3 minutes track 3 until narrator) In groups identify and discuss the reasons for the decline of Easter Island civilization.  Introduce Toynbee's bell curve of the growth and decline of civilizations on Whiteboard. Identify and discuss Toynbee's indicators (decline of patriarchy, decline of fossil fuels, and evidence of paradigm shift).
<b>Break (10 minutes)</b>		
1.5 hr	Cultural myths and reality (outcome 2)	Everyone read PCE See Change Section 2.1 on Maori p.20-21, and then Video: Maori world view by Hana (10 minutes) Everyone read PCE See Change Section 2.1 on Pakeha p.21-22. Stress the importance of the last paragraph. Explore what makes us feel like we belong, feeling attached to Aotearoa (groups and present).  Introduce and discuss the ideas that indigenous local knowledge as critical in a sustainability context (intimate local knowledge accumulated over long time periods), as is Pakeha local knowledge for the same reasons.  In groups list what we value as New Zealanders (group brainstorm and make combined wall chart)  Are these a reality? In small groups, read allocated myth from Claudia Bell, discuss and present back to class. Candy to groups. Discuss.
<b>Lunch (1 hour)</b>		
2 hrs	Deeper investigation (outcome 2)	GAME: <i>The Island Game</i>  Revisit: The Story of Stuff and discuss profit, GDP, multinational. Show brief section of Waring video (Exxon Valdez: 5 minutes). In groups discuss and then answer: what other parts of our world are economically invisible? Show brief section of Waring video war section and play 5 minutes). Discuss as a class. Class discussion on the focus of economics on growth. Role play as a class: Hardin's Tragedy of the Commons (lolly scramble). Illustrate tragedy on whiteboard. In groups what Hardin means in our day to day lives.  Globalisation - Play short extract from The Story so Far (10 minutes) and discuss in groups the impacts of globalisation on people in developed and developing nations.
<b>Break (10 minutes)</b>		
1 hr	Deeper investigation (outcome 2)	Talk about millions of people making small changes and making ripples, 'critical mass' and 'policy windows'. Make connections with Maori initiatives (e.g.: kaitiaki / caring, tiapure, rahui). In groups brain storm what is/could be done at CPIT to make CPIT a better place. Give out homework assignment.

Homework from day one: Read rest of PCE chapter 2. Over the week try to make at least one purchase where the impacts of globalisation or environment are considered (e.g.: buy fair trade or Farmers market produce). Bring the purchase to the second session to display and comment upon the impacts of that purchase.

28<sup>th</sup> Jan 2009

DAY TWO		
	content	possible method
.5 hr	review	Question and answer session to revisit themes from the last session
1.5 hrs	Deeper investigation (outcome 2)	Environmental degradation - Millennium Ecosystem Assessment report (selected slides only)  VIDEO: Chapters 6-9 of What a way to go (over population, species extinction, peak oil and climate change)  Exploration of a local issue (e.g.: Waitaki water extraction) Discuss in groups different ways of thinking about the issue.  Give examples of Maori and Pakeha efforts to look after the land (e.g.: Hinewai, DOC/Tuwharetoa Kiwi recovery, farm with covenant on bush at Te Oka Bay, Ngai Tahu restoration initiative at Te Waihora)  Video: Hana talking about Kaitiakitanga in 2008 (10 minutes)
<b>Break (10 minutes)</b>		
1 hr	Predict the future (outcome 3)	In groups participants to create a vision for the future as they would like it to be by extrapolating several positive trends – present to class  Millennium Ecosystem Assessment report future scenarios  Ronald Wright closing statement (6:30 minutes from Disc 5 Track 6 – up until applause) where Wright asks a series of questions about future thinking. Discuss: precautionary principle and future thinking
<b>Lunch (1 hour)</b>		
1 hr	Mechanisms of social change (outcome 4)	VIDEO: Hope Scroll from Pachamama. (15 minutes).  Slides of social movements and discuss. Brainstorm local examples. Question: What are the important elements of change? (include: 'critical mass' and 'policy window').
.5 hr	Personal impact & a plan for action (outcome 5)	In groups discuss what we can do as individuals and list on a continuum of easy to hard. Report back to class. Discuss.
.5 hr		Participants to find a quiet spot and think about their work and personal life and come back with a plan to change some aspect (if they choose to). This plan should be written in letter to them selves and placed in a self-addressed and sealed envelope to be sent to them in 4 months by the tutor.
<b>Break (10 minutes)</b>		
1 hr	all	Questions and discussion on any aspect of the course

TAKE AWAY READING: Richard Heinberg's chapter one (Heinberg's book is recommended reading from CPIT library).