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# RE-EXAMINING SCHOLARSHIP: EXPLORING THE MEANINGS OF BOYER'S DIMENSIONS TO THE PROFESSORiate

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University of Plymouth

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**RE-EXAMINING SCHOLARSHIP:  
EXPLORING THE MEANINGS OF BOYER'S DIMENSIONS TO THE  
PROFESSORiate**

By

**JULIA CRAIG LAKER**

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth  
in partial fulfillment for the degree of

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Abstract  
Julia Craig Laker  
RE-EXAMINING SCHOLARSHIP:  
EXPLORING THE MEANINGS OF BOYER'S DIMENSIONS TO THE PROFESSORiate

Since Boyer's (1990) seminal publication on scholarship there has been a steadily expanding body of knowledge concerned with reviewing the priorities of the professoriate in higher education (HE). This dissertation enters that discourse by exploring HE educators' perceptions of Boyer's (1990) multiple dimensions of scholarship. It also accepts the challenge offered by Schön (1996) that examination of the new dimensions of scholarship requires a new epistemology by designing and employing a spiral methodology. This twofold task forms the basis of this dissertation.

This investigation is contextually located in an education department in a large university in the United States of America. It delves into the opinions of educators as they relate to scholarly practices, and the influence of the institutional ideology embedded in the structure of HE in today's modern universities. The study then focuses on the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) and renders problematic the proposed assessment standard of reflective practice.

The use of my spiral methodology in action opens up both the framework and the theoretical structure for critical examination. It reveals, through the praxis how the phased structure has allowed the research project to extend into using such diverse research methods as an email survey, interviews through conversations and autoethnography.

This study offers contributions in two distinct areas. Firstly, the investigation into educators' perceptions of scholarship revealed four important issues:

- a strong desire to see the definitions expanded
- that the SoTL is a contested and poorly understood dimension
- the rhetoric of reflective practice is often very different to the practice
- the ideology and epistemology of the institution dictate the priorities

Secondly, the spiral methodology which holds reflexivity as a central tenet proved capable of offering a sensitive, flexible, interconnected framework within which to conduct research in the complex and context bound environment of research in educational settings.

There are a number of potential future directions that could be developed from my research some of which include:

- investigating institutional commitment to implementing campus changes
- the impact of proposed changes on the student population
- examining the contested meaning of reflective practice in theory and practice
- further development of a reflexive spiral methodology
- expansion of the combination of critical analysis and boundary conversations

This dissertation should be read both as a very personal sequential journey into researching, and as a growing understanding of the research topics. This evolution has led to altering some of my early methodological claims and demonstrates my commitment to an open and honest account.

Boyer, E.L. (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation.

Schön, D.A. (1995) *The New Scholarship Requires a New Epistemology*. *Change*, 27(6), pp. 26-38.

**AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

The dissertation is 92,905 words.

The appendix is 9,241 words.

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award.

A conference was attended at which a part of this work was presented.

Laker, J.C. (2005) *Scholars on Scholarship: In your own words*. Paper presented at the International Conference on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, City College, London, May, 2005.

Signed Julia Craighero  
Date June 30<sup>th</sup> 2005

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Surviving this educational experience would not have been possible without the support of others. Although it started as a journey with a destination, by the time it finished reaching the destination had become unimportant. In this case the journey really was the destination. This is just as well as the bureaucratic swamp that overwhelms the University of Plymouth made several attempts to drown me.

My salvation came in my supervisory team of Mr Jeff Lewis and Dr Denis Hayes. Denis was dedicated and kind, always willingly to share his wealth of knowledge, and always finding time to encourage me along the way. Thank you Denis for all that you did.

Jeff was exceptional. He took a misfit student with a bizarre logistical problem in his stride. His maverick attitude, his wit, his vast repertoire of knowledge and his disdain for adherence to absurd rules and regulations, and his honesty proved a delightful working partnership. His lightness of touch allowed me the illusion of running free, and yet his guidance traces through the pages that unfold. When uncertainty struck and I floundered, he nudged, and prompted me back on track. He was my advocate. Thank you Jeff for sharing this experience, and don't let the buggers get you down!

Finally, my thanks go to the North Carolina Ferrymen who supplied coffee, laughter and two and a half hours of solitude to study on my regular commutes. To Anne and Georgette, fellow students, we'll always remember it is possible to have excellent conversations without sounding 'educated'!

My son Laurie grew alongside my dissertation and always brought me down to earth when my priorities threatened to shift with this huge piece of 'homework'. He was always there to remind me of what really matters. He is a shining example in so many ways.

I dedicate this dissertation, all the damn hard work the grappling with dense philosophies, the sapped energy to one person, and my best friend and husband Tony. I could not have done it without him. As an educator he exemplifies the ideals that should be promoted in the modern university. He is another maverick who plays the game but not always by the rules. It was my great good fortune to have such a teacher always on hand, and I thank him from the depths of my heart!

In memory of Sam and Elliot.

## LIST OF CONTENTS

Preface	1
Introduction	7
<i>A Twofold Research Question</i>	7
<i>Reviewing the Structural Choices for Dissertations</i>	10
<i>A Guide to the Structure of my Dissertation</i>	21
<i>The introduction</i>	21
<i>The methodology</i>	22
<i>The phased methods</i>	22
<i>The Debate Surrounding Paradigms and Methodologies</i>	27
In Defence of a New Methodology	31
<i>Considering the Use of 'Theory'</i>	35
<i>The Argument for a Holistic Approach</i>	36
<i>Using Holistic Reflexivity</i>	41
<i>The Postmodern Poststructural Educational Landscape and Holistic Reflexivity</i>	44
<i>Thinking in the Postmodern</i>	50
<i>Methods as Complementary and Symbiotic</i>	52
The Methodological Map	54
<i>Locating the Research Question in the Methodological Framework</i>	54
<i>Rationalising the Phases</i>	56
<i>Acknowledging Influences</i>	57
The Study in Context	58
<i>A Modern 'Boyerian' Definition of Scholarship</i>	59
<i>Contextually Locating Boyer's Work</i>	70
<i>Defining the Meanings Contained in Boyer's Framework</i>	72
<i>How Boyer Defined Scholarship</i>	75
<i>The Scholarship of Discovery</i>	79
<i>The Scholarship of Integration</i>	81
<i>The Scholarship of Application</i>	84
<i>The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning</i>	87
<i>Refining Discussions about the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning</i>	89
<i>From Scholarship Reconsidered to Assessing Scholarship</i>	92
<i>Critical Analysis of Boyer's Definitions in the Postmodern Educational Landscape</i>	95
The Research Project	96
Phase One	100
<i>Understanding the Complex Nature of Conducting Research in HE</i>	101
Method Phase One	103
<i>Context</i>	103
<i>The Choice of Subjects</i>	104
<i>Self-Critique and Reflective Practice</i>	106
<i>Designing and Piloting an Instrument</i>	108
<i>Pilot Study</i>	115
<i>The Suggested Reforms Following the Pilot Study</i>	123
<i>The Analytical Framework</i>	126

Findings, Discussion and Analysis of Phase One	131
<i>The Demographic Construction</i>	133
<i>Questions about Scholarship</i>	137
<i>Summary of First Section of Questions</i>	146
<i>Questions on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning</i>	149
<i>Questions on Reflective Practice and Self-critique</i>	158
<i>Questions on Research, Teaching and Learning</i>	173
<i>Summary and Discussion of the Findings of Phase One</i>	182
<i>A Taxonomy of Perceptions</i>	185
<i>Section 1 – questions on scholarship</i>	185
<i>Section 2 - scholarship of teaching and learning</i>	186
<i>Section 3 – reflective practice</i>	186
<i>Section 4 – research, teaching and learning</i>	187
Phase Two	198
<i>Introduction</i>	198
<i>Significant Issues</i>	202
<i>Method Section</i>	203
<i>Interviews as Conversations</i>	209
<i>Analysis of Conversational Interviews</i>	213
<i>Questions</i>	219
<i>Participants</i>	210
<i>Data Collection</i>	224
<i>Contextually Locating the Participants</i>	224
<i>The Data and Interpretive Reflexive Analysis</i>	224
<i>Participant 1 – Boyer’s Dimension of Discovery</i>	225
<i>Participant 2- Boyer’s Dimension of Integration</i>	228
<i>Participant 3 – Boyer’s Dimension of Application</i>	231
<i>Participant 4 – Boyer’s Dimension of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning</i>	235
<i>Holistic Critical Analysis of the Data</i>	239
<i>Collective Opinions</i>	241
<i>Support for Boyer</i>	241
<i>Institutional responsibility</i>	242
<i>Bringing balance to the campus</i>	243
<i>The prevailing epistemology of the educational institution</i>	244
<i>The varying interpretations of reflective practice and self-critique</i>	246
<i>The Contested Nature of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning</i>	250
<i>Making Connection between Phase One and Phase Two</i>	251
<i>The Third Effect</i>	253
Assimilation of the Findings from Phase One and Phase Two	255
<i>Reviewing the Spiral Methodology in Action</i>	258
<i>Entering Phase Three</i>	260
Phase Three	261
<i>Introduction</i>	261
<i>Second Introduction</i>	264
<i>Let me start afresh</i>	265
<i>Introducing Autoethnographic Research</i>	267

<i>Finding the narrative in questions about scholarship and re-framing my voice as evocative autoethnography</i>	269
<i>In Conclusion</i>	277
Epilogue	279
Appendices	287
Appendix A: Email Communication Accompanying Questionnaire (Phase One)	288
Appendix B: Informed Consent Form for Participants (Phase One)	289
Appendix C: Questionnaire (Phase One)	290
Appendix D: Overview of the Coding Structure	292
Appendix E: Question Pool (Phase Two)	293
Appendix F: Informed Consent Form for Participants (Phase Two)	295
Appendix G: Reflexive Analysis of my Initial Conceptions	296
List of References	301

## List of Figures

Figure 1: The Spiral Methodology	20
Figure 2: Boyer's (1990) Multiple Dimensions of Scholarship	78

## Prologue

This prologue is intended to situate and capture the essence of this dissertation. It contextually locates the study and explains how, through my PhD dissertation journey, I not only 'researched' but also re-claimed my research ground as a re-framed narrative voice (Bochner and Ellis, 2002). This was a research challenge that spanned several years as it evolved into a long dissertation, and encompassed sequential development in both the topic of the research, and the researcher. These first few pages encourage my reader to share the journey and to cohabit the research space. This invitation is as open and inclusive as I can make it.

I have tried throughout my research to also include the personal and private discussions that have led to the decisions I have taken which contribute to contextually locating the work within its social, political and cultural framework. These 'boundary conversations' (Fishman and McCarthy, 2000) expose areas that are more usually silent and co-exist alongside the more conventional and defined discussions of research activities. This is intended to highlight the interdependency of the relationship of researcher to research that inevitably shapes the style and direction of research in practice. I hope, in laying bare my whole research process, or as much of it as I can recognise, that it complements the authenticity of the research findings. It is a reflexive action, and as Hammersley (1984) notes in an early commentary on inclusive reflexive research:

It begins from recognition that the researcher always has some impact on the setting he or she is studying, that the selectivity necessarily involved in the research activity will shape the data and the findings, and that researchers are by no means immune to the effects of interests and values. These three features open up research to a wide range of threats to validity, from reactivity of one kind or another to bias on the part of the researcher in interpreting the data. In this light the function of a reflexive account is to indicate the nature and likelihood of such

threats, as well as outlining what has been and could be done to deal with them. (p. 41)

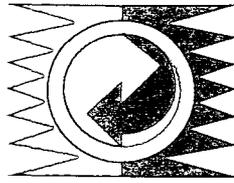
Therefore, it was in this spirit that this dissertation was written and heeds Denzin and Lincoln's (2003) advice that there is 'no single interpretive truth' (p. 37) but complex and compound possibilities. It also relied on unrestrained honesty.

The following dissertation was written sequentially. Therefore, as it evolved some of my early claims and thoughts in the methodology chapter were renovated or restructured as a framework under construction, and were not always fully developed or implemented, but emerged as a developing reflexive structure. The main body of the dissertation unfolds as an intact and authentic contextual representation where I have resisted the temptation to add a newer layer of discourse which might act to conceal its origins. A reflexive commentary on issues on which I now hold a different opinion or areas where my thinking has developed through the immersion in the evolving research process is included in the appendix (Appendix G).

It is a highly contextualised study, located in an education department in a large university in the United States of America. It offered, in broad terms, a glimpse into the experiences and opinions of practitioners as they grapple with the demands of professional life and the nature of scholarship in a modern university. This means that although some generalisations might be possible, they would be problematic. The recognition of the limitations of this study should not be read as diminishing value, but as explicit exposure of the contextuality of my research project and therefore its ability to extend the boundaries of existing knowledge (Bassegy, 1999).

What follows is both a personal journey into conducting educational research as a doctoral candidate and an immersion into the philosophical debates surrounding the issues within which my research is located. The findings from the investigation(s) into

the research topics have offered interesting and valuable new insights. This personal journey has led me to rethink my views on many things, especially theory and methodology. I embarked on a voyage of discovery, and although much of the time was spent at sea, I just managed to stay afloat!



## Preface

There has been a growing realization in recent years among researchers of something artists have long known in their bones: namely, that form matters, that content and form cannot be separated, that how one says something is part and parcel of what is said...the form of representation one uses has something to do with the form of the understanding one secures. Once this idea penetrated the research community, the form used to inquire and express what one had learned was no minor consideration. This idea that different forms could convey different meanings, that form and content cannot be separated, has led to the exploration of new modes of research. (Eisner, 2001, p. 138-139 quoted in Sparkes, 2002, p. px)

This dissertation may not quite unfold in the form most usually anticipated. This is the purposeful result of considering the creative ways research can be represented, and following Eisner's (2001) suggestion that this will impact on the nature of understandings that may be secured. I have spent most of my working life creating three-dimensional forms, my artistic world. It is for the reader to decide whether this is an advantage or disadvantage when researching educational practices, but it shapes my approach to the structure and content of this study. It has for me become an object that is as crafted as I can make it, my finger prints traced in it's making, and as open to another's gaze as possible. It introduces from the onset my belief that the barriers that exist in research between academic disciplines are mostly unhelpful, and that they should be blurred in the same way as Boyer (1990) suggests for his multiple dimensions of scholarship. My prioritising of transparency, of displaying the maker's hands in the work has been essential, and is intended to emphasise the need to

recognise the socially constructed self and the concealed discourses. The purposeful decision to use the first person follows thinking through, with the help of my advisor (Lewis, 2002), many of the questions that other researchers have toyed with, notably in autobiographical inquiry and autoethnography (Duncan, 2004; Ellis, 1997; Ellis and Bochner, 2000; Morse & Richards, 2002; Sparkes, 2002). I will be including my 'boundary conversations' (Fishman and McCarthy, 2000, p. 53) which are the hidden, unspoken and usually private research discussions that lie behind most studies. In going public with my negotiations through the research pathways, and including the influences of those who have travelled with me (notably my advisors Lewis and Hayes) I am claiming it as a valuable part of the research process. The anxieties, the negotiations, the compromises, the 'unplayed tapes' (Fishman and McCarthy, 2000, p. 74) are all part of my way of knowing, and although it may be risky to include them I have decided it is important. They form a vital link in offsetting assumptions and offer an honest account of my research process. Devereaux (1967) proposed many years ago that what might be seen as one's subjectivity, and therefore disapproved of (and should be removed), can, in fact contribute to a deeper understanding of the situation one is investigating. In acknowledging emotions such as anxiety in research we are better positioned to understand how it might impact the process, or alter interpretations.

For me, the questions multiplied as I contemplated different approaches. One of the first questions was, how can I contribute new knowledge on my subject area with openness as a tenet? Followed by other questions such as, can I do this? Will I be successful? What of myself do I include or leave out? How do I make sure that I am not overwhelmed by my area of study and that the focus is secure? And very importantly,

how do I win over those who will view my acknowledgement of myself within the process as making the research insignificant and anecdotal?

I have come to believe that displaying as many of the contributing factors as is possible is valuable. In including myself within this doctoral research, and in exposing as many of the implicit and explicit influences as I can, I am opening up uncertainties and insecurities, and it may be risky. However, if I think they have a bearing on the choices I have made, or the directions I have taken then, I think it is valid to include them. Fishman and McCarthy (2000) discuss their own efforts to integrate 'narrative and analysis, personal knowledge and disciplinary understanding' in what they call the 'unplayed tapes' (p. 32), and the resistance they initially encountered. Fishman and McCarthy (2000) also pay attention to the dilemmas of academic language with its superior affectations and abilities to distance, versus the ordinariness of expressive writing in reporting research. I hope to write in a manner that is evocative and representative, that will successfully interpret other people's meanings, and that will connect the reader to the topic of my research. It is my linguistic challenge.

In communicating my research project and its findings, I aim to engage my reader enough through this text that a sense of what I have achieved can be judged. I am, in writing up this research, and submitting it as a doctoral candidate making a claim to academic authorship (Brown & Dowling, 1998), offering it up for evaluation, and that has implications on the style of my writing. How much can I make it my own, and how much must it conform in order to be situated within the field of successful academic endeavour? In going public with my negotiations, my private dilemmas I am demonstrating the reflexive practices that are a central theme to my research

methodology and my area of study. It forms part of the research process, the researcher's way of knowing, so it should be explicit.

In researching about scholarship, in all its guises, it became clear to me that I did not feel comfortable investigating the communities of higher education (HE) with the existing research methodological frameworks. It may be that as I have spent much of my professional life as an 'outsider' to the traditional academic arena that I approached it differently. I think I did, and I think it made me especially sensitive to establishing my acknowledgement of prior knowledge before suggesting alternative ways of understanding. I hope that I will demonstrate that any deviations have been a result of thorough and thoughtful consideration.

Boyer's (1990) reconsideration of scholarship led me to rethink the way I wanted to conduct my research project. It seemed a good fit to examine the topic of Boyer's (1990) proposed multiple dimensions of scholarship with a methodological approach that could itself be multi-dimensional and overlapping and allow a degree of reflexivity. This is why I designed a different framework, and accounts for the alternative layout, from the onset, of this dissertation.

In the reporting of the research and the methodological structure, I intend to be seen as actively engaged in communicating meanings and perceptions, and seeking clarity of structure and form. It is an academic account participating in a field of discourses on educational research matters, populated and constituted by its authors. My location in that community as author of this dissertation is complex. I hope to attribute a degree of authority to the research, but I do not want to drown out the

authentic voices in recontextualising the words in the discourses, I hope to tread both softly and purposefully.

The focus of this dissertation is to investigate two distinct issues of interest. The duality of the content makes it necessary to deviate from a conventional dissertation structure, and forms part of the methodological questions I have asked. Therefore, in addition to a conventional index, I will be using an analytical preface (in italics) when discussing the theoretical background to this study, reducing the content to its simplest element and acting as a guide for the reader.

The two distinct areas are discussed and researched in the following pages, where they overlap and are co-dependant. The first is the topic of the research question which is focused on examining perceptions of Boyer's (1990) multiple dimensions of scholarship. The second is an examination of the methodologies used in HE research in education, and how I have developed and implemented an alternative analytical framework. The possibilities of employing a different, spiral research methodology in the complex, context bound environment of research in HE is tested by using it to investigate a relevant and timely research question. It is hoped that the outcome will be firstly, to provide illuminating and useful knowledge that can be considered a contribution to our understanding of the topic of the research question, and secondly to determine if there is any potential in my spiral methodology as a method of inquiry.

The focus of this research was constantly inspired by the eloquence and direct writing of Boyer (1990) who distilled his far reaching intellectual capacity into purposeful and stimulating educational discourses:

What we are faced with, today, is the need to clarify campus missions and relate the work of the academy more directly to the

realities of contemporary life. We need especially to ask how institutional diversity can be strengthened and how the rich array of faculty talent in our colleges and universities might be more effectively used and continuously renewed. We proceed with the conviction that if the nation's higher education institutions are to meet today's urgent academic and social mandates, their missions must be carefully redefined and the meaning of scholarship creatively reconsidered. (Boyer, 1990, p. 13)

Fifteen years later the 'urgent academic and social mandates' are as significant as ever and the advancement of socially relevant institutions of HE remains a priority.

## Introduction

### *A Twofold Research Question*

- a) What are higher education educators' perceptions of Boyer's (1990) multiple dimensions of scholarship, focussing on the scholarship of teaching and learning and its relationship to Boyer's (1996) standard of 'careful and thoughtful self-critique' (p. 135) in higher education practice?
- b) Can the design of my *Spiral Methodology* provide a valuable framework for examining this, and future research topics?

*An investigation of perceptions and practices surrounding scholarship in higher education educators involving self-critical analysis begins with an unravelling of the assumptions that may have been made by the researcher. This process is demonstrated as a need to approach the style and format of the dissertation in a way that challenges the epistemology, and accommodates conceptual analysis of a different methodology.*

The traditional doctoral dissertation introduction should establish several clear objectives and the research question must be seen to address a significant subject that is considered worth investigating. I must demonstrate a thorough understanding of the topic and previous research, and explain how I intend to investigate the phenomenon in question. The immersion in the copious literature relevant to most chosen subjects is generally considered a starting point, although in some qualitative or interpretive research this is not always the case, it may sometimes be considered unimportant or counter-productive to be over-familiar with 'established' theories or findings (Thomas & Nelson, 1996).

In this instance, the literature appears to fuel the research student with something of a full tank ready to embark on the educational journey, but in need of a reliable vehicle and a good map! In this introduction I will attempt to map out my route, and acknowledge that as a developing researcher I had some trepidation at the start of my journey. As Fanger (1985) expressed 'I have come to regard panic as the inevitable concomitant of any kind of serious academic writing' (p. 28). However, it is my intention to be topographic in this introduction so that my reader has a clear guide to the terrain to be covered and the path I plan to take.

As I have suggested, it is my intention in this study to attempt a twofold task, to inform both our understanding of the concerns specific to the research question, and to employ a deviation from conventional methodologies. This may shift from the territory of traditional research dissertations, but is in keeping with the challenge to academia to resist the temptation of 'reproduction' (Bernstein, 1973; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Lewis, 1998; Rorty 1998; Thomas, 1998) thereby treading the same ground. It embraces discovery, difference, enthusiasm, danger, imagination, emotion and evolution within the context of educational knowledge. If the frequently declared outcome for doctoral dissertations is to demonstrate 'a distinct contribution to the current knowledge of the subject', and to 'show systematic study and independent, critical and original powers' (University of Plymouth Research Degrees Handbook, 2001 p. 7) is to be met then uncharted territory should be both encouraged and encountered. Although rigid and prescriptive frameworks within which to perform the task *can* facilitate progress, they can also hinder and are in danger of stifling originality of thought before it has had a chance to be expanded, visualised, formed, and analysed.

To accept any frameworks and practices within which to conduct this research without careful consideration of their role and value would be to ignore the conceptual structure implicit in the research question. In asking questions concerned with scholarship I am delving into the foundations that maintain the institutional structure. Thomas (1998) calls for a re-assessment of researchers and educators assumptions about knowledge and theory, confronting existing practice 'which is destructive of imagination, curiosity and innovation' and suggesting that 'the structured reflections into which students of education are encouraged are less fruitful than more unstructured alternatives' (p. 143). A primary focus of this study includes 'the scholarship of teaching and learning' and the value of the ability to 'self-critique' and its impact on practice. It would be lacking in validity, authenticity and integrity if I did not question my own assumptions about research and practice. The topic of my research and my examination of methodological issues raise epistemological questions, and necessarily challenge the existing frameworks to adequately accommodate what may count as legitimate new knowledge.

As Schön (1995) contends:

If we intend to pursue the "new forms of scholarship" that Ernest Boyer presents in his 'Scholarship Reconsidered', we cannot avoid questions of epistemology, since the new forms of scholarship he describes challenge the epistemology built into the modern research university. (p. 26)

This presents an early dilemma concerned with conducting the research according to criteria derived from an epistemic rigidity, especially as that influences the methodology. Schön (1995) approaches this problem stating that introducing the new scholarship into institutions of HE means becoming involved in an epistemological battle and continues, 'It is a battle of snails, proceeding so slowly that you have to look

very carefully in order to see it is going on. But it is happening nonetheless' (p. 26). At best, I would hope to locate this research in the 'slime trails' behind the snail, and proceed cautiously with conducting research on a very sticky surface!

### *Reviewing the Structural Choices for Dissertations*

My intention has been to encourage my reader towards the necessity of deviating from the traditional format of doctoral dissertations, and my intentional employment of an alternative methodology (which I will explain in detail in the methodology section). If valid research is to be conducted and critically analysed in an emerging 'subject' of knowledge, it should not be bound by old rules, but must slide warily behind the snail. Perhaps the traditional style of doctoral dissertations cannot accommodate the degree of reflective response I wish to incorporate, and therefore a different approach may be needed. I also want to circumvent, at this point, a discussion about locating the research within a paradigm, and therefore distinctly categorizing it and restricting where it might develop.

The debate about the value of quantitative versus qualitative research is not at issue here, but is historically relevant. It appears more applicable to have a thorough discussion of the dangers and dilemmas of adhering to prior 'constructs' that may restrict and delineate research into categories that are counter-productive. This 'mapping the terrain' (Martusewicz, 1992) forms an essential part of engaging with areas of research where less easily measurable, less delineated information is gathered.

The polarization of qualitative and quantitative approaches is fuelled by the research community and shapes or mis-shapes a considerable amount of literature. In conjunction with this position, there will be appreciation that there is not one single

acceptable paradigm or method of analysis (for the sake of argument, qualitative or quantitative methodologies again), but that different ideological, ontological and epistemological perspectives inform different methodologies. Other researchers (Keeves, 1988; Keeves & Lakomski, 1999; Usher & Edwards, 1994) have raised questions of the assumption that the two predominant approaches to research are no more than alternative methodologies employed in response to 'what works' and ignore the epistemological considerations that underlie the decision-making. To accept at face value, or polarize research methodologies leads to a tendency to categorize researchers as either 'number crunchers' or 'storytellers' (Smith 1998). To combine the two without consideration of the underlying philosophical problems may lead to the research being dismissed as invalid because the combination cannot be amalgamated under the given epistemological basis, falling as it were between a 'rock and a hard place' and just ending up with pebbles of thought. The common sense notion that you can use whichever methodology suits the nature of the problem at a given time must also address these more complex theoretical underpinnings, the epistemic archaeology. It is through these examinations that a consistent framework may develop which will allow for clear understandings and reliable research to follow in a manner that is not fixed and bounded.

It would be easy to hide my meaning behind extensive use of lexicons and rhetoric, but I, and many others (Bochner & Ellis, 2002; Fishman & McCarthy, 2000; Keeves & Lakomski, 1999) contend that good research is essentially *understandable* research. So, although I am in danger of destroying any possibility that this dissertation may have been considered more worthy because it sounds clever, I would rather be

more transparent. This research investigation will consider as an integral part of the discussion, analysis and interpretation, the use of discourse and language in the educational setting. There is a wealth of literature discussing linguistics and contextual frameworks, as examples Bourdieu's (1994) 'habitus' or Wittgenstein's 'picture theory' of language. The work of Derrida (1976, 1967) and the examination of 'differance' and Wittgenstein (1953) explanations of the 'meanings', 'values' and 'truths' acquired in the language we use offer distinct conceptual outlooks. These and many other authors contribute to raising awareness of how we are socially constructed through the use of language, and how we should carefully consider the implications. It may follow therefore, that if we are able to allocate a purpose and meaning to language, or to disentangle that meaning from its purpose in educational practice, we may possibly expose the *reason* which may not have been obvious through the 'smoke and mirrors' that language often offers. The axiomatic nature, and personal interpretation of language is pertinent to this research question as it is the lexiconic value of both 'scholarship' and 'self-critique' or 'reflective practice' that is central to understanding what *is* achieved in practice, not just the rhetoric. At the heart of so much educational research is situated interpretation, which can often lead to miss-interpretation, which can, in turn, lead to disparate practices. Therefore, a shared clarity in the language I use is essential, and 'deconstruction' of the language that others use will form part of my critical analysis. I also recognize that a definition of terminology is, to some degree accepting a process that has stopped somewhere, and fixed a value, and this holds dangers of its own. It is important to recognize the constantly evolving nature of language. For example, anyone who remembers a time before widespread computer use

has had to adjust to the changing meanings of ‘mouse’, ‘keyboard’ or ‘cookie’ to name only a few. However, this dissertation is time-bound and by introducing my definitions, I am hoping to establish a commonality of understandings between myself and my reader. I do not intend to impose my opinion unilaterally, nor am I ruling out other interpretations, or denying the mercurial nature of research language. What I hope to achieve is mutual understanding at this point in time.

Therefore, in attempting to be explicit when I use ‘ontological’ throughout this dissertation I am referring to beliefs that are personally held, that include being and existence. Epistemology is more contested but is intended here to refer to the study of knowing, to know about what we mean when we say we know something. So, the different personally constructed beliefs (or belief about existence) and ideas about knowing inform varying methodologies. For ‘methodology’ as opposed to my ‘method’, I share Steier’s (1991) interpretation that refers to the discourse about methods of enquiry, in that ‘methodology assures that theories, data and methods constitute a consistent network of arguments and computations’ (p. 124). Methodology is the study and frameworks of methods.

To concentrate on the style of this dissertation, and the reasons for its structure, I have firstly referred to traditional styles in order to examine the possibility that the established structure might be flexible enough to accommodate my methodology. The traditional style of dissertations usually consists of five or six chapters i.e.:

***Introduction***

***Literature review***

***Methodology/Method***

***Results***

## *Discussion*

### *Conclusion*

This style has obviously worked well and is recognized and accepted as an appropriate way to present a research dissertation. It can also form an initiation into the academic world of acceptable and accepted research through what constitutes an identifiable body of knowledge having served a suitable apprenticeship, Menand (1996) calls this a 'virtual paradigm of professionalism' (p. 8). However, as Keeves and Lakomski (1999) suggest it can also mask what it apparently seeks to reveal through adherence to the ideological dominance of the institution or academy. And here I use 'ideological' cautiously to convey a wide-ranging set of beliefs, thoughts and practices that are intrinsic within political and social actions and practices thus reinforcing the values (as with much vocabulary in education, you can find many interpretations of the same terminology). This ideological dominance is what Aronowitz and Giroux (1991) identify as a hegemonic group, where intellectuals or educators unwittingly, or otherwise, reinforce or encourage 'reproduction' in education by perpetuating the dominant ideals. This may be in part to continue the status quo, or partially to protect the ideological interests they represent. They may have little or no control over the institutional or educational apparatus that dictates the philosophies, values or purpose of that which they promote. The inherent dangers include rendering invisible the structures and forces that control the dominant culture. This in turn leads to questions of authority and power which control the dissemination of knowledge, both the content *and* the form in which it is transmitted. Bernstein (1973) links this to educational knowledge 'codes', and suggests that power and social control are conveyed through the 'codes' that frame and classify knowledge, which may include the forms of

discourse. These issues are important to discuss when considering the *discourse* or *form* of representation that will best encourage a candid research project on a topic *within* higher education. I am conscious of the complexities of practicing research *in* and *on* HE.

Both Gramsci (1975) and Apple (1990) discuss these concerns and the wider implications to theory and practice, and although Apple (1990) refers to school based issues the point is equally applicable to the university setting. As Gramsci has argued, and Apple (1990) states:

the control of the knowledge preserving and producing sectors of a society is a crucial factor in enhancing the ideological dominance of one group of people or one class over less powerful groups of people or classes. In this regard, the role of the school in selecting, preserving, and passing on conceptions of competence, ideological norms, and values... is of no small moment. (p. 58)

This in turn can lead to the production of 'new knowledge' within universities in the image of what has already been assimilated and absorbed into the dominant values and theory bases of the institution and subject 'discipline'. It also raises questions about institutional hegemony, which I will discuss at some length in direct relation to investigating my research question. The implicit expectation is that a researcher is expected to use the existing programmatic, structural, linguistic, methodological and conceptual tools available and therefore make evaluations, acceptance and dissemination easier (i.e. through journal publication with its peer review system). The sound reasoning behind this practice is that it is a proven structure that produces a consistency in academic output through a structured system. A problem can arise when the area of the research necessitates a more flexible approach, and as with this topic, it is focussed *within* the institution and higher education. Most inexperienced researchers

also feel an inherent desire to belong, to please, and to be valued within the institution. They may also be guided by a highly organised research project within which they are, to a large degree, mentored. For many studies the structure may make no difference to the validity and value of the research, and safe guards of epistemological concerns will have been considered and resolved. However, as a large component of this dissertation is the trialling of a new methodological structure employed to investigate the topic, it was apparent that the structure, the dissertation format, and a method for disseminating the findings would also need to be critically examined. I could not simply assume that an existing methodological framework would allow critical examination to happen.

There are several other dissertation formats that have emerged, and that I have considered. As an example the 'journal format' espoused by Thomas and Nelson (1996) which is structured to encourage ease of dissemination by requiring little in the way of re-writing in order to be submitted for publication. They have broken down the layout into two sections that leaves the main body of work in an arrangement that could readily be acceptable for journal publication without major re-structuring e.g.

**Body of dissertation**

*Introduction*

*Method*

*Results*

*Discussion*

*References*

**Appendices**

*Extended literature review*

*Additional methodology*

*Additional results*

*Other additional material*

The benefits of this style are that it encourages publication, which according to Thomas and Nelson (1996) is 'worthwhile, especially when we consider that dissertations appear to make an important contribution to knowledge' and the 'evaluation and subsequent publication of that knowledge through refereed journals is an important step to accomplish' (p. 413). There is plenty of evidence, both apocryphal and empirical alluding to the horror most concluding doctoral students feel about the idea of revisiting their thesis to make substantial changes to make it suitable for publication, so this style may indeed have appeal. For this study however, the journal format variation is unsuitable as it still resembles a traditional layout particularly in the reporting of the results and discussion and cannot incorporate the cyclical nature of the methodology that I considered desirable.

A further exploration of alternative dissertation formats exposed the voices calling for more radical departures from traditionally accepted dissertation styles (Slattery, 1997) and methodological structures. The expanding diversity includes fictional representation (Bridges, 2003; Sparkes, 2002), poetic representations (Richardson, 1992), biographical research methods (Denzin, 1999), ethnographic fiction (Denzin, 1999), narrative enquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), semi-autobiographical accounts (Burgess, 1993), confessional ethnographic tales (Van Maanen, 1988), autoethnography (Ellis, 2004) to name but a few. Lewis (1998), when discussing Special Education research methodologies champions alternatives such as autobiographical and fictionalised accounts suggesting that they offer a holistic insight into topics, and when they become 'theorised' they offer valuable insights. As another example, Denzin (1999) used the ethnographic fiction method to examine the lives of twelve retired

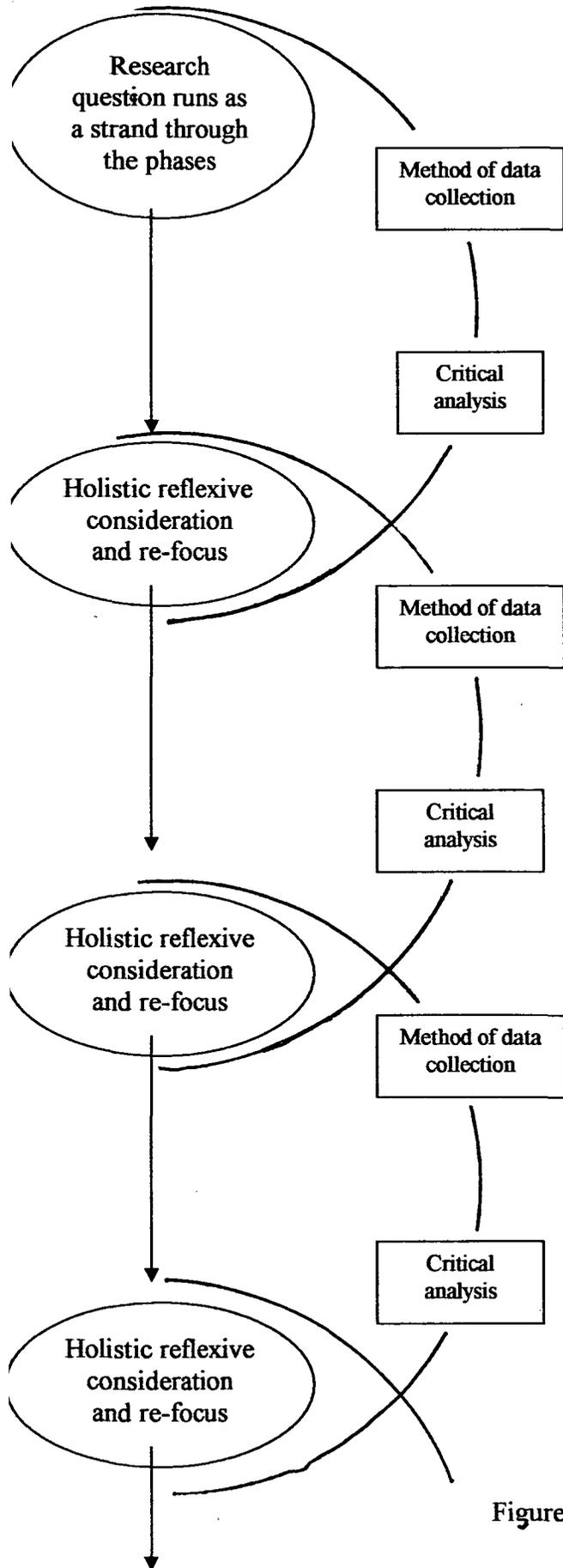
athletes, gathering data through interviews and field notes. He chose to report his findings in the form of three short fictional stories rather than the more traditional categories and themes that emerged through analysis of the data. The reviewing of these and other approaches has contributed to my understanding that there is a growing tolerance, even encouragement, to find the best ‘tool for the job’, and an increasing value in the conceptual foundation that promotes diversity. Education, because of its complex nature, should benefit from complementary ways of understanding phenomenon, and creative ways of investigation. It is important to acknowledge that ‘new’ approaches deserve hard scrutiny, and that there is a value in the failure of a research process however disappointing that may be to the researcher.

For this research dissertation the departure (or expansion) is necessitated by the methodology I intended to employ which has a spiral evolution that could not be achieved if it were to be reformatted into the previously determined styles. It simply would not fit. I am asking my reader to take something of a leap of faith at this point as a detailed description and methodological debate follows in ‘Methodological Issues’ section. In that section I explain further why I wanted to experiment with a new methodology, why I thought it was necessary for examination of my research question, and where its philosophical origins lie. As the arrangement will differ from traditional dissertation formats I think it is helpful for my reader to have a ‘map’ to follow the route which is as follows:

- **Introduction** (*an explanation that includes historical context and locating the question*)
- **Methodology** (*epistemological and methodological issues explaining what’s different about this design*)

- ***Contextual Location*** (the background to the study and pertinent details)
- **Phase 1**  
*Method - analysis/discussion/findings – reflection-on-findings – re-focus*
- **Phase 2**  
*Method – analysis/discussion/findings – reflection-on-findings – re-focus*
- **Phase 3** – continues the same structure

## Spiral Methodology



### Spiral Methodology

The starting place is a research area of interest. The question runs a strand through the phases as they evolve placing it at the heart of the enquiry. Part of this process is conceptualising the shape of the research, recognising that its form matters, and determining that the area of research is suitable for locating within this methodological framework. This 'preparing the groundwork' process includes readying oneself to begin work and opens up the possibilities for flexibility once the process begins.

The structure below demonstrates *my* use of the spiral methodology in this dissertation:

**Phase One** – method: survey education department → critical analysis → reflexive consideration → re-focus → continue research into next phase.

**Phase Two** – method: conversational interviews → critical analysis → (returned to participants) → second analysis → reflexive consideration → re-focus → continue research into next phase.

**Phase Three** – method: autoethnographic account drawn from previous data → reflexive consideration → re-focus → continue research into a new phase.

Figure 1: Spiral Methodology

## *A Guide to the Structure of my Dissertation*

*The introduction:* The introduction is designed to encompass as complete a picture as possible of the pertinent discourses and research on the topic at this point in time. It is intended that it should include the contextual relevance as well as social and philosophical implications. For this to be successful the introduction must move beyond the traditional role of convincing the reader that the topic is important and worth investigating. It must encompass 'the review of literature' which focuses on the key authorities and critical analysis of previous research that often forms a separate chapter. This restructuring is intended to combine the requirements of a dissertation committee to see a demonstration of a thorough understanding of the topic whilst allowing the actual research to be readily accessible for dissemination at a later date. As demonstrated, I have carefully thought through alternatives, to ground the research in such a way that I can be clearly seen to have fully engaged with the territory before embarking on 'active' research in an experimental framework. This is not to imply that the research process can not be allowed evolve, but makes transparent the personal process of embedding oneself in *doing* research. This has helped me gain confidence in my knowledge of what is known about the topic, and ways to research it, and acted as something of a 'check and balance' on my choices of direction.

The boundary conversations (those that co-exist alongside more defined discussions of research activities) about how to conduct the research, how to engage imaginative ways of exploring (researching), how to extract the highest quality research data are formed in ways that are not always easily disseminated...they often employ

solitary focussed thinking and hard won inspiration that comes from copious reading and long hours. Others may be blessed with genius.

*The Methodology:* The epistemological and methodological issues chapter is designed to both demonstrate that I have conducted a thorough examination of what we think we know, how we think we know it, and why we think we know it, through the use of certain methods. The structural underpinnings, paradigm debates, the philosophical positioning all create different environments through which we conduct our activities, acknowledged or otherwise. This chapter forms an important part of this dissertation as it is being submitted for examination. A different audience might require more or less explanation, but it does make explicit the research philosophies which are sometimes more implied than described in presenting research. Any peer review will always be challenging, but I hope this openness will convey my thinking. This chapter also expands the concepts that have led to my development of my spiral methodology, and why it may provide a clearer understanding of the research question. It could be that this section would not be needed in its entirety if the research were being submitted for publication; however, it does have a strong contextualizing element.

*The Phased Methods:* The phased methods 1 & 2 and onwards are the *research in action*. The process is designed to build on, and constantly check the evolving understandings. It does not rely on one point of reference for expounding a 'position', but builds, allowing the researcher a flexibility and responsiveness that seems hard to find in other methodologies. There is a distinct difference in this methodology to a study that is conducted, and then analysed and reported on, and then has follow-up studies. In that approach you usually rely on one dimension of data collection (even if it

combines different methods), and are committed to producing an end result. The spiral methodology allows you to manoeuvre and evolve with the research, reflecting on progress and adjusting the approach. It is designed to take pauses, it encourages reflexivity, and it rejects an unwavering commitment to complete a piece of research in order to be able to consider its findings. Slattery (1995) reworks the traditional complexities in research and curriculum and acknowledges a need to:

uncover the layers of meaning of the phenomena that could enrich our lives and our schooling practices. These practices must include attention to aesthetics, hermeneutics, phenomenology, poststructural analysis, multiculturalism, autobiography, theology, historicity, a postliberal and postrevolutionary political theory rooted in community and ecology, chaos theory and the new sciences, and the liberatory perspectives of society. (p. 264)

This is quite a challenge, which I think is intended to be more of a catalyst than a prescription. Although I am sure there are uncertainties in my proposed methodology, it seems valuable to at least give it a try. One obvious concern is that you cannot be a 'jack of all trades', and that a possible flaw would be a diluted research project lacking the depth because it requires diverse skills. The acknowledgement of that possibility means a raised awareness that all the research must be conducted with rigour and transparency, and that the structure should allow for the accumulation of knowledge or understandings to be clearly demonstrated. It must build upon the prior gains. I have paid particular attention to the possibility of the weaknesses mentioned above and have addressed this issue by recognising that all/any methods used must be carefully explored and knowledge gained before adopting them. This process includes rejecting unsuitable methods that might simply replicate an earlier phase, for example two or more survey methods, and harks back to Eisner (2001) who claims the form of

representation one uses has something to do with the form of the understanding one secures, an aesthetic embedded in the research structure.

The phased cycles of research are intended to overlap continue in a spiral motion until a suitable point to stop is reached. This may be for a number of reasons, for example, time constraints, quantity of data gathered, or that it is felt that the area of research is not proving fruitful. It may be that personal factors come in to play, boredom may become a factor, or a career move, but when and where the research stops is a less important issue in this methodology as dissemination of findings can happen throughout the research process, rather than at the end of a project. This may have the additional advantage of speeding up the lapse that is sometimes evident between conducting and publishing research. The phased cycles are designed to encourage 'stages' at which the research can be disseminated in publications or other shared communications. They should therefore be of a manageable length (word count), although for the purposes of presenting this dissertation I will include more detailed explanations than would normally be expected and comply with the university regulations on format. The statement that 'this topic is suitable for further research' is redundant as it is implicit in the evolutionary cycle that the stopping point is insignificant. You just have a point at which you pause. Many artists would consider it impossible to say a piece of art is 'finished', but will decide a point at which they should stop working on it has been reached, and often that is when they go public. In the shaping of this methodology, it is unnecessary to have a separate chapter for the relevant literature as it is interwoven into the phases as they investigate the research question and gather and critically analyse the research findings. This locates the

literature for the researcher and the reader where its relevance can be recognised, transforming and extending it into the research as it unfolds. The previous chapters on the context of the research question (introduction) and the epistemological and methodological issues have grounded the research. A further literature review needs to be as flexible as the process, and not fixed, frigid or concluded as it would be if it were only conducted as a precursor. There is opportunity in this format to embed the literature search in the appropriate cycle, for it to be interdependent, and keep the opportunity of unexpected connections a possibility.

There are those who consider that the review of literature in many dissertations consists of 'clumsy and turgid prose, written as *pro-forma* response to a purely ceremonial obligation in the planning format... they make dull reading' (Locke et al, 1987, p. 58). In contrast Borg and Gall (1989) present the argument that:

The review of literature in educational research provides you with the means of getting to the frontier in your particular field of knowledge. Until you have learned what others have done, and what remains still to be done in your area, you cannot develop a research project that will contribute to furthering knowledge in your field. Thus literature in any field forms the foundation upon which all future work must be built. If you fail to build this foundation of knowledge provided by the review of the literature, your work is likely to be shallow and naive, and will often duplicate work that has already been done better by someone else. (p. 116)

It would seem there is a fine balance to be obtained, to *know about*, but to still be able to *know around*, much in the same way that Illich (1971) suggests that we need to be able to *learn* and *un-learn*. It is in this dismantling of established knowledge, in the scrutinising of assumptions, of the questioning of certainties that I hope to make important issues visible. I am not suggesting that *everything* needs to be questioned in a

disruptive 'teenage' disenchanted way, but that we should all be mindful of assumptions.

A most critical element of this methodology (and the literature review element), is the ability to be cyclically responsive, to reflect on the progress of the research as it unfolds and direct the methods so that they specifically target the most fruitful areas. This is not looseness, but a continual 'working at' the specific question you want to understand, or threads of thoughts you are following. It is very precise and targeted. This methodology has been developed to address the epistemological concerns highlighted for me by Schön (1995) who suggested that questions of epistemology cannot be sidestepped when the challenging the existing conceptual frameworks embedded in modern research universities (p. 26).

Schön (1995) reworks his theories and knowledge about ways of knowing, about reflective practices, and applies it to questions of scholarship. In so doing he creates a catalyst for thoughts and actions that erode some of the infrastructure that represent and communicate knowledge and investigations of practices.

I wanted to re-examine methodological ground, to try taking what we 'know' and approach it with some freshness. There seem inherent dangers in taking a linear approach to investigate multiple practices within academia, using only the intellectual tools that are prevailing. As a student whose predominant undergraduate work was in craft design, I may well have a different subjective perspective. I also recognise that you have to be careful not to re-invent the wheel. In many ways, I am applying in practice my three dimensional structural craft training to the problems found in educational research. It requires you to engage all the senses, to *feel* the artistry of your

work, and to appreciate the value of stepping away and reviewing things from a different angle. I am encouraged that ‘failure’ can also be considered merit-worthy! Usher and Edwards (1996) discuss the value of difference, and that uncertain territory may lead to failure to produce exacting results. The danger of not attempting alternatives could be ‘the oppressive consequences of those assumptions, in the totalising of knowledge results in totalitarianism, the exclusion and silencing of difference’ (p. 158).

### *The Debate Surrounding Paradigms and Methodologies*

In explaining the design of this dissertation I have attempted to circumnavigate the debate about using a specific research method within, for example, qualitative or quantitative methodologies. This is a deliberate approach to avoid categorizing my research which would invalidate the procedures and present a paradox. However, I have found it impossible to completely ignore the issues created around the distinct terminology. According to the literature, it would seem that some of the disciplines to be found within a university setting are reluctant to relinquish the debate and have been positing, or intend to continue to posit one research paradigm against another. It encourages a self-perpetuating cycle of papers on polarising the research frameworks, and in so doing constitutes itself and denies the value of differences and choices.

Although many labels abound, in education the debate broadly focuses on qualitative versus quantitative research, and with irony, diversifying this categorisation would just lead to legitimizing the debate I wish to avoid. The discussion itself attributes values and assumptions that are exactly the type of theorizing that could be minimized, it attributes superiority and power where none should exist – in this

discourse. To take a linear approach, it is possible to look at Gadamer's (1960/1975) attacks on scientific methods as a panacea for all research endeavours, and the inability of a methodology to examine its own construction. In Foucault's (1979) discussions on power/knowledge he engages debate on how their construction within a methodology encourages assumptions about an 'absolute' status and the very idea that one methodology will guarantee a more truthful answer than another. As an example, qualitative research has evolved over the past three decades or more from a tentative position to one that claims legitimacy through the abundant publication of 'respectable research'. Yet there still seems to be the need to re-visit the debate which in itself validates claims of inadequacy i.e. 'no smoke without fire'. The core principles of what counts as 'knowledge' and what counts as valid and reliable research shift so uncomfortably on the foundations that hold them, and yet the 'building' continues and in some circumstances contributes to its own downfall. It seems fatal to continue a debate that sees such disparate practices in a competitive exercise, and more productive to focus energy on producing quality research and valuable research. I am not suggesting a reckless headlong leap of faith in one direction, but I am suggesting that how research is legitimised and authenticated should be contested and explicit.

Returning to a paradigm debate seems somewhat impractical when considering how to proceed in investigating a specific phenomenon, better to proceed hopefully with 'eyes wide open' to the pitfalls that await a researcher who has *not* acknowledged the dynamics at play when locating research in a specific paradigm. Kaplan (1964) suggested that it is the way that researchers *report* their work that differs as much as the way that they approach it. He suggested that all good researchers are intuitive,

responsive, receptive, and flexible, what he called logic-in-use, but it is in the reporting that a divergence becomes apparent. The research is then reported in a formal objective framework, Kaplan called it *reconstructed logic*, that allows for no examination of the anomalies and nuances that traced the path that led to the research. Therefore, both the common ground and the gaping holes are covered over and swept under the carpet where they cannot easily be seen. This has alerted me to inherent problems and encouraged my narrative inclusions throughout my thesis (my boundary conversations) as a way of revealing my 'way of knowing' and opening it up for discussion and examination.

To concentrate on what is essential for this piece of research, it is generally agreed that different methods that will provide the researcher with the tools most suitable to investigate a particular phenomenon. However, in stating this I am not accepting that there is a right and a wrong way, or a correct way to approach a problem, or that it is exclusive or inclusive of a given methodology. I am suggesting that in education there should not be distinct epistemologies producing incommensurable paradigms, this seems futile and destructive. Neither can research in education be unclear if it expects to be treated with the same seriousness attributed to more 'scientific' disciplines.

Therefore it would seem more productive to consider a holistic epistemic approach that encourages a co-existence of methodologies, one that blurs the distinctions and responds in complementary and overlapping environments. This would seem an honest approach, especially when dealing with people not objects, contextual settings not vacuums, and in a discipline that includes such a diversity of subject matter

and educational communities. In applying this philosophical debate to my methodological dilemma, I am offering the transparency that is often missing in Kaplan's (1964) reconstructed logic. I am revealing how it is I came to the starting point for my study, and what has, and still is influencing my choices. I am also employing a critical engagement with the research process and the research topic, and a deliberate reflexive analysis from the onset.

So, in this introductory section I have been paving the way for a later detailed description of a methodology that is mercurial and that may, or may not use (as an example) both quantitative and qualitative methods. It needs to have a framework that can connect and run a strand through the research, and yet be flexible enough to respond to changing needs. The danger is that, for example, when you frame a piece of art you intensify, isolate, and constitute a way to 'see' what is offered only within the frame. Just in the same way as a book highlights the texts it contains. The 'art' is in recognising and harnessing different ways of seeing. Rorty (1979) considers it pointless 'to find foundations to which one might cling, frameworks beyond which one must not stray' (p. 316), or that there could possibly be a set of regulations that will be capable of encompassing every circumstance and answering every question.

So, I do not propose a fixed frame of reference, a structure supplied within an accepted paradigm or theory into which I locate my study. The alternative I offer is intended to be imaginative and creative with a depth of clarity, colour and shape that moves 'outside the frame' – that the gaze is as much inward as outward. This cannot include a blurred focus, the question must stay central, if anything is revealed as a result of this investigation it should improve our understanding and add to our knowledge in

an unambiguous way. To do that it has to concentrate on answering questions, but as Greene (1995) so clearly puts it:

educational philosophers have to discover their own intertextuality, extend their minds towards the horizons, shape and reshape their traditions. In the shaping, in the interpretation, in the reflection, the questions will multiply. Posing the questions, loving the questions, philosophers may open whatever doors there are. (p. 7)

In summary, it was the purpose of the study that dictated in many ways my need to approach the research 'differently', and the need to be flexible, but it has evolved into a challenge to be creative in developing a way to do it, in designing a methodology.

### **In Defence of a New Methodology**

*This section is an explanation of the philosophical background considered when working within an alternative methodology and opens up the debate involving the conduct of research in the post-modern, and the implications for studies in educational settings. The discussion includes how locating this research in a phenomenological, ethnographic paradigm is only part of the picture, and has acted more as a conduit than a framework. It has contributed to grounding the study in a 'common sense' approach, but not anecdotal and without losing academic integrity. It explains how, for me, using 'theory' but not becoming overpowered by it, has generated an alternative position from which to explore the research possibilities and avenues of creative, imaginative and passionate discovery. It considers the necessity of using more appropriate methods to examine the philosophic changes Boyer (1990) proposes.*

As outlined in the introduction to this dissertation, this research has been conducted using my spiral methodology, and although each phase has employed different methods, this section is intended to act as something of a compass so the reader can more easily follow the route. It also offers an explanation and justification for the different choices I have made, and how they have contributed to my growing understanding of the research question. It asks my reader to enter both an *internal* and an *external* landscape, to share the commonalities found in the institutional scenery and to see how that has shaped the perceptions of the educator and their territory (Messner, 2002). On the one hand we are shaped by the external educational community, and on the other we are individuals within that territory subject to internalised subjectivity. The shape of the (educational) landscape impacts on almost every activity attempted within that terrain.

The research landscape for students of education (and other disciplines) has changed dramatically over recent decades with a varied assortment of methodological strategies and analytical procedures finding acceptance, or at least opening up debate in the research methods arena (Pinar et al, 1995). There are undoubtedly tensions to be felt in the positioning of approaches to research and what is considered ‘accepted practice’ with academic credibility. Experimental, imaginative, and alternative approaches to research are usually sceptically received. Silverman (1994) makes the point that researchers should avoid falling into the trap of ‘assuming that there are particular ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ models of society or methodologies’ and warns about ‘taking sides on the many spurious polarities which still bedevil much of social science (e.g. quantity vs. quality, structure vs. meaning, macro vs. micro)’(p. ix). Instead, he promotes

developing the ‘craft’ of research, which involves the active involvement of engaging with the methodology rather than ‘the passive ability to regurgitate appropriate answers in methodological examinations’. He continues:

It is my hope that, for many beginning researchers, this book may serve as something like Wittgenstein’s ladder, providing the initial footing for readers to go off to do their own research – charting new territories rather than restating comfortable orthodoxies (p. x)

In encountering this questioning within educational texts I have been encouraged to critically analyse my own methodological practices (Lewis, 2002). I have rendered it problematic, deconstructed it in a ‘Derridian’ unearthing fashion (Derrida 1976/1967), and looked for a constructive way forward. I have drawn on other skills, comparing my approach to metal work where I have to spend some considerable time contemplating moves before they are made and embracing the uncertainty of ductile material. In creating a piece of work in metal I have an idea of what I want to see, to end up with, but the shape will only emerge through effort, and is often at its most effective when it combines different elements and materials. My research in education may start with an interest (an idea) but I should not allow a desire to see an outcome impact on the process, I do not wish to determine outcomes (that would restrict the unexpected), but I can approach it imaginatively and with an artistic eye. Therefore, to *not* render the methodology as a problematic entity is to accept that it is perfect and complete (and created by another), rather than constantly evolving, vulnerable and ever developing as circumstances and needs change.

It is easy to chart back the developing discomfort with the status quo of methodologies many years, and Jones (1985) made the point clear:

A physician who knew how to use only one diagnostic instrument would never be licensed to practice medicine. There are a few problems such a physician might identify, but the vast majority of physical and mental disorders would escape notice. Similarly, anyone interested in investigating behaviour must master more than one methodology. Otherwise they are going to miss an awful lot. Behaviour is complex, and multi-determined, and no one methodological approach is, by itself, adequate (p. xi)

This position leads me to ask the same question of research in education, and to develop the idea that a multi-dimensional methodology that employs a variety of methods in a responsive, reflexive fashion rather than as pre-determined structure would provide an effective way to seek answers to complex questions. Evers (1999) makes an important point when discussing the ‘paradox of inquiry’:

One important test for any approach to research methodology is its capacity to deal with what is known as the ‘paradox of inquiry’. Formulated by Plato in *Meno*, it runs roughly as follows: either we know what it is we are inquiring after, in which case inquiry is unnecessary, or we do not and so would not recognize it if we found it, making inquiry pointless: therefore inquiry is either unnecessary or pointless (p. 271)

The issue Evers (1999) raises is of course confrontational, and although there could be many possible responses to this paradox, one of them could be the ‘epistemically progressive’ use of reflexivity in seeking an understanding of the complexity of research. This encourages the use of existing theoretical structure within the inquiry, but renders making assumptions problematic in a deconstructive fashion, possibly finding a clearer understanding at the end of the day. To clarify my own thinking on this point, the researcher needs to use *theory* (very cautiously, not blindly or devotedly) to avoid reinventing the wheel, and needs to use *methods* of inquiry to coherently move from one place to another. However, one must be wary of any constraints that are implicitly imposed within the foundations (methodologies) that will

further conceal that which you hope to find, rendering it invisible through the lens of inquiry.

This position owes some allegiance to a socially critical perspective that acknowledges that all knowledge is *theory dependant* and *value laden* and does its best to make transparent assumptions that may influence the research or conceal meaning or purpose. As an example, a socially critical perspective would place importance on examining ones own purposes and assumptions as well as those of others, maybe in discussions concerning power, and how that might affect the research undertaken and the conclusions drawn. But it also relies on much that is now written from a poststructural theoretical perspective, rejecting notions of a reality that is fixed, and a modernist view of autonomous meaning, and investigates how 'self' and social relations are constituted. This places importance, amongst other issues, in investigating the relationships of power-knowledge and language in constituting individuals (selves), institutions and societies.

### *Considering the Use of 'Theory'*

I think it is important at this point to place my use of the word *theory* within the framework of this research. I do not want to give theory 'capital' as a subject in and of itself, or to discuss the conceptions as if I were a theorist. As Apple (1999) notes there is a tendency to over theorise and move away from applying theory into practice which contributes to a divide between those who *talk the talk* (researchers) and those who *walk the walk* (practitioners). It is not sufficient to assume that there is an overlap into researcher/practitioner, theorist/teacher, a *talking walker*. In the case of this study, the subjects are theorists as well as practitioners (educators employed in a university

setting), so I must be very cautious of allowing the ‘talkers’ to conceal how much actual ‘walking’ they do! A second concern is that ‘theory’ claims some authority as a characteristic (Thomas, 1998;2002), and this can inhibit critical examination of structures that underlie praxis. For research into teaching and learning in higher education, *theory* should relate directly to the practices. So, in my discussion here I am using *theory* as a descriptor of the complex ways of understanding made known through the discourse prior to embarking on the practical process of asking a research question. I am employing a reflexive relationship between the theory, the practice and myself. I hope this contributes to being transparent in what shapes my work, what concepts have helped to locate my study, and why it is important to develop a theoretical perspective at all. Thomas (1998;2002) argues for a cautious use of ‘theory’ proposing an almost anti-theoretical stance. He suggests that researchers in education have adopted the term ‘theory’ to legitimise research in education, and that it carries connotations of intellectual superiority. Thomas (1998;2002) believes that it creates a ‘hegemony of theory’ and is in fact ‘an instrument for reinforcing an existing set of practices and methods in education’ (p. 76). This warning has further fuelled my reasoning for re-examining the ways I practice, theorise and present my research project, although perhaps not quite as bravely as the methodological anarchy that Thomas advocates.

### *The Argument for a Holistic Approach*

It could be argued that different research projects, using differing research methodologies involving the same question(s), provide a mosaic of new knowledge and understandings of given phenomena. It may also be that the research conducted in this

way is lacking in continuity and retaining the 'separateness' of the often polemic methodological approaches. The divergence of disparate practices cannot be accumulative in the same way as one continuous project that takes its direction from previous responses, and explores different directions within one piece of research continuously evolving after critical reflexive analysis. There are some studies ( that employ what might be termed 'multi-methods', using qualitative and quantitative techniques (Brewer & Hunter, 1989 as an early example) but they tend to be gathering data in a combined fashion and not holistically evolving in response to the findings. For example, a researcher may use statistical and interpretive analysis in interviews to provide a richer picture, or another researcher may follow up a previous research project continuing the research in another direction and using a different method. But, an important difference in my spiral methodology is that it is not left for 'another', in an alternative contextual location, with a different subjective approach to apply a complementary method in an effort to build on an understanding. That excludes too much of the dynamics of subjectivity and interpretation, it leaves too many of the absorbed understanding denied and unexplored. In my spiral methodology it is the continuing responsibility of the researcher to develop additional understandings through the different methods employed, constantly reviewing through reflexivity. The ownership is clearly apparent. Effective reflexive practices are the mainstay of its integrity.

A balance must be found between delving in sufficient depth for the research to be rigorous and academic and provide 'leads' or research threads (possibly for other researchers), but not so far that all effort is invested on one evolutionary cycle. It could

be argued that traditional research practices have emerged as a reaction to the demands of 'publish or perish' and therefore tend towards 'productivity' in terms of 'publishability'. This applies pressure on the academic community to 'produce the goods', demanding a high return on the effort invested in any research project. This again draws attention to the link between my development of a new methodological approach for my research and Boyer's (1990) proposals for an alternative to the predominance of a research orientated culture in the modern research university.

One of the key differences of the spiral methodology is that after the initial phase of research is conducted the subsequent phases can employ a variety of methods in order to build on an intimate understanding of the data as it evolves through the critical analysis. The ability to be critically reflexive as part of the process is offered as a strength within the framework. It is a way of taking stock and the exploring possibilities of what might have been obscured, what might lurk in unexpected places, the standing back and reviewing the picture. However, my argument for viewing things differently is partially based on the evidence found in research that the various 'camps' are so entrenched in their respective epistemological foundations that they rarely share findings in common understandings.

This came as a surprise to me, I found it hard to equate this positioning with my experiences in craft design where the sharing of materials and techniques and 'ways of doing' are commonplace. They are considered creative, imaginative and inspirational. The artist often looks to other disciplines to inspire creative thinking (Goldsworthy, 2004; Scrivener; 2000 Taylor, 2000). This is in stark contrast, for example, to the lack of communication between health practitioners and educationalists who rarely share the

common issues of, for example, reflective practices. Education journals publish articles on the subject, medical and health journals do the same, but it is hard to find evidence of the combining and sharing of knowledge.

Another example is found in the polarising of methodologies in journals that publish almost exclusively in one paradigm or another (the journal of *Qualitative Studies in Education* and *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*), or the research funding that is targeted towards specific research orientations and has for its prerequisite 'evidence based research' within an acceptable paradigm. Therefore, it is misguided to assume that researchers will share findings across paradigmatic divides, or that subjects will have inter-disciplinary conversations. It would be closer to the truth to state that there remains some mediatory work still to do in convincing some practitioners to value 'other' research. As Macdonald et al (2002) point out:

more work needs to be done by researchers to move out of disciplinary and paradigmatic boxes in order to develop more powerful theories and methodologies for developing and renewing practice (p. 141)

Keeves and Lakomski's (1999) call for more unity in educational research promotes somewhat of a utopian ideal in an attempt to make a valid point, and disentangle the philosophical arguments about the frameworks required to engage in the common enterprise of disciplined inquiry. In discussing the *scientific* and *humanist* approaches to conducting research they argue:

If, however, they are engaged in adding to the body of knowledge both of the long-standing traditions considered above must be rejected and in addition the positivist and naturalistic positions must also be abandoned... Under these circumstances the idea of two or more paradigms can no longer be sustained and the case must be endorsed for unity in educational research (p. 11).

When talking of paradigms, (Kuhn, 1962) or theoretical frameworks in education, it most usually identifies the two most common paradigms of research, that of the 'scientific' (positivistic/quantitative) research and 'interpretative/humanistic' (holistic/qualitative) research. It seems impossible to avoid using the rhetoric in order to communicate a point when discussing theories, and paradigmatic allegiances can determine theories, but I will use the language that communicates these constructs with caution. As if to make matters more complicated there are multiple definitions and interpretations of Kuhn's (1970) development of 'paradigm' to be found in the literature. I will use the term, as I understand it to have developed, to mean theoretical perspective or framework, a set of beliefs (Sparkes, 2002), which forms 'camps' of allegiance. It informs, from a philosophical point of view, a shared set of methods and theories and forms ontological perspectives (being/existence) and epistemological knowing. However, for the researcher this can start to become 'smoke and mirrors', and can promote the use of language to disguise rather than reveal meanings. In making this point I am avoiding the 'theory' becoming instrumental in academic vernacular, and attempting to forge an honest position (Apple, 1999). However, perhaps as Keeves and Lakomski (1999) suggest we should place less importance on paradigmatic differences and look for consequential forms of explanation and understanding, and concentrate on methods that depend more on the nature of the problem under investigation than legitimization within the educational community.

This poses a question about the audience the research is intended for, what is its purpose, whom does it best serve? Boyer (1990) has suggested that the institutionalisation of 'research' has created a value system where the research is valued

for the mistaken reasons. Too much value is placed on producing research that will meet the stated requirements of an institution, rather than the value of the research in its own right. This questioning of how to conduct research, especially within the domain of scholarship, circles around both my 'scholarly activities' and the ways I might research others perceptions of 'scholarship activities'. The framework I am employing to avoid imploding is a form of holistic reflexivity.

### *Using Holistic Reflexivity*

By employing reflexivity early in the research process and making values and meanings explicit in the theorising and the practice it may be possible to avoid some of the pitfalls. Employing reflexivity, which entails finding out about oneself, or at the very least an awareness of impact of the *self*, and about pedagogical moments and the multiple ways we are constituted in societies can illuminate quite unexpected qualities. In subjecting the *entire* research process to critical examination, through a process of reflexivity, you may seek to understand the biases and theoretical predispositions before they become so entrenched in the research as to render themselves all but invisible. Lather (1991b) when discussing texts talks of:

a reflexive tale, is one that brings the teller of the tale back into the narrative, embodied, desiring, invested in a variety of often contradictory privileges and struggles (p. 129)

This is very important in developing a critical analysis of educational paradigms, methodologies and epistemologies, and is central to defending the use of an alternative way in this study. It encourages my use of the first person in acknowledging my own position as *within*, not external to the acts of conducting educational research

and producing a dissertation (and is later exemplified in my choice of autoethnography). Also, in posing the question early in this dissertation of who stands to benefit from research in HE I am able to introduce issues of power and authority, which may impact on both the research process and the findings. It would be hard to imagine how those factors could be ignored or avoided in the process of investigating the constituents of a hierarchical educational community.

The publication of journal articles reporting findings from studies such as this do not allow much space for the epistemological questions. Questions embedded in the study about how we have come to think in the way that we do. This issue is rarely dealt with outside of journals that specifically concentrate on philosophy. However, a doctoral thesis has enough scope to allow the discussion to take place and locate the research, and the researcher, in a philosophically contextual background. It should provide information on the *why*, the *when* and the *how*, as well as the progress in finding answers to the research question. It is also essential if I am to meet my requirement of being reflexive. I should be considering the ‘big picture’, and I should be asking questions about contextuality and social phenomenon before marching into the territory of data collection or active research. If I am to employ successfully my methodology, then researcher reflexivity will have be evident in the examination of the epistemological and theoretical aspects that surround the research question, implicit and tacit, internal and external.

It is my intention not to add further to the debate about one research method versus another (qualitative versus quantitative as an example). As Pinar et al (1995) succinctly put it:

These epistemological debates are now of peripheral interest to those of us who have moved beyond the quarrels over qualitative and quantitative. For many of us at work in the field today, these debates have been over for twenty years. (p. 53)

However, as a student I am conscious of the conversation still existing in different forms. This recognition led to my inclusion and explanation of my course of action, and demonstrates how and why I felt it was valuable to design and employ my methodological framework.

I think it is important to include *why* I felt it was important, given my choice of research topic to consider methodological implications as part of the debate involving conflicting educational paradigms and entrenched epistemologies. Scholarship is embedded within them. This ‘considering’, the untold tales, usually remains unspoken in research. But it is usually implicit in the evidence of the quality of the work as to how much a researcher has engaged with, or has prior knowledge of philosophical positioning. The unspoken ‘pondering’ is used here to link my topic of research in HE to the philosophical thinking that has influenced my choices. I am opening up the negotiations that have taken place and including them within my research project, which as Fishman and McCarthy (2000) note is *not* the sort of thing you would normally go public with (p. 74). However, their argument, with which I agree, is that we need to understand *something* of the researcher when reading research in education. Although the emphasis is on *something*, and not everything! For example, my opinion of the work of some philosophers has altered when I have become aware of some part of their character, situations, their political affiliation, cultural influences and/or sexual orientation, all of which can impact on the way we may read a written word differently.

By understanding more of the social contextual world we are also able to understand the authoritative voice better.

*The Postmodern Poststructural Educational Landscape and Holistic Reflexivity*

As previously mentioned, this clearly aligns this as a postmodern enquiry, which approaches research as 'theory laden' and does not seek the 'absolute truths' of positivist or empirical studies. Here I use 'postmodern' as one word to denote, as Lewis (1998) states, a *view* rather than a period after modernism, as in *post-modern*.

Postmodern research is now well established and has been the topic of many publications, although for some it is not so much a development as a reaction. Godotti (1996) claims postmodernity is a counter claim to modernity:

postmodernism is not to be considered to be just a fashion in the cinema, music, the arts, and in daily life. Rather it is viewed as a movement that questions the future. Actually, its only real identity is that of questioning modernity. There is no clear definition of what postmodernity is. (p. 183)

If this is the case, I must be very cautious of what claims I make of my philosophical bias and paradigmatic alignment. It calls into question the very process of attributing meaning and justification to the use of a paradigmatic choice. Carr and Kemmis (1986) suggest:

There is no impartial way of demonstrating the superiority of one paradigm over any other. Knowledge and experience, far from providing a rational basis for a commitment to a particular way of interpreting 'reality', are themselves a projection of just these sorts of commitments. It is precisely because there are no neutral criteria for deciding whether any paradigm offers a better way than any other for producing valid knowledge, that they are, to use Kuhn's term, 'incommensurable'. 'The choice between paradigms', he says, 'is the choice between incompatible modes of community life.....There is no standard higher than the assent of a relevant community'. And if there is any truth in this then knowledge is not, as positivism suggests, the objective, universal and value-neutral product of the 'disinterested' researcher.

Rather, it is the subjective, context bound, normative and, in an important sense, always political. (p.73)

With this in mind I have applied critical reflexive analysis to the processes (the methodology) that I have employed to answer my research questions. Part of that process has been making as much of what I did as accessible as possible, and as free of the rhetoric as possible. Therefore, I should not leave my statement of 'reflexive analysis' uncontested but subject it to explanation and clarification, expanding on the values and interpretations that such a statement invokes. I have tried to refrain from claiming a 'position', or theoretical stance as that can restrict movement, in a research sense. However I think some discussion of the influence of poststructuralism is worthwhile. Poststructuralism 'regards language as inherently indeterminate' and Bleakley (2000) continues, 'for post-structuralists 'truth' and 'fact', and the phenomena such as self and identity, are relative to the historical moment, cultural context and the play of competing discourses' (p. 407). In using the language of 'reflexive practice' in contemporary higher education I must be careful not to allow the theories to position the subjects, rather than explain them (Bleakley, 2000). So, I am not turning the reflective gaze upon myself, to understand the self, but I am examining the choices that I make as a researcher, the reasons for those decisions and how they impact my research. If through those actions something of 'self' is irretrievably included then at least I should make that quite clear, and contextually locate the research so that the reader can discern the subjectiveness and origins of my claims.

Part of the process of being reflexive is analysis of the 'dominant discourses' and of the epistemologies that inform practices in research. As discourse analysis is involved in my research process it seems important to clarify my meaning. Although I

find much of Foucault's work very dense and difficult to read, he does provide powerful philosophical concepts. Foucault's writing (1970, 1979, 1980) describes 'discourses' as providing the conceptual frameworks for practices within societies, providing both description and prescription. His work evolves through a complex analysis of how discourses are formed, and whom they serve, and how discourses, amongst other things, are articulations of power and domination. In applying this to research, and research methods it raises awareness of the discourses that are concealed in the practice and the theory. Translated into an account of research this means that deconstructing some of the structures that legitimise research actions is valuable in revealing hidden presuppositions and areas of power. I am using 'deconstruction' here as expounded by Derrida (1976) who explains:

I was quite explicit about the fact that nothing of what I have said had a destructive meaning. (Deconstruction) has nothing to do with destruction. (I)t is simply a question of...being alert to the implications, to the historical sedimentation in the language we use and that is not destruction. (p. 271)

Using this theoretical stance to form a basis for constructing a research methodology is a soundly reflexive action, and acknowledges that finding out about perceptions, interpretations, origins and meanings is an action that needs to be problematised. It has not accepted 'a place from which to start' as being something that is given to you, but rather something that you must reach through thoughtful critique and critical examination. In employing this approach in the early stages of planning a research project it may be possible to be alert to the implications and concealed practices within the practice of presenting research. This is not research paranoia, but thoughtful consideration of complexities of doing research, and an eagerness to find

imaginative ways ahead. I don't want to be *given* a way of doing, but accept the responsibility as mine to *deconstruct* existing approaches and evolve a phenomenological understanding. As previously explained, this process facilitated my realisation that the accepted format for presenting dissertations (introduction, literature search, chapter headings etc.) would not be appropriate to the kind of research I was developing. From this position deciding on the methodology and therefore a method(s) becomes part of the process of unravelling dominant methodological practices and how they might have come to constitute 'good research' rather than instruments that assist the process of increasing understanding or knowledge of a phenomenon.

In constructing an alternative way of conducting research for this study, the research methodology has been driven by the development, and higher profile, given to alternative ways of understanding research in education over the past decade or so. It is now possible to find diverse methods of inquiry that include many different ways of presenting research, for example, narrative inquiry, fictional representations, and ethnodrama (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002; Sparkes, 2002). A concern is that through this diversification unwittingly some boundaries are reinforced, and differences enhanced by the contrasting theories. Although a few call for unity in educational research, the polarity is perhaps to be expected when you consider the philosophical implications. There are also those who have built a career and have numerous publications embedded in a particular methodological framework, and are resistant to change. Evers (1999) considers:

The development of research methodologies is a way of formulating and making explicit sound procedures for enquiry – procedures that determine the nature of acceptable evidence, the kind of inferences that may be drawn and, as exemplified in the praxis tradition, the kind of

action that is appropriate. Constructed this way, methodologies are influenced primarily by epistemological assumptions, particularly by assumptions about whether and how knowledge is justified (p. 264)

Evers follows this line of thinking suggesting that epistemologies therefore exercise a normative function, overtly influencing the methodology, and covertly ‘the structure and content of substantive theories purportedly sustained by research’. Evers does suggest an alternative, a ‘coherentist model’ (Evers, 2000) that acknowledges the complexities of research in education, blurs quantitative/qualitative distinctions and natural/social science divides.

In learning about the complexities of methodologies, my research clearly requires more than a ‘common sense’ approach and has to meet the academic requirements. However, I am mindful of allowing *theories* about methods to obscure application of the most suitable techniques to help find the most revealing answers to my question. I will have problems if I have not determined from the onset a framework for a flexible methodology, and a way that I can communicate it. I want to move out of the methodological ‘box’, with all the epistemological implications, and more freely deploy methods in a responsive reflexive framework. It may be that this makes me something of a ‘ruthless opportunist’ as Feyerabend (1993) puts it, adopting methods as they seem appropriate. He continues drawing on Lenin who discusses how to invoke change you:

must be able to master all forms or aspects of social activity without exception (it must be able to understand, and to apply, not only one particular methodology, but any methodology, and any variation thereof it can imagine)...; second (it) must be ready to pass from one to another in the quickest and most unexpected manner (p. 10)

This discussion continues with Feyerabend (1993) turning to Einstein who writes:

The external conditions which are set for the scientist by the facts of experience do not permit him to let himself be too much restricted, in the construction of his conceptual world, by the adherence to an epistemological system. He, therefore, must appear to the systematic epistemologist as a type of unscrupulous opportunist (p. 10)

Feyerabend (1993) makes a passionate case for the researcher to exert an anarchic freedom in 'dealing in knowledge' and to fight the restrictions of epistemological prescriptions or general principles, preferring instead to explore the unknown with more of an open mind to the possibilities.

I hope I am illustrating something of the journey I have taken to reach the methodology used for this research project. It has been formed through a thorough examination of previous theoretical structures, their suitability for this study, and also with the advantage of my non-traditional academic background. The measure of success or failure will be found in the ability of my research methodology to provide illuminating new understandings of the topic. There have been developments, and perhaps progress since Silverman's (1985) discussions about methodological paradigms and his proposing of holistic, inclusive alternatives in ethnographic research, but his words are still sharply succinct:

The alternative to rigid polarities in social research cannot be 'anything goes'. In ethnography as elsewhere our attempts to describe the social world must be based on critical analysis which avoids both polarised concepts and sloppy thinking (p. 117)

As previously mentioned, the advent of new or different ways of offering what counts as research has led to a number of diverse 'forms' now being presented to the academic community. Much is made of the postmodern era opening up these pathways to knowledge, and the diminishing of the power of modernity to answer all questions in an

absolute 'scientific' manner. Patrick Slattery (1995) explores the varied ways in which the word 'postmodern' has been expanded to cover so much thinking, acting and living, from postmodern architecture to eliminative postmodernism. But for this dissertation, and accepting its illusive, multifaceted nature, the language of a postmodern researcher concerns those employed in research in HE that hope to explore murky areas of unclear origin by deconstructing modern notions of truth, language, knowledge and power etc. (Derrida, 1967/76/90; Foucault, 1980) in the possibly naïve hope of finding something worthwhile to report.

### *Thinking in the Postmodern*

Postmodernism as a way of thinking warns me to tread carefully, to examine not just a given direction, but the footprints, the lie of the land, the very reason to travel in the first place. In this study I am striving to keep the philosophising a little pragmatic and relevant, in touch with the practice, and not just the theoretically located, lost in the theory. In this way I hope I have avoided descending into confusion and chaos and losing my way. As Bleakley (2000) states, learning to research in the postmodern is learning to sensitise to unusual and imaginative ways of what is traditionally described as data collection and analysis, and through that re-awakening we come back to how imaginative those ways are becoming. As previously mentioned, the variety of research methods that have been reaching, and influencing, the higher education community now include areas such as life-history, autobiographic, story-telling, fictionalised accounts, art installation, readers theatre. Lewis (1998) in his appeal for a holistic/constructivist paradigm in Special Education sees legitimising or 'theorising' these non-traditional methods of reporting research as the job of those engaged in academic endeavour - opening a door to

a range of complex possibilities. He suggests that ‘it may well be one of our tasks to articulate a way in which autobiographical and fictionalised accounts may become “theorised” in order to render useful, if not generalisable, insights’ (p. 105). This less brittle, more organic approach does not suggest succumbing to Silverman’s (1985) ‘sloppy thinking’, but allows a researcher to think in a less linear direction, to be more inclusive and fluidly weave in what may come to be recognised as useful, insightful, valuable knowledge or understandings.

It is only through a clear explanation of the influences I have identified that I can hope to present my *academic self*, to take my reader with me on a journey that is certainly less certain in a postmodern educational environment. It may also be a characteristic of an enthusiastic apprentice to the academic world to push the boundaries, and to be free from some of the pressures and institutional requirements in the academic community of scholars. However, the struggle that Adams St. Pierre (2000) describes as the problem of making postmodern educational research intelligible has to be tackled if the audience is to be larger than oneself, if only to successfully meet the requirements for submitting a dissertation. Adams St. Pierre reviews Constan (1998) paper concerned with deciphering research where he describes postmodern educational research as ‘politically *decentering*, methodologically *idiosyncratic*, and representationally *unbounded*’ (p. 40) and proposes a structure for understanding. Adams St. Pierre (2000) challenges the question of creating an artificial structure and making it intelligible and asks:

How does one become available to intelligibility?” That is, how does one learn to hear and “understand” a statement made within a different structure of intelligibility? At the least, this question shifts prevailing attitudes by assuming that the burden of intelligibility lies as much with the reader as with the writer, a position contrary to that of those who chide postmodernism

for “deliberate obfuscation over clarification” (Constas, 1998, p38). For some reason, these readers expect postmodernism to be readily accessible and coherent within a structure it works against (p. 26)

So, my dilemma is conducting and presenting postmodern educational research in such a way that structure is not *imposed* but deliberately designed to be complementary. By choosing to conduct research in this way I am able to invite my reader to walk alongside, even though what we see may be quite different, our images contrastingly interpreted.

It follows then, that having described the philosophies that have influenced deriving this methodology I should explain the cognitive structure that has allowed a fluid, cyclical, spiral methodology to evolve without restricting it.

#### *Methods as Complementary and Symbiotic*

The methods (plural because more than one is used) themselves do not present especially new alternative ways of research investigation and representation. However, the combining and the responsive and reflexive approach of utilising more than one way of seeing within the *same* research project as you progress into the topic is a little unusual. Most critically, it is the *pausing* to critically analyse the data gathered, and then being able to adjust the direction of the questions asked, and methods used, in a responsive reflexive way that has proved fruitful. The study accumulates confidence as the picture fills with increasing detail, the focus sharpened. This is done with awareness that it could possibly be criticised for lacking the depth associated with one method disseminated through many pages, but is countered by the gathering evidence of evolving understandings. Sturman (1999), when discussing case study methods in Keeves and Lakomski (1999) comes to this conclusion:

There has also developed recognition of the value of blending different methodologies. In one major study into the characteristics of effective schools in Australia, key concepts and variables were defined through reference both to prior quantitative studies as well as selected case studies of selected schools. From this a quantitative study of 150 schools was conducted, but case studies were used to compliment and help illuminate the findings from this study. The process is cyclical and case study methodology enters the process at various stages (p. 111)

To move this evolution forward is to remove any trace of *competing* methodologies. Brewer and Hunter (1989) recognised the need for developing different ways of approaching research in the late nineteen eighties. They promoted the use of a 'multimethod approach' developed from the changing climate of academic research:

Social research today is highly diverse in nearly every respect, including methodology. Researchers in different social scientific disciplines and sub disciplines now study a myriad of research problems not only from a number of different theoretical perspectives but also with several quite different types of research methods. This diversity of methods implies rich opportunities for cross-validating and cross-fertilizing research procedures, findings, and theories. However, to exploit these opportunities, we must develop more cosmopolitan research strategies. What are needed are approaches that systematically explore the new avenues of research that methodological diversity affords. Multi-method research is one such approach. (p. 13)

In this dissertation I am presenting an alternative to *multi-method* research, or research that *triangulates* findings by using separate methods focussed on one subject area. This spiral methodology emphasises the role of the researcher, placing importance on self and flexibility, and the ability of the researcher to cross boundaries finding imaginative links in a holistically creative research process. It makes room within the research to be *actively* reflexive. Critically, it disengages areas of tacit power which may be thought to drive the production of research, and dictate output and formats.

## **The Methodological Map**

*This section describes the methodology in practice, and how to follow its pathways through this dissertation. This is included as a precursor in order to familiarise the reader with the fundamental work done to arrive at a point at which to begin 'researching' into the topic with my new methodology. This is a lateral move intended to be read as 'integrated with' the previous section rather than sequential. This section grounds the research question explaining how it was chosen and what was purposefully included and excluded. This is another example of what might constitute 'unplayed tapes' (Fishman & McCarthy, 2000) but is revealed here as integral to the research process. I will briefly explain the three method phases that have evolved through this study and have provided the content of this dissertation.*

Eurocentric analysis is viewed as linear. Rooted in empiricism, rationalism, scientific method and positivism, its aim is prediction and control.....African epistemology, on the other hand, is circular....and seeks interpretation, expression, and understanding without preoccupation with verification. .  
(Watkins, 1993, p. 331)

### *Locating the Research Question in the Methodological Framework*

This methodology begins with a researcher and an area to be researched. What is acknowledged at the forefront is the recognition of the fact that researchers in education must be 'included in their own research' and that constructing connections is a social process (Steier, 1991). This also becomes a key issue in autoethnography, which is explained in more detail in phase three.

In general terms, the researcher looks closely at what it is that interests them, what they want to explore, noting the above. For this study an area of interest evolved from a previous project (Laker, 2001), more accidentally than deliberately. From this

beginning point I have taken my research question and ‘played’ with it, as gemmologist might with a diamond before cutting it. Looked at it from all angles, noted the possible quality, the ‘inclusions’, the weight, the faults, the flaws, the cloudy areas, before cleaving that first cut through the surface. This is the first conscious or purposeful act of reflexivity, and it locates the research and the researcher. This should be considered part of the first phase of the spiral and an initial ‘data collection’ of a different nature, or information gathering process in its own right. I have attempted to make this explicit in these earlier sections.

The choosing of an area to research, and the refining of the research question establishes a starting point to begin the more obvious cyclical phases. The topic(s) or question(s) that might be used must marry to the structural composition of this methodology, but there is tremendous flexibility. It could be that another researcher may have chosen to use secondary data, a focus group or a survey, a case study or possibly an intervention in a lecture hall or classroom. I am proposing that there are diverse locations where it might be possible to apply this framework, and therefore diverse questions that could be applicable. It is the *application* of the spiral methodology that places a different perspective on the action of researching, a different emphasis. It is a synthesis of styles and protocols, reconstructed into a new shape providing a unique skeletal framework. It has developed from my initial scribbles on paper, to the form it takes in this dissertation, and I readily acknowledge the influence of previous designs. Other more fragmented influences arose from immersion in the subject of researching, gaining the knowledge (sometimes tacit) of procedures, and recognising my dissatisfaction with available techniques.

In particular, I focussed on the need for any questions about Boyer’s (1990) interpretations of scholarship to be able to be examined in a multilayer fashion, echoing in some ways the framework he proposed. This became evident through consideration of the contextual location (HE) and the complexity of Boyer’s (1990) proposals. It

appeared that the question(s) about scholarship would benefit from being examined from multiple perspectives, and as an evolutionary process building a detailed picture interacting with the framework of my methodology.

As a side note, if research were to be disseminated as a project evolves it could provide the additional benefit of generating a new direction to follow, drawing attention to a weaknesses not previously noticed, or develop unlikely connection from another's way of seeing (Thomas & Nelson, 1996). At the very least this would provide the opportunity for debates to occur whilst the research is 'active' and a 'work in progress'...still alive with possibilities. Other important advantages are the ability to fill in gaps of understanding as they become apparent through the phases, to collect relevant data where a need becomes obvious, to respond before pursuing a less fruitful avenue, and to place *theory* cautiously in reflexive practice.

In this section I have described how I embedded the choice of question in my methodology, and how I considered the symbiotic relationship between knowing how to ask the question, and knowing what the question should be.

### *Rationalising the Phases*

Under the section of each phase in this dissertation I have provided a detailed account of the method used in that cycle. As three distinctly different methods were chosen each section can be examined separately, although attention should be drawn to the location of the phase in the larger picture.

The first phase of this research project used an email questionnaire to generate data for analysis. This 'net casting' approach of asking a large target group a number of open- ended questions offered many possibilities and was thought to be a good starting place (Hannan, 2000; Keeves, 1988; Munn & Drever, 1999).

The second phase utilized conversational interviews with individuals generated from the analysis of the initial data collection. I was able to use the information gathered from the first phase to inform my choices of participants in this second phase.

The choices I made are expanded on in phase two and a detailed explanation of the method used can be found in that section.

The third phase used autoethnography (Ellis, 2004). This enabled me to include the marginalised conversations, the gleaned evidence, in a cohesive, expressive format that connects the *knowing* with the *intuitive* and gives a different perspective on the growing understandings of the research topic.

The design of the methodology is summarized below:

**Phase One** – method: email survey to education department → critically analyse → reflexive consideration → re-focus → continue research into next phase.

**Phase Two** – method: conversational interviews → critical analysis → returned to participants for responses → second analysis → reflexive consideration → re-focus → continue research into next phase.

**Phase 3** – method: autoethnographic account drawn from previous data → reflexive critical analysis → re-focus → continue research into next phase.

### *Acknowledging Influences*

As this methodology emerges in practice it is clear that it hopes, to some degree or another, to achieve an enriched consensus of opinion on a topic. There are other methods that can be found, particularly in survey methods that seek agreement of opinion amongst participants. The Delphi survey method (Clayton, 1997, Fish and Busby, 1996) hopes to achieve an agreed consensus of opinion on a given question by referring the emerging information back to the participants for confirmation or clarity of intent. However, it maintains the same target group throughout the process and encourages reactions from the participants in light of each others responses. When Kreber (2001) conducted a study on ‘conceptualising the scholarship of teaching and identifying unresolved issues’ she used an adaptation of the Delphi survey method. She started her research by identifying her target group (eleven highly regarded

interdisciplinary academics) and asked them to respond to two open-ended questions. Following her analysis of their answers she developed a questionnaire, which included a Likert scale, and asked the participants to respond to that. The final stage of her study followed analysis of the questionnaire. She used a combination of the Likert scale, and the narrative responses of her participants to develop something of a consensus of opinion between them. She rated each individual's answer against the group's responses. She then invited each participant to reconsider their answer in light of the group rating, and clarify any areas of discrepancy. According to Kreber (2001) she was able to report the extent to which the panellists agreed and disagreed with each other and identifies unresolved issues. There were areas where there was a high level of agreement and a consensus of opinion, and others were far more problematic.

I have used Kreber's (2001) research as an example of an existing research methodology, and how it has informed my development of a new framework. It exposes my reasoning, the ways in which I have rendered the issues problematic, and provides an insight into my development of an alternative way of researching. In the refining of my spiral methodology, I have placed the desire to build layers of understanding, incorporating flexible and reflexive qualities as central values. I want it to be able to be sensitively responsive to findings, and adaptable enough that a phase that proves unsatisfactory does not signal the end of a project. Instead, you can return to the proceeding phase and re-direct your research. Following this discussion of methodological issues I will return to the topic of the research.

### **The Study in Context**

*This section will locate the study within its historical and contextual settings and discuss the seminal issues surrounding the debates. I will advance Boyer's (1990) definitions of scholarship, and isolate 'the scholarship of teaching and learning' as the*

*focus for this study. It will overlap discussions of Boyer's four dimensions of scholarship and interrelate it to the scholarship of teaching and learning. It is intended to act as a pathway for the reader and writer with the aim of reaching a shared understanding of issues and the context.*

#### *A Modern 'Boyerian' Definition of Scholarship*

Boyer's (1990) '*Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*' presented a philosophic conception of the relationship between research and scholarship for academics working within higher education, and how it is relevant to the international academic community. Boyer's work and much that is written about the scholarship of teaching and learning is both inter-disciplinary and globally applicable through its universal application of principles. The language used is one of a mutual conceptualization, a shared problematising of beliefs, and a connecting of educational communities in a language of common concerns that ignore most demographic variations. Different countries or locations may be moving at a different pace with the given topic, their concerns may peak in slightly different areas, but there is still a strong fundamental strand that runs through all institutions of higher education; *how to maximise the teaching/learning environment for all those involved*. It is this key issue, the encouraging of the teaching/learning dialectic towards a fully communicative educational relationship (Habermas, 1979) that is the critical connection with the purpose of the higher education institutions, and is essential in understanding the conflicts to be found in the mandate. Therefore, any research that examines the international forum and dialogue, and relates it to informing our understanding of

similar issues in the United Kingdom (UK) should be encouraged. Many of the structures, and much of the academic language used in higher education institutions around the world can trace their origins to Germany and England, and any reading of historical literature will give a rich picture of the historical background and a traceable evolution (Rudolph, 1990). The term 'scholarship' has an interconnected relationship with academia, research and learning and could be thought of having shamanic qualities in that it can shift its shape and form over time to appear as something 'other'. What is frequently agreed is that the definition of 'scholarship' has over the years become more narrowly defined, moving from the broad actions of thinking, communication and learning in a variety of contexts, to scholarship emanating from research publications (Braxton et al, 2002; Conrad & Gunter, 2000; Richlin, 1993b). This narrowing of the definitions and of the conceptualising of scholarship is critical to the debate. It is this restricting that challenges the dynamics of praxis and the dialectic relationship between theory and practice, student and teacher. The challenge is to see through the protective autonomous veil of the established practice to the areas of concern that constitute *what* is done and *why* it is done (epistemology and ideology), *who* is doing it and *why*, and perhaps to what is *said* to be practiced and preached. Hopefully, it is through this grappling with ideological and epistemic issues that an attempt can be made to avoid falling into the trap of external appearance over actual content (i.e. my thesis conforms to the expectations of my peers and what is acceptable... it appears authentic, but in the process fails to really critically inquire and reveal any new understandings of what constitutes knowledge; it stays in the box). If we were to consider for a moment *scholarship* within the structure of an institution as policy in practice, we can consider a

variety of conceptual possibilities that may prove useful in critically analysing and understanding what constitutes its framework. Although Ball (1995) is concerned with education policy analysis within the school system, this statement relates well to the structures within HE:

One of the conceptual problems currently lurking within much policy research and policy sociology is that more often than not analysts fail to define what they mean by policy. The meaning of policy is taken for granted and theoretical and epistemological dry rot is built into the analytical structures they construct. It is not difficult to find the term policy being used to describe very different ‘things’ at different points in the same study. For me, much rests on the meaning or possible meanings that we give to policy: it affects ‘how’ we research and how we interpret what we find (p. 15)

Ball (1995) continues on to describe the problems with defining and fixing meanings to contextually located rhetoric, and also the dangers of not *fixing* meaning. He acknowledges his own ‘theoretical uncertainties’ and concludes that he has two very different conceptualisations of policy issues, not opposing but ‘implicit in each other’ which he calls ‘policy as text’ and ‘policy as discourse’. This in turn leads to a basic question of ‘what is policy?’ and the possibility of ‘unexamined assumptions’ that encourage us to think monochromatically seeing policies as ‘things’ rather than a conglomeration of actions and processes, of ideological politics and legitimating of knowledge. If I apply Ball’s (1995) theorising to considerations of scholarship, it raises important issues of what it is in theory and practice, and how it might be confused in assumptions associated with its context. For example, Nicholl’s (2004) considers that it is possible for the term scholarship to carry *cultural capital* and axiomatically promote teaching (and learning) in the academic discourse. Nicholl’s (2004) uses Bourdieu’s (1986) concept of ‘cultural capital’ that attributes an enhanced status to an activity by

using terminology that 'is recognised and accepted by a particular audience' (p. 30). Therefore, when I approach Boyer's definitions it is with an eye to the implicit as well as the explicit, bearing in mind that Boyer recognises his own subjectivity in his philosophies and that this is a point of reference, another 'grid' on my map, from which I can develop my research and critical analysis.

The more recent impetus to raise the profile, and redefine scholarship can be traced to Boyer's (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered*, although it has been debated to varying degrees for many, many years. Braxton, Luckley and Helland (2002) offer a concise history of perspectives on scholarship before Boyer noting that over the years a number of voices have raised the debate, but with varied interpretations and emphasis. In more recent times it has been Boyer's work that has raised the profile of the discussion, encouraging critical analysis and dialogue of the topic amongst a wide interdisciplinary global audience. This recognises the evolving climates of academic institutions with ever shifting priorities and campus based initiatives which include social and political influences.

Boyer's research in HE, and particularly his work on scholarship, arose from an environment and culture of growing concern about the direction and dogma of HE institutions, and the lack of status for teaching excellence. Boyer also believed that 'teaching and learning' had been somewhat lost in the modern research driven university, losing sight of a key fundamental purpose of the institutions. The debates in academic circles and literature (and I know I am generalising here) had developed into a discussion over the dichotomy of *teaching versus research* (sometimes referred to as the 'publish or perish' debate) and very much focused on how to balance one with the

other, how to *value*, and how to *assess*. As Boyer discerned, this really sidestepped confronting the ideological, epistemological and hegemonic issues that had framed this discussion in the first place. It was to accept that the environmental and institutional frameworks had been formed in such a way as to allow clarity in understandings, and for equity to be ‘won or lost’ through resourceful debate. What Boyer (1990) contended was that the playing field was far from level, and that debating the rules of the game was futile unless you did some groundwork first, perhaps even inventing a new game.

When he examined the territory he did indeed conclude that the existing structures needed to be challenged, dismantled, and re-established. His concerns focussed on the priority assigned to research as opposed to teaching in higher education in the United States of America (US), and how this manifested itself among other things in such as funding, tenure, promotion, and not least, student learning. His challenge was to call into question a system that seems to reward faculty for *everything* *but* the very reason universities and colleges claim legitimacy, namely institutions of learning. Boyer (1990) starts with the premise that both the teacher and the student are in his experience being short-changed, and that it is ideologically unsound:

[Academics] are losing, too. Research and publication have become the primary means by which most professors achieve academic status, and yet many academics are, in fact, drawn to the profession precisely because of their love for teaching or for service – even for making the world a better place. Yet these professional obligations do not get the recognition they deserve, and what we have on many campuses, is a climate that restricts creativity rather than sustains it (p. xii)

It is of particular interest to this study that Boyer chooses ‘creativity’ as an attribute that should be encouraged since it is a subjective practice that is essentially

difficult to assess. However, 'creativity' is a mainstay of the methodology I am employing, and as such I am claiming it as a strength.

There is at least one clear area for critical examination, that of apportioning respect and legitimacy to aspects of 'teaching' as part of the holistic package of scholarly activity in HE. However, there is also a much less easily defined component that finds its authority in the passion, the creative, the expressive, the *feeling*. Those emotions can, and do, inform the *practice* as well as the theorising, and that point opens up a wide set of inquiries into elusive emotional responses to theory and practice. These are the very intangible, complicated factors that make research in education a complex and imperfect art, but are core issues often ignored because they are difficult to validate and justify, or even to find a place to be voiced. I have struggled in my own dissertation to locate this aspect, to find a comfortable home for the conversation. This is a hidden pedagogy of a different nature to the one more usually expressed. It brings the *personal and private* into the practice of teaching or researching and is interwoven into the subject with which the educator has engaged – it is very illusive. In many ways it touches again on Fishman and McCarthy's (2000) 'boundary conversations', and the (sometimes) tacit influences on research. It also invariably influences the effectiveness of the learning environment, which is constituted by a community of scholars and learners.

This discussion overlaps methodological issues inasmuch as it was another influence on the choice to conduct the research using a different framework. At the beginning of this research project, when I decided to investigate the academic community and its relationship with scholarship I recognized that I would need to

engage a range of 'senses' to entice the fullest understanding of the complexity of the subject. Boyer's (1990) broadening of the definitions of scholarship was an epistemic challenge in that it called into question the ways in which institutions determine what will count as 'knowing' and 'knowledge'. Boyer (1990) suggested that re-conceptualising the framework for evaluating the professoriate would expand what would count as 'valuable', and what could be cognised as a constituent facet of a community of educators. It redefined and reconsidered the fundamental issues of what counts as scholarship in the modern university environment, and as Schön (1995) contends 'we cannot avoid questions of epistemology, since the new forms of scholarship he describes challenge the epistemology built into the modern research university' (p. 26). Investigating the topic demanded the same of the researcher, to challenge the existing framework by presenting an alternative.

Boyer's work was by no means isolated, and the wave of publications following '*Scholarship Reconsidered*' (1990) expressing similar sentiments is a testament to a genuine environment of apprehension concerning this subject. Cochran (1992) addressed the integration of scholarship and teaching by questioning the value of past rhetoric that has had little real impact on campus ideology and proposing that the 'publish or perish' debate was entirely the wrong issue. Cochran (1990) proposes a shake-up of HE in the US with a very practice-based text that proposes new frameworks for 'translating teacher scholar theory into action'. This, however, avoids the larger issues of the philosophical underpinnings that constitute contextual educational communities, and by ignoring the philosophies threatens to offer a 'solution', rather than tackling the problem in the first instance.

Boyer (1990) and Cochran (1992) agree on the evolution of HE, tracing the shifting priorities of the educational institution (university or college) from its historical roots in (European) ecclesiastical and civic leadership. Boyer (1990) succinctly suggests that higher education in the US has moved through three recognisable phases: the founding colonial colleges, the technical/scientific schools and the knowledge/research universities of today. Boyer (1990) considers:

Thus, in just a few decades, priorities in American higher education were significantly realigned. The emphasis on undergraduate education, which throughout the years had drawn its inspiration from the colonial college tradition, was being overshadowed by the European university tradition, with its emphasis on graduate education and research. Specifically, at many of the nation's four year institutions, the focus has moved from the student to the professoriate, from the general to the specialised education, and from loyalty to the campus to loyalty to the profession (p. 13)

Cochran (1992) draws similar comparisons on this evolutionary process:

The changing educational needs of our culture have evolved in response to social, economic, and political conditions. As a result, the educational outcomes desired have shifted from an emphasis on learning facts, to developing skills, and, more recently, to understanding concepts (p. 3)

He continues, proposing the challenge to 'move institutions that have become firmly entrenched in the values of the twentieth century (industrial age) into the twenty-first century (information age)' where a major faculty characteristic is 'teacher scholar'. It would seem valuable to draw a distinction between simply progressing the educator into a technologically superior position, and making a case for prioritising values so that the use of technological competence (pedagogical content knowledge) is integral within scholarly practice. This is similar in some ways to Ball's (1995) discussion in the field of educational studies about 'intellectuals or technicians' where he contends:

It is hardly novel to suggest that the discourses and knowledge structures of educational studies are shifting in response to the political and ideological repositioning of the academy and of the scholarship in the United Kingdom. ... However, the resultant changes in the practices of scholarship seem particularly marked and paradoxical in the field of educational studies. More specifically, what I have called a sorry state of educational studies seems to me to stem in part from both the wholesale appropriation of other 'unreflexive' and utilitarian languages and an internal lack of dynamism, exasperated by intellectual isolationism as educational studies pointedly ignores significant theoretical developments in cognate fields (p. 256)

This may well be a vital point, but it could be argued that within the changing landscape of technology and globalisation is a growth of inter-disciplinary, inter-community communication throughout the educational environment worldwide. Therefore, it follows that raising the profile of the debate concerning scholarship of teaching and learning should be considered as a global issue with a commonality of issues and application. There has been a considerable amount of research conducted in Australia, Sweden and Canada (Andresson and Roxå, 2004, Kreber, 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003; Kreber & Cranton, 1997; 2000; Ramsden and Martin, 1996; Trigwell et al, 2000) providing a diverse interpretation of 'Boyerian' concepts and locating them in other contexts. In the UK we trail somewhat in published research, and in some instances seem to be reluctant to progress domestic discussions at a pace consistent with the international debate. Unfortunately we seem so embedded in the political narrative of HE that the scant literature located on discussions of scholarship often reverts to other domestic dialogues and debates. To say that the UK has yet to fully engage with the philosophies promoted by Boyer is manifested in the frequent misquoting, not only of Boyer, but of other key authorities. Healey (2000) uses Boyer's framework in a confused discussion on teaching in HE as a discipline-based approach. I am not quite

sure we are talking about the same literature (as it is so frequently incorrectly referenced) but I am certain we have not engaged with the same philosophies. For example, Healey (2000) suggests that ‘an excellent place to develop the scholarship of teaching would be ‘to encourage colleagues to apply the same kinds of thought processes to their teaching as they do to their research’ (p. 183). He contends that if university teachers followed this dictum both the quality of student learning would improve and more scholarly teaching would ensue. I think this entirely misses Boyer’s redefining of scholarly practices, including the scholarship of teaching and learning, as he calls for a diversifying and broadening conception of what it means in practice. It requires the university teacher to reconsider how ‘scholarly’ practices might be restricting potential learning/teaching, to ask important questions about how scholarship *is* manifested, and how it *should* be performed. Boyer calls for educators to ‘rethink what it means to be a scholar’ and ascribing scholarly legitimacy to a diverse range of academic work (1990, p. 16). This cannot be done by applying the same existing claims to legitimacy (Healey’s existing practices) to new ways of valuing scholarly endeavour, unless the ‘scholarship of teaching and learning’ is intended simply as a *means* to implement policies.

Nicholls (2004) relates Boyer’s notions of the scholarship of teaching and learning to the UK academic community and the varying political agendas that might underlie re-examining its status. It is not always easy to equate her interpretation of Boyer’s (1980) work (referencing is again a problem), but as I noted earlier she links Boyer’s philosophies to Bourdieu’s notions of symbolic capital and cultural capital (1993, 1994). By Nicholl’s (2004) focussing on the language value rather than

examining the challenge Boyer offers she argues that scholarship is an abstract term, particularly when used without context. I would argue that Boyer (1990) is very careful to locate his framework in context, and that if it were implemented it would be highly unlikely to be able to be considered 'symbolic or cultural capital'. However, Nicholl's (2004) raises an interesting connecting of ideas, but they do not seem to address fundamental understandings about the conceptual framework before introducing complex arguments into discussions surrounding the issues in the UK.

Perhaps in itself, this is an indication of the pressure to publish, almost as it were, a turning back of the topic into the practices it seeks to reveal. For the educator, has *publishing* research become a more critical factor than considerations of value, quality or authenticity? The risk involved here, in diversifying research output, might allude to leaving the more certain, or productive research territory and entering areas of uncertainty and failure. If you are successfully publishing in a discipline within the 'research versus teaching' environment created within the social context of the institution, you are also meeting the requirement of the institution. Why risk leaving the high ground and entering the swamp (Schön, 1983). If an academic has hit a rich vein of research/publishing opportunities with a given topic, and it is publishing that counts highly in the institutional reward system, then a conspiracy of continuation will exist for as long as it remains unchallenged. The narrow focus of the universities on research productivity is in contrast to Boyer's (1990) expanded definition of scholarship covering as it does a much wider scope of activities. There is the dangerous possibility that 'scholarship' and 'the scholarship of teaching and learning' could become 'tacked

on' topics to validate research publications and provide a new avenue of discourse, with no profitable engagement with changing the landscape of values in HE.

There have been a few significant exceptions as Menand (1996) notes in his chapter on the limits of academic freedom (p. 3), but it is a subject that is clearly a double edged sword. This is one of the areas that I will render problematic, and be mindful of, as I explore this research topic and critically analyse the data.

### *Contextually Locating Boyer's Work*

It is important to critically and contextually examine Boyer's work, to locate it within a body of knowledge that has developed, and to try to make transparent the where, the why and the when. Most developed countries have institutions that excel in a particular field, and rightly command considerable respect from the educational community. *The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching* is considered in this category and was founded in 1905 "to do all things necessary to encourage, uphold and dignify the profession of teaching" (carnegiefoundation.org 2002). It has supported and encouraged much of the published (and unpublished) work of Boyer and his colleagues. It has an international reputation for making outstanding contributions to a variety of research and policy studies about teaching and declares:

With a focus on the scholarship of teaching, the Foundation seeks to generate discussion and promulgate sustainable, long-term changes in educational research, policy, and practice. Foundation programs are designed to foster deep, significant, lasting learning for all students and to improve the ability of education to develop students' understanding, skills and integrity. (carnegiefoundation.org 2002)

*The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching* has encouraged the expansion of the scholarly activity base in America concerned with this topic, and with

Carnegie scholars such as Glassick, Huber, Hutchins, and Shulman (and many more) publishing much of the definitive research. In 1998 the launching of the initiative known as The Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) was designed to provide a direct focus and supportive environment for ongoing research of the topic. In the UK, if the lack of published work is a measure, there seems a slight reluctance to embrace both the topic and the international context of CASTL, or perhaps it is due to the lack of a similar funding organisation (the closest being the Institute for Teaching and Learning?). Yet it would seem that it is a highly relevant topic that is of interest to the global educational community, and that it could offer a contribution to the UK educational environment. This may be partially due to what Andreson (2000) argues is a xenophobic lack of awareness of research and discussions being conducted globally, which has led to the debate on scholarship lagging a decade behind the international research. There is no self-funding organisation in the UK which we can comfortably relate and compare to CASTL, or indeed *The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching*, but any reluctance to legitimise the work of its academics can only be seen as isolationist and outdated. If a researcher is to consider the epistemic and ideological implications, then contextually locating published research is part of the process of understanding values and meanings and embarking on critical examination. This is why it is as important to acknowledge *who* is producing research, *where*, and with which/whose agenda it might be influenced. It is within these ideological constructs that incidental deception can occur, that without realising it the boundaries are imposed, a tacit control.

Identifying this process of discrimination is as important as using credible research techniques, or at least being transparent about the process and influences allowing other 'readers' to understand fully the contextual influences.

Over the past decade or more the theory has sharpened and developed to progress Boyer's concepts, however, much of the skeleton of his framework still remains very visible through the details that have now been added. To a great extent the subsequent research has been concentrated on building an understanding of the complexities of definitions, multiple meanings, overcoming resistance and practical applications. It has also been about finding a consensus of the differing interpretations.

#### *Defining the Meanings Contained in Boyer's Framework*

If this is to be a shared and systematic research journey I must clearly articulate a point from which both my reader and I can assume common ground. I will investigate Boyer's concepts, and trace the evolution as completely as I can to date. Each of the four dimensions will be critically examined. Therefore, at this point I want to take a series of steps back, to encourage a mutual understanding based on the literature published, and to discuss in depth what Boyer proposed as 'scholarship' and 'the scholarship of teaching' (not yet 'and learning'), and continue on to what has developed over the past decade and more as a theoretical proposition. This reflective action is intended to compile a detailed understanding about the evolution of the debate and its relevance to critical analysis of Boyerian philosophies. As indicated at the onset of this dissertation, this is not specifically a 'literature review', but this is a relevant place to discuss the applicable literature for the purpose of a coherent explanation of what is meant by 'scholarship' in HE, and more specifically, 'the scholarship of teaching and

learning'. I hope to avoid the 'dull reading' of regurgitated references (Locke et al, 1987 p. 58), but I understand that it is my task to convince my reader that I have thoroughly examined what has already been discussed in the literature. This is part of the process of 'mapping the terrain' that Maxine Greene (1995) illustrates as a valuable process in understanding issues:

educational philosophers have to discover their own intertextuality, extend their minds towards the horizons, shape and reshape their traditions. In the shaping, in the interpretation, in the reflection, the questions will multiply. Posing the questions, loving the questions, philosophers may open whatever doors there are (p. 7)

It also makes the flaws as transparent as possible, as well as the well-formed arguments that generate what might be considered the 'body of knowledge' on the subject. For this dissertation it is a reference point from which I hope we can continue with a clear path and travel in the same direction, acknowledging how we have got to this location. Assuming you cannot start from nowhere, it is essential to search for a common definition of the 'scholarship of teaching and learning' within the literature, but unrealistic to expect universal agreement on this contested and elusive phrase. 'Scholarship of teaching and learning' is both an axiom, and a topic, and is being variously defined within educational circles emerging with differing emphases and applications (Kreber, 2002; Nicholls, 2004).

Scholarship is not an obscure entity that can be applied at will to actions within the province of all academic professional activity, and it is not often found in isolation, just a tick placed within a box. Scholarship should be central to the academic profession. It should weave its way into the very heart of the lecturer's/professor's/educator's career making it impossible to interact with the

students who have come to learn, without engaging in a scholarly activity. As scholars, the relationship between teacher and learner should be interactive, as both must continue to learn in the reciprocal dynamic of engaging in the intellectual world, in the academic setting. The imperfections, ambiguities and political tensions are but a few of the contextual factors without which there would be no organic institution of higher learning, but a dried and dead landscape. This dialectic relationship is in direct opposition to the didactic, although I should clarify that this is in reference to philosophies not teaching techniques. Importantly, it is within the *practice* that scholarship is really nurtured, and the praxis (theory into practice) that demonstrates an awareness of the dynamics of the learning environment. The fact that what might be termed 'the scholarship of teaching and learning' has been difficult to define and contain within one definition/framework reveals its very character. The nature of the individual's artistic, passionate and emotional involvement within the subject contrasts with the institution's documentary evidence of scholarly practices, and how they might be assessed. It is these diverse elements that provide for a holistic consideration of defining both Boyerian scholarship and the broadened definitions that are being discussed and implemented in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is essential to acknowledge that 'worth' can only be derived from this area of research if the theory *can* be translated into actions, applications and integration, extended and transformed from the theoretical into the tangible and practiced. It would be ironic indeed if research into scholarship were to become just another topic of academic debate (a discipline) that contributes to the practitioners' portfolio of 'research productivity', and therefore become its own undoing.

### *How Boyer Defined Scholarship*

In tracing Boyer's path, it may be helpful to clarify the terminology. The term 'academy' broadly refers to the institutions that generate and encourage teaching and learning, knowledge and acquisition, the college, the university, the academy. The 'professoriate' are the educator, lecturer, teacher, academic that acts in a 'professional' capacity to form and inform understandings, often the inhabitants of the institutions, and the educational community. The next section is my understanding of Boyer's meanings, how other researchers have interpreted his work, and critical analysis of its importance within the educational community. This historical and contextual locating of his work is aimed at establishing shared meanings and topographic understandings. Boyer (1996) clearly articulated the dilemma:

The truth is that it became far more important for most professors to deliver a paper at the Hyatt in Chicago than to teach undergraduates back home. Frankly, I find this hugely ironic that in thinking about the priorities of the scholar, we give more attention to those who fly away and teach their peers than to those who stay at home and inspire future scholars in the classroom. It is an educational trend that must be examined (p. 31)

Boyer's (1990) new vision of scholarship derived from what he perceived as a need to 'clarify campus missions and relate the work of the academy more directly to the realities of contemporary life, within this 'the meaning of scholarship must be creatively reconsidered'. He recognises both a shift in priorities within educational institutions, exemplified by the tenure and promotion requirements, and the changing needs of the late twentieth, early twenty first century, including political and economic needs. With the aim of clarifying academic endeavours, he seeks to define scholarship as complex and multi-faceted, and to adopt an understanding of scholarly worth that

embraces the different functions within an institution of learning. A point to consider here is that ‘scholarship’, and Boyer’s framework, have raised discussions in many diverse disciplines (see Andresen, 2000; Bass, 1998; Bender & Gray, 1999; Bullard & Mclean, 2000; Diamond & Adam, 1995; Elton, 2000; Healey, 2000). Education and specifically ‘the scholarship of teaching and learning’ is the focus of this dissertation, but that does not mean the scholarship of teaching and learning should be viewed as exclusively within that domain. For example, medical institutions, health and social services, music schools and museums are just a few seeking to redefine scholarship within their communities.

In education, seeking to better define scholarship as a term leads to confronting the conflicting priorities that are expected of faculty/educators. This demands critical examination of the dichotomous relationship between research priorities and teaching priorities throughout the educational environment and the subjecting of *scholarship* to critical philosophical analysis.

Boyer (1990) distinguished four overlapping and interrelated dimensions that constitute and define ‘scholarship’. They are *discovery, integration, application and teaching*. These categories allow a creative discussion to take place about how to effectively encourage faculty growth in any one, or as he later expands, all four dimensions. He then determined six standards, those of *clear goals, appropriate procedures, adequate resources, effective communication, significant results, and careful and thoughtful self-critique* (Boyer 1996, p. 135) aiming to establish an assessment structure. Boyer’s proposes an inclusive framework in which his four forms of scholarship – discovery, integration, application and teaching can be constituted and

defined, then assessed and practiced. His framework should not be seen in terms of categories that contain only those specific characteristics but as headings under which overlapping discussion can take place and values be attributed, often incorporated into more than one section, and in areas where fields converge. For example, communicating the discovery of new knowledge through integration in teaching content and contextualising the application should mean you learn something new, you impart that knowledge in a way that has meaning, and that meaning is a shared experience. To examine further Boyer's framework we must look in turn at the four areas he identified:

1. The scholarship of discovery
2. The scholarship of integration
3. The scholarship of application
4. The scholarship of teaching

**Boyer's (1990) Dimensions of  
Scholarship**

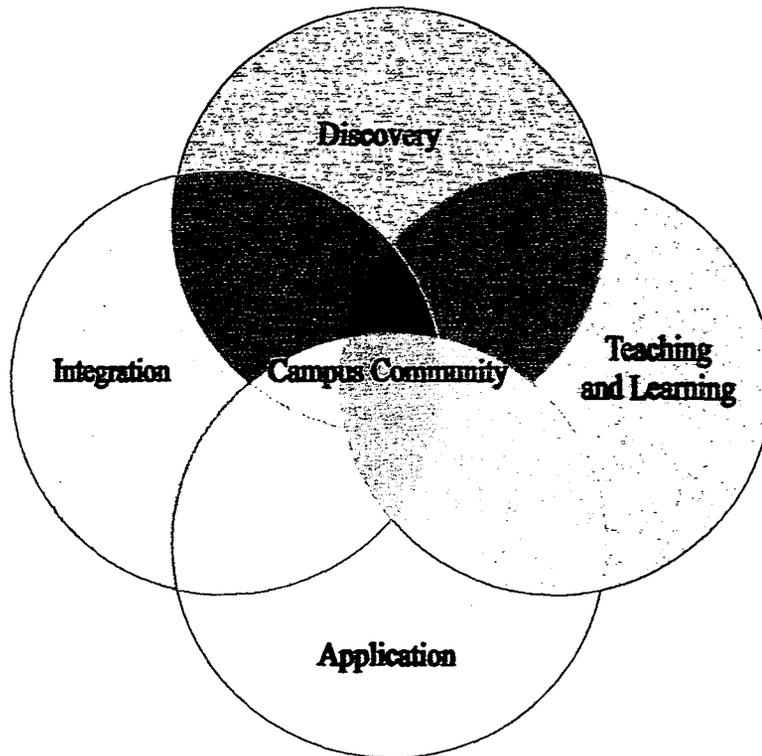


Figure 2: Boyer's (1990) multiple dimensions of scholarship

### *The Scholarship of Discovery*

As its heading suggests, the scholarship of discovery is at the cutting edge of knowledge. It is the description Boyer uses to cover the broad spectrum of research, of inquiry, of investigation, and of *discovery*, all in a quest to increase our understandings and discover new knowledge. It is the pursuit of knowledge and scholarly investigation (in all subjects/disciplines) that legitimises the academic institution, and without which knowledge would become stationary. It brings excitement and life to the dissemination of information by constantly contributing to the knowledge base and expanding horizons for all engaged. It includes innovative ways to see things 'differently'. In its most simplistic form it is *research*.

The scholarship of discovery would appear to reflect most recognisably the emphasis of most higher education institutions. It would be fair to say that almost all, if not all, educational institutions value discovery, in the form of research, even if they do not generate that research. This is apparent in the reward systems and emphasis that are now paramount. Under the banner of 'discovery' Boyer (1990) proposes an expansion of the narrow definition of research (e.g. from peer reviewed publications) to one that will encompass the need to pursue imaginative, open inquiry for diverse dissemination in a more holistic fashion. As an example, this contests the notion that only publications that appear in peer reviewed journals will count towards assessing an educator's professional value, and advocates inclusion of text books and books that communicate findings in the public arena (public press). For Boyer, this does not mean lowering standards, all 'research' should still meet the exacting standards set within and outside the profession, but expands the ways in which new knowledge and understandings can

be disseminated, and contests the self-governing nature of restricted practices. To some extent, it questions the autonomous character of universities, and the legitimisation of knowledge. In revisiting what is an appropriate forum for distributing knowledge it is possible to expand the possibilities to reach a greater audience and reward more diverse practices.

Therefore, in redefining what counts as research and constitutes the ‘scholarship of discovery’ Boyer challenges the epistemological foundations and critically analyses the processes that allow research to be counted. In one sense, the scholarship of discovery sets a benchmark for the other categories. The challenge is to balance more evenly the other forms of scholarship with that of ‘discovery’ and find purposeful ways of integrating a more complex understanding of what it means to be engaged in scholarly activity. One of the critical issues is recognition of the other definitions in a more equal way, a way of appreciating value in a more diverse academic environment. This relates closely to Polanyi’s (1967) ‘overlapping academic neighbourhoods’ which expands on the notion of blurred boundaries and interdisciplinary research as ways of expanding knowledge and reducing the confines of prescriptive academia. It encourages brave and imaginative thoughts and actions in research and contests linear knowledge and authoritarian actions. When the scholarship of discovery is located as part of a larger whole it becomes one of the strands that connects the researcher to the campus community, including the students, and the outside world. It has with it recognition of the value of diversity and inclusivity, whilst still aspiring to the highest standards and strictest protocols of academic research. The challenge is to handle ‘discovery’ in such a way that almost anything is possible, but not devalue or dilute it

so that confusion and disorder obstruct progress in all its forms. From an historical perspective, it challenges the present movement of the many modern universities towards valuing research output above other interests, and measuring their success accordingly. Boyer's (1990) framework clearly outlines a balance, and by encompassing research under the broader concept of *discovery* and then making it only a part of a larger whole, he reduces the emphasis.

In summary, *the scholarship of discovery* closely aligns to 'research', but to research in a broad conceptual way. It can be the generating of new knowledge, new insights, deeper understandings...it is inquiry in infinite ways. It can be interdisciplinary and collaborative across professional groups, and shared amongst the academic community and a wider audience. It runs a strand through the other dimensions and overlaps especially in the scholarship of teaching and learning. The scholarship of discovery at its most passionate (creative, literary, artistic) contributes to the intellectual climate of a university bringing meaning to the pursuit of extending human knowledge.

#### *The Scholarship of Integration*

Integration is the use of knowledge in a contextual sense, and is characterised by the interdisciplinary assimilation of that knowledge. The scholarship of integration takes isolated facts and asks what meaning they have, what purpose, what value 'putting them in perspective...making connections across disciplines, placing the specialities in a larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way' (Boyer 1990, p. 18). It is where purpose, application, interpretation and context become central, making connections with practice and praxis as a link in a chain. Boyer contends that this

tangible link is where *purpose* becomes apparent as it relates to the personal and social context. The work has a practical purpose and is contextually relevant and/or is aesthetically valuable. An essential ingredient of the scholarship of integration is the ability to reduce isolation and fragmentation in the disciplines and to avoid artificial segregation of knowledge. Glassick et al (1997) identify Boyer's definition of integration as making 'connections within and between the disciplines, altering the contexts in which people view knowledge and offsetting the inclination to split knowledge into ever more esoteric bits and pieces' (p. 9). In other instances the picture grows from the personal interpretation of knowledge to the understanding of what it might mean in an expanded globalised sense, the micro to the macro. This process of putting the theories into practice, or praxis, can be as logical as quantum physics, or as subjective as the potter's art of a raku glaze on a ceramic pot. There is also the crossing of invisible boundaries, the encouraging of interdisciplinary applications, and the rejection of clearly delineated subjects that are restrictive by nature. Perhaps the potter will employ materials derived from scientists working in an unrelated area. In some senses it looks for *possibilities* through purposeful actions, not dissimilar to Greene's (1978) philosophy of 'wide-awakeness' that relates to multiple perspectives, diversity and contradictions – an imaginative awareness. The aim is to promote a learning (and in this case include teaching) environment that enables learners to become attentive, perceptive and 'wide-awake' to the possibilities. Boyer (1990) claims:

By integration, we mean making connections across the disciplines, placing specialties in the larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way, often educating non-specialists, too. (sic)...The distinction we are drawing here between "discovery" and "integration" can be best understood, perhaps, by the questions posed. Those engaged in discovery ask, "What is to be known, what is yet to be

found?” Those engaged in integration ask, “What do the findings mean? Is it possible to interpret what’s been discovered in ways that provide a larger, more comprehensive picture? (p. 18-19)

It is also possible to draw a distinction here between Boyer’s statement and how it relates to the philosophical debate about research methods. There is connection between Boyer’s *discovery* and *integration* and the research methodology needed to investigate educational practices, and specifically scholarship practices. It illuminates the problematic areas in conducting research *in* and *on* this topic by illuminating the need for a ‘comprehensive understanding’. For example, the positing of qualitative versus quantitative research methodologies, and their contested values, mimics the ways Boyer suggests ‘discovery’ and ‘integration’ are determined. Quantitative methods engage almost exclusively in data or empirical findings, and seek to find answers to the question/answer dialectic. Qualitative methods often deal with the more murky, subjective ‘so what does this mean’ and to whom? How might it feel? This methodology can rarely determine widely generalisable data or ‘absolute truths’. In making this comparison I am hoping to illustrate that within the discourse of Boyer’s (1990) text he is advocating an epistemic shift. Boyer’s (1990) framework and the research methodology I have devised focus on the interrelatedness of praxis. Indeed, as with Boyer’s ‘overlapping dimensions’ of scholarship, we are now seeing a blurring of research methodologies in theory and practice. This dimension of *integration* is particularly pertinent when considering publication of research, where Boyer disputes the existing narrow definitions of ‘what counts’. He promotes inclusion of textbooks, articles in forms other than refereed journals, ‘popular writing’, and publications in non-academic outlets as valid integration of knowledge. He considered a very diverse

dissemination of knowledge paramount, and would I'm sure have included the internet as a fine resource. The assessment of these various 'integrations', and how they are manifested can be just as rigorous, but it needs an expanded definition of scholarly endeavour in the first instance in order to value the wider implications.

Therefore, in summarizing Boyer's (1990) framework *the scholarship of discovery* and *the scholarship of integration* overlap with common aims of expanding knowledge in such a way that where possible it can connect thoughts and actions, stimulate students, have a contextual relevance, and have endless possibilities. The scholarship of integration seeks to synthesise and interpret research into a larger intellectual picture, and thereby find its contextual relevance and meaning.

The scholarship of integration essentially finds new ways, across the disciplines, of interpreting otherwise fragmented research so that new insights can combine disparate practices and brings fresh, imaginative contextual meanings.

### *The Scholarship of Application*

In Boyer's (1990) framework, the scholarship of application draws upon the first two definitions to find a merit of its own. It is at times difficult to determine a clear distinction between 'application' and 'integration', but I will attempt to interpret the differences as they are proposed in Boyer's work and expand later on how others have continued the development in this complex area.

As previously discussed, the scholarship of discovery is closely connected to the process of research, and the scholarship of integration contextually locates that work and tries to give it meaning and perspective. The scholarship of application conjoins these first two definitions into the area of 'use'. It looks for the *application* of the

knowledge, what problems may be remedied, what *use* can be made of knowledge and understandings that have developed? Boyer's (1990) scholarship of application asks what are we to do with what we know. How can knowledge be responsibly applied to consequential problems? How can it be helpful to individuals, as well as institutions and society? This is not to restrict 'actions' to only those that will prove to have tangible worth, but to serve as a dimension within which questions may be asked of the value, application, relevance etc. How will this work affect one, a few, or many? How can a specialist field of knowledge be related to the needs of societies, if at all? What will evolve from the scholarly activities that have been engaged? What context is relevant, again, does it have the potential to affect none, one, many, or does it have a global magnitude? It should be in the scholarship of application that the dynamic process of theory into practice, or *praxis*, is apparent and tangible, and moves beyond existing applications of knowledge into imaginative and unexpected areas and wider applications. There are obviously differing intensities of purpose to be found in different subjects, the purpose of an Arts programme will differ from that of a Natural Science programme; even so, scholarly integrity should be found in the *application*. Boyer's 'scholarship of application' intends to draw on the other categories in such a way as to emphasise the 'worth' of human knowledge in all its forms, and concentrate on its value to the world outside of the educational institution. This covers a very broad spectrum of 'worth', for example: aesthetic, practical, societal, personal, political, or institutional. In many ways it is similar to what has become known in educational communities as *service*, which can cover anything from committee work to civic councils, but is somewhat external to activities within say the university setting. It

might involve work with related committees, and it may stem from a desire to invest back into a discipline, or it may be investigating new ways to connect otherwise separate groups. However, what Boyer (1990) is proposing is valuing ‘application’ on an equal footing with, say, research (Boyer’s discovery) providing it still meets the rigours traditionally associated with any professional academic work. The scholarship of application values the knowledge that is nurtured within the institution and expounds the virtues of applying that knowledge in some meaningful way, whether that is on a macro or micro scale. Boyer notes:

The *scholarship of application*, as we define it here, is not a one-way street. Indeed, the term itself may be misleading if it suggests that knowledge must first be “discovered” and then “applied”. The process we have in mind is far more dynamic. New intellectual understandings can arise out of the very act of application – whether in medical diagnosis, serving clients in psychotherapy, shaping public policy, creating architectural design, or working with the public schools. In activities such as these, theory and practice vitally interact, and one renews the other (p. 23)

This definition applies value in its broadest meaning to *application*, acknowledging that it is not always obvious what use may be found for a knowledge gained, or that all that constitutes knowledge is widely applicable. However, if it is to fall within the boundaries of the scholarship of application then it must fulfil some part of the requirements Boyer has defined.

The essential qualities of the scholarship of application are the ability to relate the theories and discovery/research to every day life, to find imaginative ways to use what we know and understand – to find its context. It is a dynamic process through which theory and practice interact (praxis).

### *The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*

Boyer (1990) started by identifying this dimension as ‘the scholarship of teaching’ but it has since evolved through a continuation of his work to include ‘learning’. It is apparent through all that he writes that this is the intention, and I will therefore use *teaching* and *learning* as the basis for this dimension. The heading is a starting point for the complex and interactive process of scholarly activity that concentrates on the practice of communicating knowledge in a dialectic discourse between participants. It should be at the heart of the work of any higher education institution, as it is only when the work of an educator/researcher is understood or interpreted by others (contested or validated) that it can be said to be externally valuable. It is through intellectual engagement with a community of ‘others’ that understandings and knowledge become consequential, and although an argument could be made for the individual and isolated learner, it does not find a place in Boyer’s (1990) definition of scholarship of teaching and learning. It would be easy to fall into the trap of defining the scholarship of teaching and learning as just what educators’ *do* when they interact with their class of students successfully. It would also be a mistake to conclude that it is simply a classification under which acts involving teaching methods and actions are defined and validated.

It may help the to turn to the growing body of knowledge concerned with conceptualising the scholarship of teaching and learning (Boyer, 1990; Brookfield, 1995b; Cochran, 1992; Glassick, 2000; Glassick, Huber & Maeroff, 1997; Huber & Morreale, 2002; Hutchins, 2000; Kreber & Cranton, 1997; Kreber, 2000; Kreber et al, 2001; Paulsen & Feldman, 1995; Richlin, 1993b; Rice, 1992; Shulman, 2004). The

discussion circles around how it is defined, its major characteristics, components and values, and attempts to find unity in a common understanding in the modern university setting. It is proving to be one of the most contested areas of Boyer's work generating confused interpretations of what exactly it encompasses. Kreber (2002) notes that 'the concept remains devoid of a unified definition' (p. 93), however, through her research she considers that understanding is growing and that diverse opinions and some ambiguity are not in themselves negative qualities. However, because it is a contested discourse, it can easily be interpreted differently and become confused, for example separating and differentiating between 'scholarship of teaching' and teaching itself (or scholarly teaching). Although, it should rightly retain the essential 'connected' relationship, it must claim a distinct character of its own if it is to be evaluated. This area of distinction becomes especially important when it comes to assessment, when a capacity to determine and measure achievements and outcomes is paramount. It is important in this study when concentrating on the scholarship of teaching and learning to locate it within the framework designed by Boyer (1990). As previously stated Boyer's four dimensions of scholarship as he defined were intended as overlapping and interrelated. Boyer (1996) later determined six appraisal standards common to all four dimensions which might be usefully used as a framework for assessment. These are discussed in the following section.

It is essential that in concentrating this research on the scholarship of teaching and learning I do not isolate it before it has been adequately explained within the framework. In contextually locating this study, and in the practice of researching, I am aware of the need to foreground understandings and establish differing positions. I have

found it valuable to consistently employ reflexive actions, especially when encountering areas of this research that require me to question assumptions about meanings and interpretations. In keeping with that aim, I will expand on the more recent discussions of Boyer's vision of the scholarship of teaching and learning. It is also important to clarify that in my reflexive actions I am critically aware that *prior knowing* could influence how, when and what I research, that I must be mindful of such actions issues as expectancy, coherence or familiarity which might produce research full of assumptions.

#### *Refining Discussions about the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*

It is not about method (teaching), nor is it about doing (practice). As Huber (2001) puts it 'it is not just teaching, it is teaching gone "meta". It is teaching that involves inquiry into learning and that is being made public in a way that can be critiqued, reviewed, built upon, and improved' (p. 20). This establishes some fundamental questions, it asks us to engage curiosity about teaching and learning as a subject in its own right, and see it as something that can be creatively investigated and researched, transmitted and transformed.

It is about understanding pedagogical function and procedures and how those relate within the act of being scholarly. Fashionable teaching methods will come and go (usually derived from research into teaching practices!), but a deep understanding about the values of teaching and learning between the student and the educator and how that process may be most effectively engaged should remain as a core objective. When teaching is defined as an act of scholarship it must challenge the preconception that it is 'just something that is done' as part of the package of operating within the academic

institution. It becomes an area of academic endeavour or *scholarship* only when there is a commitment to pedagogical excellence and there is recognition that knowing and learning are communal acts. Within that are fields of excellence, such as thorough subject content knowledge, teaching methods, understanding student learning and intellectual engagement with the larger community of teaching and learning. In addition, teaching has an inspirational role, encouraging new ways of thinking in both the student and the educator and stimulating further generations of inquirers. The creative nature of excellence in teaching is intrinsic to the growth of knowledge. It is the link between what is known, what might be discovered, and how it might be shared with others. The scholarship of teaching and learning weaves through the other three dimensions of scholarship, connecting *within* discovery, integration, and application, but it should be identifiable as a central intellectual function in its own right within an academic institution. In Boyer's (1990) opinion:

Teaching is also a dynamic endeavour involving all the analogies, metaphors, and images that build bridges between the teacher's understanding and the student's learning. Pedagogical procedures must be carefully planned, continuously examined and relate directly to the subject taught...With this vision, great teachers create a common ground of intellectual commitment. They stimulate active, not passive, learning and encourage students to be critical, creative thinkers, with the capacity to go on learning after their college days are over (p. 24)

This vision of the scholarship of teaching and learning represents a consolidation of theory and practice, and an expanded notion of good teaching practice...in essence, it is not sufficient to downgrade teaching to a practice that is not critically examined and problematised. You cannot be said to be engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning through effective teaching technique, or even effective outcomes. It becomes a scholarly act when the teacher fully engages in

conveying, transforming and broadening knowledge in a contextually relevant way with the student, and integrates theory, practice and learning as a dynamic act of mutual importance. It cannot remain theory-bound, but must become validated through the practice, action and words.

It is not dependant on teaching style, it may be that the teacher of a statistics class may utilise a very didactic teaching method, with a subject that would be very difficult to learn through say 'discovery learning'. But, it is to be found in how that teacher relates to the communal act of knowing and learning, and how he or she values the process as part of a holistic process of scholarly activity. The scholarship of teaching and learning can easily be confused with the processes of teaching and learning, and it is important to clarify the difference in order to progress the theory.

To summarize the scholarship of teaching and learning as envisioned by Boyer (1990), and subsequently advanced in the academic debate, it must possess several core qualities (whilst recognising that different disciplines have differing pedagogies) that are also found in the other dimensions, especially *discovery*. The scholarship of teaching and learning must include critical peer review and evaluation, it must be public, and it must be accessible for exchange in the scholarly community, although not necessarily the conventional avenues. Although it is difficult to find a consensus of opinion on all the attributes that constitute its meaning the central themes mentioned above broadly encompass examining theory and practice *in* and *on* teaching and learning.

In concluding the examination of the four forms of scholarship that are identified by Boyer (1990) it could be seen as a palate of colours, to be blended in an

infinite possibility of shades, and dependant upon each other to create a picture of worth. To a large extent it depends on the talent of the artist to create something really special, and for the 'gazer' to assign a value. However, in defining and attributing value to all four areas it opens the possibilities for creativity and diversity of talent to flourish in an environment of encouragement and nurture, but provides a framework to avoid chaos.

*From Scholarship Reconsidered to Assessing Scholarship*

Boyer (1996) proposed a framework for assessing the four forms of scholarship which he describes:

When I put all this together I can imagine a grid in which the four forms of scholarship discovery, integration, application, and teaching – are placed horizontally across the top: running vertically down the sides are the six standards by which all forms of scholarship might be measured: clear goals, appropriate procedures, adequate resources, effective communication, significant results, and careful and thoughtful self-critique (p. 135)

These standards are effectively an assessment tool, whether that is self assessment, peer assessment or institutional judgements. Taken as a package Boyer (1990, 1996) has reassessed the campus, and redefined the roles of the institutions and their constituents. Hutchins and Shulman (1999) consider the epistemological and ideological shifts that need to take place to encourage the traditional university campus into new territory. In adopting new characteristics and broader concepts of scholarship it is impossible to keep the same methods of assessment, whether those are the tracking of graduation rates, student attendance, and staff retention or promotion regulations. The epistemic shift requires a 'different' way of thinking and has to include questions such as 'what are our students really learning? What do they understand deeply? What

kind of human beings are they becoming – intellectually, morally, in terms of civic responsibility? (Hutchins and Shulman, 1999) These are not just questions isolated within the scholarship of teaching and learning but course through the heart of a university. The institution also needs to include questions about the significance of bringing knowledge to different forums, to, as Shulman (1989) describes, take learning seriously and legitimise more than one kind of research, one kind of scholarly activity, one kind of teaching and infusing into the academic culture a commitment to a broad community of scholars.

In returning to the six standards identified by Boyer (1990), other researchers have continued the process of defining the characteristics proposed for achieving and assessing scholarly practice. The six standards are common to all four dimensions of scholarship, although the balance may vary between and within dimensions. Glassick et al (1997) asks a number of pertinent questions to help characterize each standard:

- *Clear Goals* – Does the scholar state the basic purposes of his or her work clearly? Does the scholar define objectives that are realistic and achievable? Does the scholar identify important questions in the field?
- *Adequate preparation* – does the scholar show an understanding of existing scholarship in the field? Does the scholar bring the necessary skills to his or her work? Does the scholar bring together the resources necessary to move the project forward?
- *Appropriate methods* – Does the scholar use methods appropriate to the goals? Does the scholar apply effectively the methods selected? Does the scholar modify procedures in response to changing circumstances?

- *Significant results* – Does the scholar achieve the goals? Does the scholar’s work add consequentially to the field? Does the scholars work open additional areas for further exploration?
- *Effective presentation* – Does the scholar use a suitable style and effective organisation to present his or her work? Does the scholar use appropriate forums for communicating work to its intended audiences? Does the scholar present her or his message with clarity and integrity?
- *Reflective Critique* – Does the scholar critically evaluate his or her own work? Does the scholar bring the appropriate breadth of evidence to her or his critique? Does the scholar use evaluation to improve the quality of future work? (p. 36)

It might be helpful for me to mention here that this critique of Boyer’s standards was another of the influences on my decision to employ my spiral methodology. It was under the heading of ‘appropriate methods’ that I questioned the frameworks I had found available for my use. In particular, I thought it would be important to be able to ‘modify’ or adapt to changing circumstances or evolving issues within this topic. The redefining of scholarship through Boyer’s philosophies seemed to demand a rethinking in the way any research on the topic could be usefully engaged.

Returning to the defined standards, a further interpretation of these standards and proposals of how they might form a workable structure can be found in Glassick, Huber & Maeroff, (1996) and Braxton, Luckey and Helland (2002).

As stated in my research question, my chosen topic of Boyer’s scholarship narrowed to focus on the dimension of the scholarship of teaching and learning, and traces through to the standard of *self-critique*. If Boyer’s broadened dimensions of scholarship had

already been thoroughly discussed and researched in the academic community, then I would perhaps have felt more confident of being able to assume a common understanding of his definition of scholarship, or at least familiarity. However, it is a contested area, and the scholarship of teaching and learning is still evolving as a recognised topic of research (Atkinson, 2001). Therefore, to leap into researching a single standard seemed likely to be too disconnected to well-recognised conceptual frameworks, too great a leap.

Examination of the sixth standard, self-critique (also interpreted as reflective practice) remains a desired objective, but it will only become realised if the 'landscape' within which it is embedded can be successfully negotiated.

#### *Critical Analysis of Boyer's Definitions in the Postmodern Educational Landscape*

The international debate on the critical analysis of notions of scholarship can be found in many disciplines, many locations, and at varying degrees of development. For example, in the US, a large number of campuses have reviewed their standards for tenure and promotion, which involves assessing how they prioritise 'scholarship' and attribute value. An increasing number have looked to Boyer's framework for guidance. In Australia and Canada the discussion has been developing over a number of years. In the UK the focus has been more on discussions surrounding improving student learning and continuing the debate over teaching versus research. This is slowly evolving in the UK into examination of the definitions of scholarship and how educators are rewarded for their work within educational institutions. For example, the UK is in its fifth year of hosting an International Conference on the Scholarship Teaching and Learning (2005).

It is commonly acknowledged that this is a catalyst for opening the debate on the uneasy balance that exists for educators in universities between research and teaching,

between what counts as academic endeavour and what is sidelined. There are a number of publications following Boyer's work (Braxton, Luckey & Helland, 2002; Glassick et al 1997; Hutchins & Shulman, 1999; Kreber, 2000; Shulman, 1993 etc.) that argue for the need for scholarship to be recognised as having multiple meanings and to be defined in such a way that all components are recognised, appreciated and rewarded. This in itself strongly aligns it with postmodern philosophies. Using the term 'postmodernism' seems fraught with dangers as it rejects much of the fixed definitions or categorisations to be found in other research paradigms. It is itself an epistemological challenge and should therefore be helpful in awakening fresh ways of thinking and locating this research and the work of Boyer and others. Postmodernism rejects the idea that a unitary answer can be found to many research questions and embraces theories such as the constitutive effects of language, text/discourse and interpretation and subjectivity. It is important to differentiate between postmodernism and post-structuralism as they are not considered synonymous, although a single definition of either should be resisted as defeating the purpose of the intellectual positioning. The postmodern paradigm encompasses an extended post-structural position, going beyond the boundaries of say discussions of language and textuality and embracing considerations of power, authority, hegemony and social constructs. As all these issues are considerations in conducting this research project it is valuable to acknowledge and utilise all that postmodern thinking may have to offer as a paradigmatic/cognitive framework. Slattery (1997) presents a convincing argument that the postmodern university environment must expand research methodologies to encourage multiple forms of representation. He says 'the analysis of the complexity of postmodern theories requires multiple voices, contextual reflection, and

expanded illustrations in order to move towards new modes of research beyond traditionalist, progressive, or reconstructionist philosophies' (p. 2).

This discussion of the postmodern environment is relevant because, in a sense, what is proposed by Boyer is a new paradigm of scholarship, a new way of thinking about the role of the professoriate, and a change in the way good practice is recognised in all its forms. It finds a natural home in the postmodern era. Schön (1995) argues that this new definition of scholarship demands a new epistemology that challenges the existing frameworks built into the modern research university.

Within this paradigmatic shift are considerations of policy, theory and practice, in the actions of those who form the university community; and also how power and legitimacy are supported in the infrastructure through such issues as funding and policy. Redefining scholarship encourages a wider debate than just the linear concerns of how scholarship is categorised, it must include discussions of epistemologies, ideologies and ontological beliefs. It must tackle *why* we think we know, how we think we know, what we mean, and whom it best serves. If an essential factor in implementing a broader recognition of scholarship is to encourage a scholarly approach to teaching and learning, and specifically to better facilitate student learning, then transparency in the methods of transmitting knowledge, in the structure and the practice, become important. What is valued, and by whom, become questions of significance and shape both the problems and the possible solutions.

The challenge above was clearly voiced by Schön (1995), and it has been influential in developing and locating my research project. In tackling these issues, and returning to the need for a more responsive methodological framework for conducted the research, it became apparent in part through engagement with the postmodern turn in academia.

## **The Research Project**

*This section will return to the initial research question and how I hope it will start to provide the insights into educators' perceptions of 'the scholarship of teaching and learning', and specifically the element of 'self-critique'. It describes the method used for gathering the data in the first phase. Analysis of the data is interwoven with discussions of the relevant authoritative literature previously discussed. The final section deals with what new insights and understandings we have gained through this initial 'first phase' and how to progress with the refocused next phase. I also hope to be successful in retaining as a methodological priority the need to be epigrammatic with an eye to future dissemination through research publications.*

To reinstate the topic of this research, the project has emerged from Boyer's (1990) '*Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*'. The research question is:

- What are higher education educators' perceptions of Boyer's (1990) multiple dimensions of scholarship, focussing on the scholarship of teaching and learning and its relationship to Boyer's (1996) standard of 'careful and thoughtful self-critique' (p. 135) in higher education practice?

This first research phase was intended to be the most widely exploratory, and necessitated gathering and analyzing higher educators' opinions, experiences and perceptions within a contextually relevant setting. The broad intention of this study was to increase our knowledge of higher educators' perceptions of scholarship. The more specific focus was to examine the dimension of 'scholarship of teaching and learning' as identified in Boyer's (1990) work on scholarship, and a final sharpening of focus was on his standard of 'careful and thoughtful self-critique' (reflective practices) considered

integral to practicing the scholarship teaching and learning.

This broadly encompasses the essence of this research phase; the locating of my frame of reference, the narrowing of the focus to some degree, and concluding with very specific attention concentrated on a practice, that of self-critique. The relationship of these defined areas is apparent in Boyer's (1990) own structuring of inter-related and overlapping scholarly dimensions, and therefore provides an interesting pattern to echo.

I want to include for a moment the thinking that surrounded and impacted on how I proceeded with the research question, and how I was conscious that it would be easy to unwittingly adopt an existing stance whilst believing I was being original and creative. To avoid this I persistently dismantled structures that presented themselves as *fait accompli* and questioned my assumptions (where I could recognise them).

As previously stated, the methodology is responsive, reflexive, creative and malleable. These allowances make room for the research to move in unexpected directions, for the possibility of subsequent phases to evolve *from*, and *through*, the data and critical analysis. This study in its entirety could be considered to fall within the category of naturalistic enquiry, as it is a natural setting, a community habitat. It might also be categorised as phenomenological research as it concentrates on perceptions and on *knowing*, *experience* and *awareness*. I am using these titles and classifications very warily as I am conscious that they may prevent me 'doing research differently' and that in assuming a classification I am fixing a meaning that I may not intend. Perhaps a demonstration of the knowledge of existing frameworks and how they have functioned is a valuable attribute? I am seeking a balance here between demonstrating a thorough understanding of existing frameworks (and how they function) as a part of the requirements of this dissertation, and being able to construct/reconstruct a creative new structure. It becomes more complicated and problematic when I suspect that in fulfilling all the requirements of the existing categories in traditional research practices, including evaluation, I may be restricting my own practices to those that are 'given'. It may be that

I dip in and out of conflicting practices, those that share little common ground but exist as offerings of *other ways of seeing*. Carspecken (1996) describes this dilemma as like a large room full of noisy people all talking about (qualitative) research in cliques and using distinctive jargon. He says:

there are new flashy groups heatedly discussing “constructivism”, “postmodernism”, and “critical” research. Most of these people are talking about qualitative social research, but they disagree with each other on such basic issues as the nature of reality, the nature of knowledge, and the concept of truth. You cannot get more basic than that! (p. 1)

Carspecken (1996) calls emphatically for clarity in research, to lose some of the ‘neologisms’, to recognize the role of the researcher in their research and the influence of society. These issues are important to discuss at this point. Failing to acknowledge the expected categorisation of a research project could be seen as ignorance of the existing choices. However, by exposing my rationalisation, the choices I have deliberately made, I hope I will succeed in defending areas where a ‘difference’ of approach is apparent. In posing the questions of where this research sits, in opening up the otherwise unexposed discourses, I can at least reveal a deliberate choice of stance. I have discussed in some detail my reasoning for conducting this research using a methodology I have designed. The following section will locate the first phase of the study and describe the method used for conducting the research.

### **Phase One**

*The discussion centres on a suitable method to gather data and the eventual choice of an electronic (email) questionnaire distributed to a HE Education Department. It includes relevant connections to the literature in describing a detailed picture of the how, why and when to conduct the research.*

In my process of inquiry in phase one I want to continue to make explicit much that often remains tacitly understood in researching. I will discuss my dilemmas and uncertainties, the practical decisions, and the exploring that is built into the act of conducting research in educational settings. In testing out my methodology this *in action* stage has required considerable flexibility as I have searched for a compatible method that will compliment the framework. I have included areas of failure as they contributed to the choices made. In the following section I will be interpreting other peoples' experiences, their voices, and finding a way to understand the discourses as they relate to this study and the research question. It is a creative practice. I will be re-forming and shaping the words through the process of understanding meanings, but essentially the *story* to be told must remain as accurately and truthfully retold as possible. This has run a strand throughout the process and featured as fundamental requirement, it is the desire to achieve a faithfully retold narrative.

#### *Understanding the Complex Nature of Conducting Research in HE*

Denzin & Lincoln (1994) discuss the influences of personal outlook and the socio-economic forces or hegemonic influences on the reconstruction of data presented as research. Some others scholars argue that interpretive research leaves too much room for unexamined interpretive frameworks (those of the researcher) in making sense of data (Brown & Dowling, 1998). This offers a valuable reminder of the complexities and contrasting positions that exist before conducting research has begun. Of the many questions that arose before I decided on a course of action, many were predictably simplistic. How can I start to get answers to my question? What group of people will be interested enough to answer my questions? Where can I conduct this research? How easy will it be to analyse? Can I succeed at my task?

I found that the questions multiplied when they were framed within the context of doctoral research, and the additional expectations of the 'others' that constitute the educational community. The progress from uncertainty to action was encouraged by

discussions with Lewis and Hayes (2002) that encouraged and motivated action without imposing implicit structures.

I have alluded to the more troubling questions of *how* to conduct the research involving the philosophical positioning. These discussions influenced my choice of the method of data collection, and who, if anyone would count this as a valuable contribution to our knowledge about educational practices. If I wished to gain a statistical analysis of opinions about scholarship then I would be well advised to employ a large scale survey with something along the lines of a Likert analytical framework for analysis (Likert, 1932). This would, in theory, provide valid, generalisable results if conducted professionally. However, this did not seem to offer the insightful details I am seeking and could easily miss the revealing undercurrents of assumptions about educational policies and practices. For example, it would be very difficult to design a scored question that asked about personal interpretation of meanings of the scholarship of teaching and learning. Further investigations (Brown & Dowling, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Hollaway & Jefferson, 2000; Keeves & Lakomski, 1999; Silverman, 1994; Steier, 1991) for a suitable way to conduct this research phase led me to make several fundamental choices:

- To conduct this research in the US (United States of America) - as a practical choice this could provide an interesting comparison for similar studies in the UK (United Kingdom) or elsewhere.
- To use a focussed email survey that could effectively reach my audience and allow for considerable narrative discourses and the emergence of disparate opinions, should they exist.
- To consider my options for analysis, and integrate the framework in the designing of the instrument.
- To conduct a pilot study

The following section expands on my detailed choices and decision-making in implementing a method of data collection.

### **Method Phase One**

#### *Context*

The choice of location for my research was based on accessibility, suitability, and feasibility. This study was conducted within what might be considered a very typical institution of higher education in the US. There are more than 3,500 institutions of higher education in the US. Of these more than two thousand offer Associate and/or Bachelor degrees, but do not customarily offer education through to doctoral or PhD level. The universities that are committed to offering programs through to doctoral level are classified according to the number of graduates, the funding provided, the priority given to research and the status historically awarded. The university involved in this research project does not have any major characteristics that render comparisons problematic. The university is located in a semi-rural area with a mixed economy ranging through low income farm workers to high income medical specialists working in the regional hospital. The university is a coeducational state university and the third largest in its state. It is a doctoral granting institution offering baccalaureate, masters, specialist and doctoral degrees in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional fields including medicine. The total number of undergraduate, graduate, and first professional students enrolled at this institution at the time of this study was 21,756. The total number of undergraduate and graduate teaching staff was 1,225. This demographic makes it a highly suitable for my research purposes as comparisons to other institutions (should they be desired) could be relatively straightforward.

As previously discussed, I wanted to be able to target a group of respondents who would be contextually located in an environment involved in issues concerned with the scholarship debate, especially the scholarship of teaching and learning. I did not want to

obtain perceptions and opinions from the entire community of scholars that populate a university, but rather, I wanted to target a specific group who are embedded in both the theory and the practice associated with the scholarship and teaching and learning. I considered it a priority to locate a cohort of participant who could at least be expected to be familiar with the terminology I would be using, if not the full concepts. The conceptual understanding forms a central question, and I did not think it would be fruitful to sow my questions on arid ground.

The following sections give a more detail discussion of my rationale and illustrate when and where choices have been made.

### *The Choice of Subjects*

As with many researchers, I acknowledge that I was encouraged to use this group of participants in part by the ease of access. It does not compromise the quality of the research, and I have no special relationship with this department. The subjects of this study were higher education educators in the College of Education within the university. As previously mentioned, I decided to target a structured or ‘purposeful’ population as this research question is clearly contextually located in HE and has existing boundaries. This delimiting of the sample is a conscious and justifiable action as it clearly made sense to select the subjects who may be able to answer my questions and who were located in the culture I was examining (Borg and Gall, 1989). Although in recent years research methods have diversified, Marshall and Rossmans’ (1989) advice regarding selecting a sample group is still timely and straightforward. They suggest:

The research design should include a rationale for the selection of a certain setting in an organization or the selection of a certain group of people as subjects in the research. The ideal site is where (1) entry is possible; (2) there is a high probability that a rich mix of many of the processes, people, programs, interactions, and/or structures that may be part of the research question will be present; (3) the researcher can devise an appropriate role to maintain continuity of presence for as long as necessary; and (4) data quality

and credibility of the study are reasonably assured by avoiding poor sampling decisions. This ideal is seldom attained, but the proposal should describe how the researcher will select a site (or sites) that at least approximates the ideal (p. 54)

Following this and other advice (Borg & Gall, 1989; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Goertz & LeCompte, 1984; Hannan, 2000; Keeves & Lakomski, , 1999; Lincoln & Guba 1985; Thomas & Nelson, 1996) about research method and the selection of a population/sample group, I was able to thoughtfully consider my choices and how typical or representative this group of subjects/participants would be. This consideration relates to what generalizations to the population as a whole may or may not be made, and if that is an objective of this study. A representative sample is a sample that is representative of a population if the nature of attributes within the sample corresponds to the nature and distribution of those same attributes in the population (Jones, 1985). Glaser and Strauss (1968) offer a clear defence of generalizing 'ideas' from a population even though it would be difficult to follow statistical logic. Glaser and Strauss (1968) use as an example (albeit rather grim) of the dying in hospital and the discussion of 'awareness contexts':

The issue of whether the particular hospital studied is 'typical' is not the critical issue; what is important is whether the experiences of dying patients are typical of the broad class of the phenomena.....to which the theory refers. Subsequent research would then focus on the validity of the proposition in other milieux (e.g. doctors' surgeries). (p. 91)

It is not the intention of my study to offer a strong recommendation of the generalisability of the results. The insights I may gain are intended to add to the growing knowledge, and to be relevant to other institutions, but I acknowledge the contextual diversity that defines each individual institution. This will make some generalizations of this study in a wider context possible, but problematic. That said, recognition of its limitations does not diminish any value that may be gained as long as I clearly identify

the purpose and origins.

The choice of the university and a description of its demographic characteristics will have provided something of a background location to the study. I will expand on the decision to concentrate on the College of Education.

When asking higher education educators about scholarship, and particularly deep perceptions of the emerging trends and varying characteristics that constitute it, I wanted to be careful to place my questions in a rich environment. The topic is far from restricted to education, it is an interdisciplinary conversation happening in diverse locations such as music, medicine, geography, business and library studies ( Boyer, 1990; Glassick, Huber & Maerhoff ,1997; Healey, 2000; Richlin, 1993). It crosses many boundaries, and I recently heard it used to describe a desirable attribute for a ‘Miss World’ contestant! It does however find a loud voice in an education department. Further more, when concentrating on the scholarship of teaching and learning it seemed appropriate to garner the opinions of those closely aligned to the subject. Boyer’s (1990) scholarships are intended to be interdisciplinary, and to raise awareness of the need to be able to extend into various ‘dimensions’, but as he states ‘the work of the professor become consequential only as it is understood by others’ (p. 23). Boyer defended the scholarship of teaching as lying at the heart of all scholarly endeavour, and breathing life into the other scholarly dimensions. It was therefore of particular interest to this study to try to reveal how a College of Education, of all the colleges/departments that constitute a university, might view the scholarship of teaching and learning and especially the element of self-critique.

### *Self-Critique and Reflective Practice*

There is, within the domain of education a considerable amount of literature to be found on practices that closely align to self-critique. For example, discussions of reflective practices (Loughran, 1996; Moon, 2004; Rogers, 1980; Schön, 1987), and reflexive practices (Lather, 1991; Steier, 1991) have been regularly discussed in

educational literature, and one would anticipate a background of familiarity and understanding of the concepts. This made the College of Education an interesting choice for this first phase of the study, and I anticipated it would provide a rich and detailed source of data for critical analysis.

The College of Education consisted of six academic departments that offer seventeen undergraduate degrees, twenty two graduate degree programs, six programs for advanced certification, and the Doctor of Education programme in Educational Leadership. The College of Education also includes administration of Teacher Education, the Office of Clinical Experiences, a Schools Network, and a Teaching Fellows Program. These degrees include a number of specialist areas qualifying students in varied areas such as teaching, educational leadership and administration. The mission statement of the College of Education follows:

The mission of the College of Education is the preparation of professional educators and allied practitioners including professionals including professionals in business information systems, counselling, electronic media and librarianship. Significant to this mission is a strong commitment to three important related areas, all of which are realized through partnerships and other endeavors. These three areas are the encouragement and nurturing of professional growth for educators and allied practitioners at all levels and in all areas of the educational endeavor; a continuing emphasis on and support for scholarship and research/creative activity; and service in all areas of professional education. Critical to such commitment is the promotion of effective teaching; staff participation in the improvement of schools; and in concert with other state agencies, the development of educational policy. (College of Education online 2004)

This mission statement draws attention to areas of interest for this study, for example 'the promotion of effective teaching' and 'support for scholarship and research/creative activity' and appears to offer a good location for this research. The College of Education has clearly considered some issues that relate to this topic and has

placed an emphasis on *teaching* within the College. It seems timely to see if that notion translates into practice.

### *Designing and Piloting an Instrument*

In designing an instrument suitable to gather the narrative data I was looking for I paid attention to authoritative literature on the subject. I admit, it has been difficult to find ways to apply the sound advice in *all* the areas as the unique nature of many studies mean blueprints are unlikely and universal rules hard to apply. However, tracing the origins of any influences on the design framework should be made explicit throughout, and I have provided as many of my considerations as practical.

I have identified the location, context and participants I used in the first phase of this research, and justified my choices. As previously noted, the participants in this initial phase of my research project were all professionals within the College of Education and active in the community of education.

The decision to use a questionnaire was based on authoritative opinion and suitability (Borg & Gall, 1989; Devlin, 2002; McMillan & Schumacher, 1993; Verma & Mallick, 1999). It provided an effective and practical way to obtain information within the field of educational research. According to Tuckman (1994):

Questionnaires (sic) are used by researchers to convert into data the information directly given by a person (subject). By providing access to what is “inside a person’s head”, these approaches make it possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge or information), what a person likes and dislikes (values and preferences), and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs). Questionnaires and interviews can also be used to discover what experiences have taken place (biography) and what is occurring at present. (p. 216)

A further reason a questionnaire was chosen as the method of data collection was the ability to use a larger sample than would have been possible through other techniques,

for example interviews. This is not to place undue significance on the size of the sample as small scale projects have justifiable merit and validity. Bassey (1999) is quoted taking the view on small case studies that ‘carried out systematically and critically, if they are aimed at the improvement of education, if they are relatable, and if by publication of the findings they extend the boundaries of existing knowledge, then they are valid forms of educational research’(p. 86).

This study was obviously not concerned with the population as a whole, but with a specific group. This focusing on a particular group is what Goertz and LeCompte (1984) refer to ‘criterion-based sampling’ where the researcher establishes the criteria necessary for inclusion in the study and then finds a way to extract the information, usually through a questionnaire or interviews. In order for this research and data collection to be relevant and contextual it must consider all aspects of its frame of reference. However, questions of validity and reliability should not be so overwhelming and problematic as to render the work non-academic or unsound. I intend the findings to reflect an awareness of any shortcomings, the fallibility of interpretation, but claim that there is legitimacy in inquiring into what is not easily measurable by other methods. As the researcher, I determined the suitability of a questionnaire, over say focus groups, having taken into account not only the likely quality and suitability of the data collected, but also considerations of how to conduct critical analysis. The cost in terms of time and finance was small for questionnaire distribution and collection, and the ease of access for communicating via the internet made distribution quick and certain. The use of the internet also made it possible to be confident that the intended recipients had indeed been contacted. In turn, this allowed the size of the sample to be increased and possibly improve the authenticity of the results.

As human subjects were used in the study an ethics protocol was necessary. Before any questionnaires were distributed the University of Plymouth Research Policy Committee’s *Ethical Principles for Research Involving Human Participants* was

consulted. The following guidelines are in accordance with that policy:

1. The topic is not sensitive enough to warrant written informed consent, a consent form will be attached to the questionnaire and it is explained that agreement is assumed if they participate in the study.
2. Participants will be introduced to the questionnaire with open and honest details of its purpose and application.
3. Participants will be able to withdraw at any time.
4. There is no possibility of physical harm and no likelihood of psychological harm during this research project.
5. Results of this study will be available to participants at its conclusion.
6. Questionnaires can be completed anonymously (this was achieved by having a third party receive the internet documents), or the participants can choose to attach contact details. There will be no identifying marks on the documents. (University of Plymouth, 2003)

The College of Education was contacted and permission to conduct this research was granted by the Dean. The College of Education also provided access to their records so that accurate details of the composition of the College could be obtained and analyzed for suitability for this study. Included in this information were internet contact details for all the professional staff in the College at the time. Through analysis of this data it was possible to identify any anomalies, for example non-teaching technicians and administrative staff who were not the intended targets of the questionnaire. This process of considering and examining my intended target group provided ample opportunity to reflect on the likelihood of conducting a successful research project. It gave me pause for thought about any assumptions I may have unwittingly made about the suitability of the

participants or the feasibility of the study. This reflexive process allowed me to proceed with more confidence.

The questionnaire was developed following examination of the purpose of the research (revisiting the research question), and reviewing some of the relevant literature on conducting and constructing questionnaires (Borg and Gall, 1989; Cohen & Manion, 1994; Devlin, 2002; Hannan, 2000; Munn & Drever, 1990; Oppenheim, 1992; Tuckman, 1994; Youngman, 1978). I used Borg and Gall's (1989) advice as a guideline:

The following rules of questionnaire format have been developed from experience and research in this field and should be considered carefully:

1. Make the questionnaire attractive.
2. Organize and lay out questions so the questionnaire is as easy to complete as possible.
3. Number the questionnaire items and pages.
4. Put the name and address of the person to whom the form should be returned at the beginning and the end of the questionnaire even if a self-addressed envelope is included.
5. Include brief, clear instructions, printed in bold type.
6. Use examples before any items that might be confusing or difficult to understand.
7. Organise the questionnaire in some logical sequence. For example, you may decide to group together related items or those that use the same response options. If you ask time-ordered questions, such as respondents' employment history, follow chronological order.
8. When moving to a new topic, include a transitional sentence to help

respondents switch their train of thought.

9. Begin with a few interesting and non-threatening items. Do not start the questionnaire with an open form item that requires considerable writing.

10. Do not put important items at the end of a long questionnaire.

11. Put threatening or difficult questions near the end of the questionnaire.

12. Avoid using the words “questionnaire” or “checklist” on your form.

Many persons are prejudiced against these words.

13. Include enough information in the questionnaire so that items are meaningful to the respondent. Items that are interesting and clearly relevant to the study will increase response rate. Length also has an effect on response rate, so the questionnaire should be as short as possible consistent with the objectives of the study (p. 431).

I disregarded one or two areas where I thought my research would benefit from a different approach, for example there was no need to use names and addresses. The structure of the questionnaire was framed within the context of current research (Keeves & Lakomski, 1999) where subjective qualities are acknowledged. At the forefront of the construction of the questions was the desire to focus on the opinions and perspectives of the participants. The use of open-ended questions would allow those voices to be a most important factor, encouraging a descriptive response. Silverman (1993) makes the point that authenticity is vital in producing quality research and that open-ended questions are an effective way to gather an authentic understanding of people’s experiences. The closed-ended or straightforward questions can be employed to more easily and efficiently determine some information. Hannan (2002) considers closed-ended questions to be most

suitable for the gathering of unproblematic facts, and they can be more easily categorized. In addition, questions that contain statements can determine agreement or disagreement and focus the area of research very specifically. The statements themselves can engage the participants by offering a thought provoking subject and encouraging a conversational response.

In constructing a questionnaire the researcher must make every effort to remove ambiguity (unless it is a deliberate ploy) and bias. This is just a beginning in constructing a thoughtful and useful instrument for collecting data which will be able to provide credible research. There are so many different approaches to conducting and constructing research questionnaires that it is possible to defend almost any stance, other than a sloppy and ill thought-out instrument. Hollaway and Jefferson (2000) approach the problem by suggesting that researchers need to start with their own assumptions about the participants. Therefore, as I was the researcher designing the questionnaire I need to be aware of what shared (or not) understandings we had, to look at how the questions connect or fragment, and to problematise both the subject and subjects of the research. This approach tried to break down or reveal as much as possible about presumptions and prejudices, and to attempt to make any compromises at least transparent. I did not think it was possible with the topic of this study, and the methods used in this phase to be objective, and I acknowledge the inherent subjectivity. I, as researcher, bring myself into the research (Holland and Ramazanoglu, 1994) just as my participants are contextually bound, and we may interpret meanings differently. Throughout this dissertation I have endeavored to cast myself as a *player* in revealing my role and claiming this as *my* research, through *my* eyes, but with hopefully enough care and integrity to be able to

offer it as credible research. The key seems to be to balance *interpreting meanings differently* with *sharing understandings of meanings*, to allow the voices that are heard to be as intended by their speakers. There should be distinct and audible opinions, not mine, but those of my participants. If my questions were to be successful they must share a common understanding of what is being asked, and also reveal any lack of consensus (should it exist) in the answers. This is further complicated by the amorphous nature of the term 'scholarship of teaching and learning' (Kreber, 2002), and I will direct some of my attention to this problem. If the purpose of an enquiry is to find some illuminating answers to a research question, to progress understanding in some form, then you must be certain to ask the right questions of the right people. How will you obtain the relevant information from your participants? How certain can you be that it reflects their true feelings and opinions? Hollaway and Jefferson (2000) ask:

Do you just ask them direct question(s) to which you wish to find the answer? If not, why not? How else would you approach them? Would it be feasible to observe them in relevant situations? If you decide on a face-to-face interview is it best to structure it through a series of questions? What should they cover and how many do you need? In other words, just how are you going to produce data which, when analyzed, will help answer your starting questions. (p. 1)

This raises issues of honesty, thoughtless responses and institutional identity which needed to be addressed both in the construction of questions and in the analysis.

This issue was raised by Hayes (2001) when discussing non-participant research interviewing, where he suggest the researcher needs to stay alert to the possibilities that the respondents will construct a 'version of the truth' that is contextually located and may be subliminally conveyed (p. 25). The participants in the study could have spoken in a voice that they believed the researcher wanted to hear. It therefore follows that, at least in

this early phase of this research project; I would be relying to a large extent on the candidness of the participants and my ability to encourage uninhibited responses. As the phases evolved it should be possible to trace elements of disparity and increasingly use comparative analytical techniques to establish authentic meaning, credibility and dependability (Hayes, 2001). This 'back to basics' review is intended to demonstrate the processes I employed in creating my research questionnaire. To show the considerations I made, and why I chose to design the instrument in the way that I did. What I chose to include, and exclude. It also opens up the research project for scrutiny, and may display any flaws or ill conceived thinking within a thorough examination of the processes involved.

### *Pilot Study*

I decided, as recommended by many of the aforementioned research guides, that a pilot study should be conducted to establish strengths, weaknesses and incongruities. This give me a chance to refine and re-examine my questions and gain confidence in the instrument. In planning of the pilot questionnaire, the design, the focus of the questions, the range of questions, ambiguities and constraints were all rendered problematic. I decided to establish some additional guidelines building on those of Borg & Gall (1989) previously mentioned which could act as a touchstone as I designed the instrument. These were:

- The design must lend itself to effective analysis.
- I do not want it to be boring.
- I want to be able to isolate groups of answers.
- I want to feel able to cope with the quantity of data generated

In keeping with my guidelines I decided to divide the questionnaire into sections that would help with both the analysis and a feeling of focused questioning. I decided that the section headings of the instrument should be sequentially less important so that if boredom overtook my participants at least I would have some significant early responses that I could subject to analysis. I found it relatively easy to decide that I should follow the same prioritizing of the questions that I had established in my research question. Namely, that I need to know firstly if there is a shared and common understanding of *scholarship* as it relates to the university community before I could move into discussing areas such as *the scholarship of teaching and learning*. Therefore I devised sections mirroring my research question leading from more generalized issues of Boyer's (1990) scholarship, through to the sharp focus of 'self-critique' or reflective practice.

I decided to start the process with a series of questions that would provide a demographic picture of the participant. I wanted to gain something of a picture of the person who was responding, and to establish their position with regard to teaching experience. I did not want this to appear invasive, and decided to concentrate on relatively neutral details, such the number of years they had been teaching. This would require short responses but provide an immediate insight into other areas, for example their likely research output. These first four questions covered:

- gender
- teaching experience
- formal teacher training
- the division of class time between undergraduate and graduate classes

The second section of questions was located in the domain of understanding what my respondents considered constitutes scholarship. I wanted to tease out perceptions and understandings of the rhetoric, and to specifically hear their opinions on Boyer's broadened definitions. It seemed important to establish as much as possible about how this is perceived on an institutional dimension well as on a personal basis. A central issue to consider was how I might establish the focal issues without leading my respondents and prejudicing the discourse. This is a contentious issue, Brown and Dowling (1998) contend that, although on the surface of it questionnaires provide a straightforward method to obtain data they are often ill conceived and conceal a bias in both the structuring and the analysis. There is also a methodological implication, the epistemic and ideological nature of the research methodology shapes how each method will be used and recontextualised. I hope, that in recognizing these dilemmas I can avoid some of the pitfalls in practice and remain alert to what Silverman (1994) warns is 'the situated character of accounts and other practices and to the dangers of seeking to identify phenomena apart from these practices and the forms of representation which they embody' (p. 197). In applying this to my structuring of questions I need to be especially aware of the context (HE) and that if I am not seeking dogmatic answers, then the texts (questions and answers) may be subject to different readings both by the respondent and the interpreter. These issues needed to be addressed and negotiated if an authentic and accurate picture was to be portrayed.

Therefore, within the designing of this questionnaire I was seeking a pattern of inquiry that minimized biases but acknowledged that, as Kaplan (1999) argues, total neutrality in educational research is a myth, and that bias can be hidden by a pretence of

neutrality, and that the only way to reduce its impact is to make values explicit and subject them, in turn, to inquiry.

From this establishment of where I might easily go wrong I developed a series of questions focused on extracting perceptions on Boyer's broadened definitions of scholarship. I decided that I could foreword this section with a synopsis of Boyer's (1990) framework to avoid ambiguity, and that I should seek responses about the institution (the large picture), as well as the more personal interpretations in practice. I devised four questions that covered:

- opinion on Boyer's definitions
- how the respondent would define scholarship
- what the respondent thought scholarship meant institutionally
- what scholarship meant personally in practice

These questions were intended to establish the more precise focus of this questionnaire, and to move the conversation quickly into the specific area of interest.

Following this group of questions on scholarship, I wanted to focus on the area of the scholarship of teaching and learning. Through my thorough reading of the literature concerned with this topic I was aware that it is the most contested area, with the least consensus of agreement on its meaning (Braxton et al, 2002). It could therefore be difficult to draw out perceptions and opinions about such an elusive topic, and I could easily alienate my audience by offering such uncertain territory about which to respond. I decided to keep both the foreword descriptor and the questions very concise. I did not offer an explanation of how the literature defines the scholarship of teaching and learning. I felt this would offer either a way of seeing that could be adopted, or an

interpretation of the meaning that is not universally held, it could be an area of bias. I was interested to see how, through the responses, this strand of Boyer's scholarship might be diversely interpreted in multiple ways. I designed five questions in this section encouraging personal opinion on whether teaching and learning should be counted as a strand of scholarship, and also how this might affect learning. These questions covered:

- whether the scholarship of teaching and learning should be considered scholarship
- what benefits there might be if it were considered so
- what changes, if any, might improve the teaching/learning process
- where responsibility for learning predominantly rests
- where responsibility for teaching predominantly rests

I hoped that the last three questions would tease out *how* the respondents would connect the scholarship of teaching and learning to the practice of teaching and learning. It was not intended to be a 'trick' question, but more to extract an understanding as to whether my respondents would differentiate the *study* of teaching and learning from the *acts* of scholarly teaching and learning.

I became concerned at this point that I may be asking for a considerable commitment from my participants, and that this may in turn produce a low response rate. I decided that I should continue with my defined areas of interest, but that I should ask my pilot subjects to comment, not only on the questions themselves, but on the amount of effort they felt it took to complete the questionnaire, and how much they thought this would affect the return rate.

The fourth section concentrated on the area of self-critique or reflective practice which Boyer defined as one of the standards by which all forms of scholarship might be measured. I was acutely aware that the community of an education department should be very familiar with the rhetoric of reflective practice as it is a commonly used axiom. The first choice I had to make was whether to use reflexive practice, reflective practice or the language of 'self-critique' that Boyer uses. I decided to make this a 'piloted' question in itself, with the express intention of re-designing this section of questions in light of the trialed questionnaires. I would ask my pilot study group to tell me how comfortable they felt with the differing language, and whether it confused their responses.

I decided again not to define the terminology in the questionnaire as a precursor as I felt this would impose a fixed meaning given to the participants rather than exploring their interpretations of the theoretical framework implied by the terminology. I divided this section into five questions that covered:

- what reflective practice meant in professional practice
- what reflexive practice meant, if different from the above
- how self-critique might differ
- if these concepts are valuable in practice
- how much time is spent lecturing versus other teaching styles

This last question was intended to determine if the respondents would offer to discuss didactic teaching styles as opposed to other methods and what they might reveal about praxis. This section raised some concerns for me as I felt it would be difficult to keep the focus on the topic of scholarship, and yet move it into an area that is more

commonly associated with teaching practices. I did feel however that it was important to look closely at this issue as it is clearly an area where assumptions abound.

The final section concentrated on the relationship between research, teaching and learning. I wanted to determine how my respondents felt about the prioritizing of these facets, and what emphasis they felt should be placed in each area. This should open up both the personal philosophies of the individual and institutional policies. I was interested in the opinions and perceptions of the respondents and how they balanced their professional lives in these areas. I hoped, not only to find out how they prioritized these dimensions, but why, and if, they would like to see any changes. This section appeared an appropriate area to include an additional question linking the discussion to those in the UK concerned with separating research universities and defining teaching universities as separate entities. Although this is not directly concerned with my research question I thought it might provide some interesting data. Therefore, this fifth and final set of questions was concerned with the respondent's personal opinions on issues of:

- personal emphasis on research
- the reasons for this emphasis, or lack thereof
- the UK proposals to segregate universities
- changes, if any, they would like to see

I have included throughout this discussion how I came to make complex decisions about the designing of a questionnaire, for example, the types of questions, the framework and sequence, the wording, and how the design would compliment the analytical tools to be employed. If this is to be an open discussion, then it should include my moments of 'pondering' that included feelings of uncertainty, but may also have

helped to prevent a headlong tumble into ill-conceived activities. These silent moments, the pauses, are not easily assessed, but they do constitute an essential element of thoughtful research practice, and there were many of them!

The pilot questionnaire was distributed to another, smaller department within the same university, where four participants had agreed to take part in this trial. They were not randomly chosen, but were purposefully targeted for their expertise and experience in research methods and practice, and they were also somewhat familiar with the topics covered by the questions. I was careful to select a small group who I had determined through their research publications covered diverse research orientations. They were all familiar with questionnaires, and had experience in both construction and advising in this area. I made these decisions based broadly on the advice to be found in the research literature (Brown & Dowling, 1998; Cohen & Manion, 1994; Youngman, 1986) which advocates piloting as an essential stage of the successful research process. In addition to the unanticipated, I hoped to reveal any areas where I had unwittingly led the questions, included an unreasonable bias or ambiguities, and any concerns they had over intentions, meanings and interpretations.

Therefore, when the questionnaire was distributed I included a postscript asking for the pilot participants comments on the construction of the questionnaire and their opinions on its effectiveness at harnessing answers to my research question. I asked them to comment in particular on the section concerned with reflective practice etc. as this was an area that was causing me some concerns. I then followed this with short interviews to clarify problematic areas or to confirm my interpretation of their postscript comments. As a result of the pilot I modified the questionnaire in a number of areas but also gained

some confidence that, following the reforms, I could construct a useful instrument as a method of obtaining the data for the first phase of my research project.

### *The Suggested Reforms Following the Pilot Study*

There were several areas that needed to be modified or refined. All of the pilot respondents felt that I needed a concise introductory passage to encourage my target group to participate. Following this feedback I constructed a short 'letter' that explained who I was, what and why I was conducting the research, and what I was asking of my potential respondents. I also included details about the attached consent form and a declaration of the level of privacy I would be able to provide.

The pilot group alerted me to a number of other areas that they had found either lacking or unclear, and to one or two overall comments.

Dealing with the overall comments firstly, they all felt that it was too long, and that a number of questions were overly complex and needed clear descriptors or section headings. I rectified this in the final version by clarifying my use of language and by deleting some questions. I will expand on this as I break down each section.

In the first section of mostly closed-ended questions gathering background information they suggested I include a question about tenure (permanent contract). On reflecting on this issue I realized that it could have implications concerning the responses as it goes some way to indicating the level of job security, the likely experience of the respondent, and how likely it is that they are actively grappling with issues of scholarship as they relate to promotion. Therefore I included a question on tenure.

In the second section dealing with Boyer's (1990) expanded definitions of scholarship it was suggested that I more clearly define Boyer's framework, and more carefully word the fourth question on scholarship in the professional arena. The fine tuning of this section would provide very fruitful responses when the questionnaire was eventually distributed.

The third section concentrating more specifically on the scholarship of teaching and learning provided an opportunity to trim the questions. I deleted the last two questions in this section on where the responsibility for teaching and learning lies. It appeared an ill thought out question that elicited some rather rude responses from my pilot group! Instead I decided to construct a question that asked for input on any changes the respondent would like to see made to improve the teaching and student learning process as it did seem to serve as an emotive issue. This is a slightly covert question as it does not relate openly to questions on the scholarship of teaching and learning. I was hoping it could be used to extract responses that suggest that embracing teaching and learning as a scholarly dimension would benefit these activities, or that contrary responses/non responses would indicate a lack of conviction that it would alter practice and improve the environment.

The next section on reflective/reflexive practice and self-critique was the most taxing to re-evaluate. The pilot group felt that the language of 'reflexivity' and the analytical framework it represents were complexities that confused the issues being examined rather than clarified opinions and interpretations within the scope of this research phase. If reflexivity is a contested term whose situated meaning often encourages differing interpretations (Steier, 1991) then I considered that perhaps at this

stage it would be better to adhere to the more often used 'reflective' practice. I wanted to be careful not to fall into a trap of thinking that the weight of importance should lie entirely in the rhetoric. I felt a central issue should be communicating with a common language, an understanding, and from that point establishing differences or similarities about issues. Therefore I removed two questions that related to interpreting reflexive practice and self-critique as they had elicited very little additional information and seemed to confuse the issues. This also helped with the overall problem of the length of the questionnaire. I decided to keep *self-critique* in the section heading as it relates directly to Boyer's (1996) use of language, and to link in 'reflective practice'. I would then consistently use the terminology of reflective practice and encourage my respondents to comment on any other frameworks they might employ. I therefore felt I was offering the opportunity for other practices to be made apparent.

The final group of questions remained mostly intact, although I decided to delete the question concerning proposals in the UK. This question had caused some confusion and my pilot respondents felt they would need to know far more about the topic before being able to make useful comments. This question had been included as something of a wild card and did not relate directly to my research question, therefore it was removed. I decided to offer a somewhat open comment section at the end of the questionnaire encouraging any participants who had made it that far to add to the debate over 'what counts as scholarship' and why the community as a whole should engage in the discourse. This net casting approach was intended to gather any comments that might not otherwise be captured, and was the least structured question.

I ended the questionnaire by asking the respondent to indicate if they would be willing to contribute to the next phase of the research project, although I did not know what form that might take, I thought it would be useful to know if they would be willing to participate in any future research. Therefore I included a final question asking them if they would be willing to participate in future research and to indicate this by including a contact email address or telephone number.

### *The Analytical Framework*

Although this section follows my discussions describing the processes of constructing a questionnaire it was in practice concurrent. As previously mentioned, I had intended through the analysis to group and categorize the data into emergent themes, and then interpret the findings. The piloting of the questionnaire had provided not only an opportunity to revise the questions, but also a chance to refine my mechanisms for analyzing the data collected (Thomas and Nelson, 1996). As with any survey research, the researcher must design both a viable mechanism for extracting the information desired (in the broadest sense) and a way of analyzing and interpreting the findings. In the case of this study I wished to gather broad and expressive responses on the research topic so that I might begin to respond to the research question. I wanted to be able to encompass both the participants more personal emotional responses about scholarship, as well answers about the principle meanings and values of scholarship in practice. I also wanted to be able to narrow the focus on the specific area of the *scholarship of teaching and learning* and through to the practice of *self-critique*. On reflection, my motivation for opening up the topic to a broad discussion was partially driven by uncertainty. I wanted to be able to ‘feel’ my way around the topic and not jump straight in making assumptions

about my research domain. I wanted to be more certain of how much common understanding on the subject of scholarship existed, before focusing the study on the one dimension I had isolated. I wanted to explore the language of scholarship, its axiomatic nature, the assumptions and interpretations that abound in the educational community in a way that could provide a good foundation for further exploration. Above all, I did not want to begin my research project by assuming a commonality of understandings that may not have existed, or to be misleading. Also, if too much uncertainty existed in establishing the conversation *around* scholarship, then it would be foolhardy to have begun discussing and researching the fine print contained within the concept (e.g. Boyer's standards for assessment).

The careful design of the questionnaire encouraged narrative responses and allowed for some elements of both qualitative and quantitative analysis. From the first questions about the participants' backgrounds I was able to generate factual information about gender, teaching experience, teaching qualifications etc. The analysis of this data would form something of a quantitative picture of the educational community under examination. As some of this data is also public record it could easily be verified. The remaining four distinct categories of questions encouraged perceptions and narrative responses specific to the topic of this study. It asked the respondents to contextualize their experiences on both a macro and micro scale. As I have noted, this in turn requires a suitable method of analysis where a dialogic process can be developed between the discourse, the practice and the theory. As previously discussed, I decided the data would be subjected to content analysis using the method of constant comparison searching for emergent themes, re-occurring statements, areas of consensus, disparities, silences,

patterns of response, areas of frustration or misunderstandings and strongly stated opinions etc. I knew it would entail me becoming immersed in the data, reading it and re-reading it in order to become completely familiar with the responses. In this analytical process I hoped to remain alert to the subtleties and tacit meanings expressed through the texts. As Marshall and Rossman (1989) encourage I should not 'search for the exhaustive and mutually exhaustive categories of the statistician, but instead identify the salient, grounded categories of meaning held by participants in the setting' (p116).

I considered the possibility of employing a computer program to aid with this analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 44), but decided to retrieve the data first and reconsider that possibility depending on the complexity of the responses and the likelihood of it providing other information. The questionnaires would be reviewed and statements categorized according to the emergent themes (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Merriam, 1988; Silverman, 1993; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). These themes would then be amended, changed and adopted or discarded in response to this process of analytic induction (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984). This is further strengthened by asking an experienced researcher to independently compile emergent themes and compare the results. This offers what Silverman (1994) calls 'inter-rater reliability' (p. 148) which provides an alternative analysis of the same data to confirm or contrast the findings. This secondary input secures a sense of reinforced theorizing, and illuminates areas where contested interpretations are evident. This process included examining the different categories we felt had emerged and discussing any contested areas or amalgamating closely aligned themes.

This recognized method of analysis in qualitative research still left me with some concerns. I must be able to do more than just categorise and reinterpret the words found within the questionnaire discourses. I must attempt to probe into deeply held perceptions, assumptions and beliefs and recontextualise the collective discourses into a coherent rich description. Hollaway and Jefferson (2000) discuss 'tell it like it is' ethnographers and others, for whom the analytical task consists of little more than giving voice to informants' (p.56). This is justified by those who employ this analytical framework by suggesting that the interpreter or researcher does not assume to know better than the participant. As Jefferson and Hollaway (2000) point out, this approach can miss more complex understandings (for example hegemonic influences) and contextual bias, with perhaps too much emphasis placed on allowing informants their voice and therefore producing coherent, non-confrontational interpretations. This leads on to suggesting that the data analysis is driven by rationalizing self-descriptions, and specifically in this research, ratifying the perceptions of the participants. It would appear that if I was to avoid these pitfalls I would need to supplement these recognized forms of analysis (content analysis, constant comparison and emergent themes) with a holistic enterprise that looks at the *whole* picture that both hears the opinions voiced and the silences that might indicate differing perceptions. To clarify my meaning, it must include looking at the contextuality, the textual use of narrative, the political climate, social construction, lived experiences and a myriad of less easily discernable but vitally important influences that affect the responses of my participants, and my interpretation. It must also include any perceptions that I cannot explain or interpret so that I do not limit my research to what *I* understand. For another reader, with different experiences, the meanings might be

clearly apparent. I am acknowledging that I will be re-interpreting and re-contextualising meanings and it is essential I am aware of imposing *on* the data. I was aiming for an authenticity and vividness in the discourse that can seldom be found in tables and figures alone. However, if it is to enrich our knowledge of a topic then it must honestly and truthfully re-interpret the meanings and opinions of my respondents in a way that connects to external examination and public scrutiny.

The breaking down of the data into sections or groups of questions supported the analysis. Each category can be examined independently and collectively, with the aim of gathering together the different elements into a detailed whole picture when all the data has been considered. I therefore intend to employ a holistic reflexivity as an analytical tool, turning back to review the parts as interlocking and overlapping components. I have interpreted this as a puzzle, where the parts are re-examined to see if they could fit in any other ways and thereby create a different picture. To look for parts that might be missing, or overlooked, or for the possibility that some issues can 'shape shift' when examined in a different light. I hoped, by being alert to theoretical positions and philosophies to be receptive to examples that might be found within the discourse, alerting me to areas that could otherwise be misread. In being reflexive throughout the research I was able to employ both my creativity and my subjectivity to assist in the analysis. Within that framework I can be seen to be actively applying reflexivity within the methodology and putting the theories into practice. This holistic analysis was not a substitute for any of the other analytical methods, but served to strengthen my theoretical conviction that much can be gained by being open to the many possibilities that are not always overtly

apparent. I will be explicit in the analysis of the data when making sense of meaning is through holistic reflexivity and identify it explicitly as my subjective understanding.

The final issue of the texts chosen to exemplify an emergent theme or to illustrate a topic of discussion should be addressed. These texts are held within the context from which they originated, and have not been manipulated to illustrate my pre-conceived viewpoint. They offer glimpses of the data so as not to overwhelm the reader with narrative inclusions but to confirm the interpretation of the responses through empirical evidence. I am intensely aware that it is possible to manipulate the data, to 'cherry pick' to mirror my prior expectations, or to make a distinct point. This would have devalued the research and made any findings questionable and leaning towards anecdotal. Fielding and Fielding (1986) identify this problem as:

- a tendency to select field data to fit an ideal conception (preconception) of the phenomenon
- a tendency to select the field data which are conspicuous because they are exotic, at the expense of the less dramatic ( but possibly indicative) data (p. 153 in Silverman, 1994)

Therefore, I have taken great care in selecting the texts I have included so that they are representative of the category being discussed and that I have not excluded opinions and perceptions in order to develop that category. I also anticipate that the methodology will strengthen interpretation of perceptions, the developing of answers to my research question, as it moves through its phases and establishes an ever richer picture. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1984) note 'one should not adopt a naively "optimistic" view that the aggregation of data from different sources will unproblematically add up to produce a more complex picture' (p. 199), but in the careful development of a responsive reflexive framework I hope I have been able to address

issues of authenticity by encouraging different pathways to understanding one area of interest.

### **Findings, Discussion and Analysis of Phase One**

In this section I will use the categories employed in the questionnaire as headings in the analysis of the data. I will examine each section and discuss the findings in context. The results of the questionnaire will then be considered as a whole, and the emergent themes identified and discussed with reference to the next research phase.

The revised questionnaire was administered to the 75 professional staff of the College of Education in the middle of the semester. I was careful to avoid very busy periods of high workload, for example towards the end of a semester. It was also administered on a Thursday with the hope that a weekend might allow an opportunity to complete the questions. It can be a problem in this form of questionnaire data collection to determine whether the responses to the questions will be superficial remarks, ontological beliefs, or the ideological representations of the institution, although some analysis of the language used may hint at the conceptual significance and sincerity. We are all subject to making comments we do not necessarily mean, loose chatter, and although there are a multitude of reasons this might occur perhaps engagement with the subject and time are critical factors. Another factor could possibly be what is referred to as the 'hawthorne effect' (Brown & Dowling, 1998) where the effects of being researched influence the outcome. In the case of HE educators this could be apparent in a kind of 'performance' where they see this questionnaire as something of a test of their knowledge. I am not sure it is possible to overcome these factors in any reliable way, but rendering them problematic areas means I am able to sensitize my analytical framework

to the possibilities. Keeves and Lakomski (1999) note that the effect of the researcher on the participant should not be assumed to be negligible even if they do not actually meet, that they can still create other images. They suggest instead that the respondents may 'answer or act in terms of what they perceive to be the expectations held for their behavior as they interpret the meaning of the items or tasks put before them' and that 'enquirers deal with the responses in terms of their interpretation of response meaning and intent, and so on' (p. 142). This conundrum seems to indicate you are damned if you do and damned if you don't, and eventually leads to the conclusion that interpretation (in all its forms) is among other things, subjective, value-laden, contextual and differently held. This does not detract from this research project it just registers and re-iterates the complexities and concerns. I think it makes it more of a challenge.

As previously stated, the questionnaire was preceded by an explanation of my role and objectives, and a brief description of the project, offering what I hoped would be a non-threatening, non-invasive presence! I included a consent form and reassurance that respondent's identities would not be revealed in the course of the study. In consideration of the responses it should be noted that the university, and many other universities nationwide, have instigated a Commission on Scholarship to examine discussions of scholarship and the needs of a modern university community. This has raised awareness of the debate to some degree, in diverse communities, and is an added bonus to this research as it provides a timely period to inquire into educators' perceptions. As noted, I decided to distribute this questionnaire via the internet as an email. This was a very efficient method of assuring it reached my entire target group and meant that they could

also return the responses using the same route. The structure of the instrument allowed for text input under the corresponding questions.

### *The Demographic Construction*

At the time this study was conducted the College of Education had 32 men and 43 women members of the professional staff. Of the respondents to this questionnaire, 65% were female, 35% male. I decided, after consulting other department demographics that any gender bias was not dramatic enough to cause concern or warrant further investigation at this point. However, it was noted, and I decided that should issues of gender become apparent as the study progressed it may well become significant.

Of the 75 questionnaires sent there were 32 responses. This makes the response rate approximately 50%. I have not been able to compare this response rate in any meaningful manner with what might be expected as very little, if any, research on a similar topic has been conducted in HE. I am therefore left applying my subjective analysis to reflect on my expectations. On the one hand I feel that the 50% return rate, with a healthy amount of data to critically analyze is respectable. On the other, I wonder if the non-responses indicate some deeper issues that point to a lack of willingness to devote valuable time in an essentially philanthropic act, an act which in itself could fall into one of Boyer's dimensions. I also wonder if this is somewhat of an emotive topic that some would rather avoid. Is there a connection between the response rate and the topic of the research? If this were the case it could indicate what Brown and Dowling (1998) refer to as 'unintentional bias' (p. 68), for which there are very few safeguards other than the fostering of a good relationship with the participants. In exploring the possibilities of an importance held in the silences I decided that this issue might be easier

to explore when the analysis of the data in this phase was completed, it is possible that connections may then be apparent or that this issue would need further investigation.

As previously noted, the opening section of the questionnaire was used to gather demographic information about the respondents. It gathered information on their contract status (whether they had permanent positions/tenure or were working towards tenure or were on annual contracts), the number of years teaching experience and formal teaching qualifications etc. The majority of respondents (90%) were permanent members of staff and had formal teaching qualifications (teaching license). The average number of years teaching experience in higher education was 13 years. All respondents were responsible for teaching classes at the time of the questionnaire, some to undergraduates, some to graduates, but the majority had a combination of both.

From this information it is clear that the majority of participants in this study could be considered a secure community of scholars who were active practitioners in a research, teaching and learning environment. The majority of respondents will have undergone a review of their portfolio of teaching, service, and research at an earlier date in order to have gained tenure (permanent contract). The importance placed at that time on any, or all of these areas may now have changed, but they will not be continuing to address these areas in order to secure a permanent position at the university.

Embedded in this analysis are excerpts from the texts to illustrate the issues that are being discussed. I have attempted to keep the texts examples concise so that the data does not overwhelm the discussions of the opinions that they collectively represent. As I have noted, the texts were carefully selected, but not removed from the contextual intentions of the authors. The discourses are not chosen to illustrate a predetermined

position, but are texts to exemplify the themes that have arisen *through* the discourses. In this analysis I am interpreting and re-reading the texts as data, and through the critical examination of the collective whole reconstructing it into the coherent perceptions of a community.

This interactive process is a negotiated pathway where I must adhere to the opinions of the participants, whilst being able to determine how that relates to the theory and provides new knowledge or understandings of the research question being studied. The intention in the analysis is not merely to report what has been said, but to find ways to recontextualise the data into relevant, meaningful, credible insights that translate the collective perceptions of those who took part. I am also critically aware of the effects of tacit and formative theory (however much I may think I have avoided incorporating it). As LeCompte (2000) notes in referring to tacit knowing and formative theory, 'these are the sources of selectivity (and bias) because they create something analogous to a filter', which in turn 'admits relevant data and screens out what does not seem interesting' (p. 146). I have included textual examples as illustrations of opinions, but these are not chosen out of context to make a point, but are moved from the data and into the reporting as interesting examples of the issues that have emerged through analysis. I have not 'selected out' passages of texts to support my favoured interpretation (Potter & Wetherell, 1992) but have applied a critical examination of the possibility of multiple ways of understanding what is being said, and determined through reflective deconstruction if a discourse can provide an example of the general pattern. In some instances, a single utterance may prove strikingly emotive and worthy of inclusion, but if it does not fall into a category this will be made clear. I have described earlier my use of

content analysis to identify emerging themes and generate categories, in and from, the data. This reviewing of the data, identifying re-occurring themes, omissions, contrasting opinions, and areas of agreement or disagreement (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) has resulted in a painstaking sifting through the data. I have then assembled something of a taxonomy of opinions emerging from the research questionnaire. In this way, a coherent and integrated picture of what has emerged has been built up and examined. Throughout the process I have adopted Glaser & Strauss's (1967) advice about assumptions and postures reminding myself that:

I am not certain what constitutes meaning and significance in this research. You (the participant) must tell me what the important things are that I must be investigating. Then, through a process of collecting data via interviews, observations, artifacts, and 'being immersed in the context', the researcher formulates something known as grounded theory. (Glaser & Stauss 1967 in Gerdes & Conn, 2001, p.183)

My interpretation of 'grounded theory' is that the data and analysis should be allowed to generate inductive understandings and not be led by a hypothesis. It does, however require considerable concentration to stay focused when uncertainty is commonly encountered. Under each of the questionnaire headings I have discussed the analysis of the data and the emergent categories. In some instances a strand of understandings may thread through several of the sections. In the final analysis and discussion of this first research phase I have gathered the categories from each section into general emergent themes that can provide a holistic view of the findings.

### *Questions about Scholarship*

The purpose of this section of the questionnaire was to establish what understanding the target population had of the broad definitions of scholarship proposed

by Boyer (1990). The questionnaire was designed to discover what their perceptions of scholarship might include, or exclude, and how these perceptions impact on their professional life. I wanted to be able to ascertain what common understandings could be established and if any areas would appear problematic before requesting more complex engagement with Boyer's (1990) dimension of the scholarship of teaching and learning. I used a statement as a prefix to the questions to clearly identify my area of interest and to establish the frame of reference for my enquiry (Hannan, 2002, Munn & Drever, 1999). The following statement introduced the questions:

- *I am interested in what you think constitutes scholarship, and the ways in which that is evident. Ernest Boyer's (1990) framework for scholarship defined four distinct but overlapping areas, which he described as discovery, integration, application, and teaching/learning. Boyer's broad definition of scholarship implies multiple ways of understanding the meanings and values of scholarship'*

I deliberately resisted the temptation to further describe the various ways Boyer (1990) has characterized scholarship in the anticipation that my participants would impart their interpretations and meanings rather than adopting those that I (through Boyer) had given them. I also needed to keep the questionnaire concise and focused.

I followed this statement with the four previously described questions. The four interrelated questions covered asking for opinions on Boyer's definition of scholarship, how they might define it differently, what it meant to their institution, and finally what

scholarships means to them in practice. A copy of the questionnaire is included as appendix C.

In response to the first question there was almost unanimous (99%) support for Boyer's definitions of scholarship. All the respondents agreed on one level or another with Boyer's broadened definitions of scholarship, none were in disagreement. There were no clearly articulated negative comments, although some discussions were more effusive and enthusiastic than others. There was an overwhelming embracing of the redefinitions of scholarship, and the value this would bring to the academic community. On the first examination of these results this appeared unproblematic, but deeper critical examination of the discourses revealed a potentially troubling aspect which I will expand on later. The following categories were found within the texts and exemplify the almost universal opinions being expressed in agreement with the broadened definitions:

*'I think it is a helpful way to describe the various contributions of different kinds of [educators] within a university setting'*

*'all universities should adopt Boyer's principles'*

*'excellent – universities need to adopt a more flexible model to mesh better with the needs of the communities in which they reside'*

There appeared to be agreement throughout the responses with expanding the definitions of scholarship, but in the analysis some uncertainty is raised about where that re-defining should or is taking place. In the previous statements, and any number of others found within the data, the respondents are advocating a broad, inclusive 'Boyerian' approach to scholarship. It does appear however to be inclined towards allocating the responsibility to the institution. It is not seen as a scholars' responsibility within (or to) a

community, but as the community's responsibility to the scholars. This deferring of responsibility is a cause for concern as it allocates the acceptance of the concepts to *outside* rather than *within* or *as* a community. It also sidesteps issues concerned with the educators' implicit values and priorities concerned with their academic roles and their conceptualization of their academic work. As Schön (1995) indicates, institutions are built around a particular view of knowledge just as the practitioner operates within that domain:

In the varied topography of professional practice, there is a high, hard ground overlooking a swamp. On the high ground, manageable problems lend themselves to solution through the use of research-based theory and technique. In the swampy lowlands, problems are messy and confusing and incapable of technical solution. The irony of this situation is that the problems of the high ground tend to be relatively unimportant to individuals or to society at large, however great their technical interest may be, while in the swamp lie the problems of greatest human concern. The practitioner is confronted with a choice. Shall he remain on the high ground where he can solve relatively unimportant problems according to his standards of rigor, or shall he descend to the swamp of important problems where he cannot be rigorous in any way he knows how to describe. (p. 27)

If I apply Schön's theorizing to the changing definitions of scholarship it is possible to see that the concepts are staying on the 'high ground' and, in some senses in isolated terrain, and that the swampy lowland of practice has yet to fully integrate with this territory. This is not to say that multiple ways of demonstrating scholarship are not being practiced, but that this data did not indicate a dialectical relationship. There seemed in the responses a reluctance to define their academic 'selves' through the dimensions, but to defer the responsibility to the institution. In Krebers' (2000) study of university teaching award winners she notes that engaging in scholarship as defined by Boyer

(1990) requires that scholarship thus defined, would be precisely what scholars *do* and not only what they produce, they have to actively engage in the theory, policy and practice. If we examine this further by considering organizational culture and university cultures we might consider Silver's (2003) discussion of 'community and fragmentation'. Silver (2003) posits the notion of institutional cultures or contexts and the educators' conceptualizations of their academic identities, and suggests that there is an absence of connectedness:

the weakness or absence in the range of interviews with academic staff of any sense that the university as an organization possessed a culture that rested on a community of interest, shared norms, assumptions and even values that were clearly associated with the institution itself. A commitment to expand sharing knowledge, to scholarship and academic discourse, has sometimes been confused with the values of the university simply because that is where academics conduct their daily academic lives, as though the institution and its structures and amenities were simply the higher education system writ small. (p. 162)

It should be noted that Silver's (2003) study was based in the UK, and although it makes a useful comparison there are distinct cultural differences between the two academic (and societal) communities. This can be clearly noted in the absence of his interviewees' articulations of the concept of a 'culture of teaching' or notions of multiple dimensions of scholarship. Silver (2003) also states that for academics stability lay not in the institution, but in the values of scholarship associated with the discipline and the academic profession. This is in contrast to the move to reconsider scholarly practice and institutional priorities in the US (Diamond, 1993; Kreber and Cranton, 1997; Rice, 1992) where considerable attention is being paid to re-evaluating the structures and practices. Institutional policy can often be determined as occurring *externally* to the practice of the individual, even in contention, and this may prevent some integration in practice. In

essence, it is about how the educators themselves conceptualize their academic work, as well as a definitional framework that promotes these functions. The major tasks of educators has in the past been defined as teaching and research (Clark, 1987), and as research, teaching and service (Buchbinder and Newson, 1985; Nearby, 1985). The goals have been built into the institutional structures and practices, and these epistemological beliefs define what counts as legitimate knowledge, and what will externally construct and validate an educator. Further evidence of some disparity between the theorizing and the practice, and the deferred responsibility are found in the data in examples such as:

*'it should be the foundations of all university policy'*

*'all universities should follow this model'*

Many statements reiterated these comments. This appears to be indicating that the majority of respondents are inclined to assess Boyer's (1990) broadened definitions of scholarship as conceptual institutional functions, and that they are not yet indicating translating this into their own practices. The question did not specify how scholarship is differently accepted, or institutionally applied, but asked an open question about the respondents opinions on the multiple definitions. The respondents moved it into the realms of organizational policy.

As the first question in this section attempted to establish how the respondents felt personally about Boyer's (1990) definitions of scholarship. I then wanted them to tell me how they thought scholarship should be defined specifically in HE. I hoped this re-directing of the question would indicate if there were any changes the respondents would make to Boyer's (1990) framework when it has direct application, or shifts in priorities as it expanded into the wider context.

Again, in this second question, there was almost complete support for Boyer's (1990) model. Throughout the responses there were consistent categories of agreement which ranged from:

*'I'm very happy with Boyer's four-pronged model'*

*'Boyer's framework makes sense to me'*

*'Boyer's definition is the best I've heard'*

A few respondents endorsed Boyer's (1990) definitions but added concerns about standards or assessment and the shifting values, for example:

*'I believe in multiple forms of scholarship, but they must be used/reviewed by a population larger than the individual researcher'*

*'I strongly agree (with Boyer)...yet believe there is a place for pure theory'*

This endorsing of Boyer's multiple forms of scholarship must be seen within the context of an education department as opposed to, for example, an exercise physiology department where the culture of the discipline relies heavily on scientific research often funded through grants, and less on interaction with teaching and learning. The responses however draw no clear distinctions between the policy in higher education and the practice in action. This is a very complex area and possibly hard to extract in the questionnaire format, however, what was being expressed at this juncture was an enthusiastic embracing of Boyer's (1990) multiple representations of scholarly endeavor.

The third question in this section revolved around how the respondents thought their institution defined scholarship. I was attempting with this question to draw out strongly held perceptions and perhaps some inconsistencies between policies and practices.

There were two distinct groups that emerged. One was a strong perception that the institution valued research, mostly in the form of publications and grants, which in turn was reflected in tenure decisions (permanent contracts). Nearly 75 % of the participants indicated that they felt this was the case, and that, above other dimensions the institution rewarded *research*. The following excerpts are examples of the comments on what the institutions values that clearly falls into this category:

*'publishing in peer-reviewed journals'*

*'pretty much scholarship of discovery'*

*'publications!'*

*'publish or perish'*

In contrast, the remaining 25% felt the institution was expanding to include diverse dimensions of scholarly activity, and reward them accordingly. They commented on:

*'Boyer's definition fits here very well, that's why I came here'*

*'(the institution) is working towards a broadened definition, but change at a university is slow'*

*'I think this is being developed, it is happening'*

These contrasting categories of opinions may be due to the changes that this university has been discussing in a recently published document produced by the 'Commission on Scholarship' (in 2002) which may be instrumental in changing the campus climate. It is possible that some educators have become involved, or become aware of, these conversations surrounding the issues, whilst others have not engaged in the discussions, and are therefore more entrenched in the traditional epistemic values.

Another possibility is a cynicism towards policies that are frequently seen as ‘external to’ practice, and that function within administrative layers and are ultimately imposed at the practitioner level.

The final question in this first section moved the conversation into the area of praxis. I wanted to know how my respondents translated the meaning of scholarship into practical applications and integrated practices. Would scholarship be indicated as a cognitive process that only became tangible in *research* output, or would other dimensions be made apparent in the actions of those embedded in the academic community?

There were a myriad of personal interpretations of scholarship in practice and it was very difficult to find consistent themes or patterns of responses. This in itself has significance as it mirrors the research literature to be found on the subject which is also somewhat mercurial. Amongst the respondents there seemed very little consensus over the praxis of scholarship as an ideological conceptual framework. The responses included:

*‘scholarship is imparting my knowledge and experience in a manner that can be re-shaped, reformed to the learning needs of my students’*

*‘applying theory to practice to help address problems and policy issues in education’*

*‘a model of inquiry – a stance towards my professional and personal existence’*

*‘scholarship is field research, conceptual and research publications, seminal books etc.’*

None of these responses really told me what scholarship meant to the participants in practice. I found the only way to make some sense of this data was to return to other published research, of which there is very little, that has discussed related issues of

interpreting scholarship in practice. Perhaps the inability to collectively articulate thoughts about scholarship in personal practice is to do with what Schön (1995) calls 'knowing-in-action', which he suggest makes up a 'bulk of what we know how to do in everyday and in professional life' (p. 31). Polanyi (1967) calls this knowing-in-action 'tacit knowing' which is a process that happens in an implicit fashion which is very difficult to isolate and describe explicitly. This would appear to indicate that although there was almost unanimous agreement with Boyer in principle, in practice engagement with the framework is mixed, confusing and difficult to articulate. It would be possible to argue that until the institutions change their epistemic structure, their assumptions and values, then you would not expect to see its 'community of scholars' change their values and practices (Schön, 1995). However, it would appear through the critical analysis of the data that agreeing with principles, and connecting that to individual practices, and conceptualizing the theory are at this point problematic. It might indicate an area of conflict for some in the implicit conceptualization of their academic work, and the explicit perception of scholarly community activity.

#### *Summary of First Section of Questions*

I will summarize this first section of questions and provide a synopsis of the emergent categories identified in the analysis. There were four distinct emergent categories, and one underlying theme that began to emerge in this section and became of greater significance in later sections. I use 'theme' here to indicate a strand that runs through more than one section, and is found in the sub-texts of different categories. The following categories were identified:

- General support for Boyerian dimensions

- Allocating responsibility for change to the institution
- Institutions place highest priority on research (Boyer's discovery)
- Scholarship in practice has contested and disparate meanings

The fifth apparent theme had its genesis in these early responses. As has been reported, the respondents all endorse Boyer's (1990) framework of multiple dimensions of scholarship, however, when they are asked to specifically reflect on these dimensions later in the questionnaire distinct contradictions will become clear. Therefore, although this is not a distinct category in this first section but it does run a strand through later conversations.

To summarizing each of the themes: firstly, the support for Boyer's dimensions of scholarship was unanimous, both for institutional and personal practice (although, as I have stated, this will be contested as the respondents progress through the questionnaire). There were no problematic areas, although some cautionary notes concerned with the importance of appropriate assessment were expressed.

Secondly: the responsibility for changing the academic climate was seen as the university's responsibility, and seen as an external function rather than interpreted as a personal practice. The respondents did not offer many *personal* philosophies of how scholarship should be defined in higher education, but continued to endorse institutional support for multiple understandings.

Thirdly: the majority of respondents (75%) believed that the university valued research, or Boyerian 'discovery' above the other dimensions. The other opinions voiced believed change had taken place, or was taking place, to extend a broader value to scholarly activities.

The fourth theme that emerged from the data gave the impression that it was easier to approve the theory than give evidence of it in practice. The differing interpretations on issues of defining scholarship 'in action' or in personal practice were confused and illusive. The responses gave no clear picture of how it is collectively defined in personal practice.

Using a holistic reflexive approach to subject both the data and my analysis to reconsideration I hope to pause in the tracks of my research and re-examine my progress. In critically examining the discourse it may be possible to see that the evidence is pointing towards a dislocation, although I do not want to overstate this at the early stages of this investigation. I do want to alert my reader to my thinking but reserve the right to abandon this emergent theme if it proves insignificant. I intend to do what Foucault (1991) calls;

open out a space of research, try it out, then if it doesn't work try again somewhere else. On many points...I am still working and don't know whether I am going to get anywhere. What I say ought to be taken as 'propositions', 'game openings' where those who may be interested are invited to join in; they are not meant as dogmatic assertions that have to be taken or left en bloc. (in Ball, 1995, p. 255)

It seems that there was some indication that, for a large proportion of the respondents, they must rely upon the theoretical structures of their institution for foundations to their scholarly activities (Steier, 1991). They believe that unless there is a model of concepts and conceptual frameworks, then there is no effective way of practicing multiple scholarly activities. They are supportive of a *given* set of descriptions, meanings, explanations, (the philosophies of Boyer) but demonstrate only tentative interpretation in their practices. The recognition that the dimensions of scholarship are far

more than prescription, that they involve a personal, social construction of the educational encounter, has yet to emerge.

### *Questions on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*

In this group of questions I wanted to concentrate on Boyer's dimension of the scholarship of teaching and learning. I hoped by having first introduced the respondent to the general topic of my research, and engaged in a discourse, I could now introduce a more explicit issue. The scholarship of teaching and learning has struggled in the literature for a clear definition (Atkinson, 2001; Braxton et al, 2002; Glassick, Huber and Maeroff, 1997; Kreber, 2000; Paulsen, 2001; Shulman, 1998) since Boyer (1990) first introduced it as one of the four distinct dimensions of scholarship. It has become a provocative topic in the literature, with strongly contested meanings and varied interpretations. Rice (1992) suggests that the scholarship of teaching and learning is the dialectic relationship between knowing about pedagogy, and knowing about effective learning techniques. This is in some ways similar to what Shulman (1987) calls *pedagogical content knowledge*, when it is applied to knowing about learning, knowing about teaching, and knowing about how to combine these with subject knowledge in a way that best facilitates student learning. Kreber (2000) understands Boyer's (1990) meaning to include 'the scholarship of teaching can be observed when professors publish articles and books on teaching, write text books, develop innovative instructional materials and so forth' (p ??). Kreber and Cranton (2000) interpret the meaning as 'when people advance or develop a scholarship of teaching, they engage in a learning process

involving various kinds of reflection on research-based and experience based knowledge about teaching (p. 63).

Richlin (2001) suggests that the scholarship of teaching and learning became confused, before it had really had a chance to be clearly defined when Glassick et al (1997) published *Scholarship Assessed* which built on Boyer's work proposing a framework for judging the various dimensions. Unfortunately, they concentrated their attention on the *process* of scholarly teaching rather than research and peer evaluation of the scholarship of teaching and learning. Bass (1999) sees the scholarship of teaching and learning as problematising teaching in such a way that it can be 'investigated, analyzed, represented and debated (p. 1). Bass proposes that you can research the acts and practices of teaching and learning in the same way as traditional research, not just to 'fix problems' but to extend our knowledge.

Boyer (1990) saw the scholarship of teaching as a symbiotic process where research and knowledge are transmitted, extended and transformed through both the learning and the teaching process. He suggested it might involve an educator employing a reflective approach by looking at their own philosophies of teaching, 'theoretical assumptions that under gird that faculty member's teaching procedures' (p. 38). Boyer (1990) also suggests that 'theory surely leads to practice. But practice leads to theory. And teaching, at its best, shapes both research and practice' (p. 16). It seems possible through the literature to establish at least some commonalities of an agreed meaning for the scholarship of teaching and learning in that it should integrate research on pedagogical procedures with praxis. The purpose of this next section of questions will be to determine if the data in my research project can add to this discussion.

I knew in this section of questions I would be ‘teasing’ out meanings and perceptions, looking for understandings to run through the general topic and into more elaborate awareness. I also felt some trepidation entering this territory as it seems very uncertain research ground and if those who study this area find it hard to reach established terrain, then I am likely to encounter equally troublesome areas.

Firstly, I asked my respondents to specifically consider whether the scholarship of teaching and learning should be considered *scholarship*?

This question should have received a unanimous endorsement if the data in the first section was to be consistent. All the respondents had, with very few reservations, embraced the Boyerian dimensions of scholarship as a cohesive, inclusive framework. None of the respondents in the first section had voiced any concerns about the various dimensions concerned with the multiple meanings of scholarship, or specifically the concepts of scholarship of teaching and learning. However, a small discrepancy began to appear in this section. Approximately 85% of the respondents stated opinions that supported the inclusion of the scholarship of teaching and learning as a dimension. Within the texts were such statements as:

*‘of course it’s scholarship. If it’s public, systematic and discovers new things, it’s scholarship!’*

*‘if it’s researched its scholarship’*

*‘it is scholarship when you understand what you do, why you do it, and how it affects learning’*

*‘investigating teaching and learning in theory and practice is central to academic activity- reflecting on all aspects’*

*'I interpret how I teach, I examine how my students learn, I read about research into teaching/learning, that's scholarly activity'*

Most of the responses to this question were decisive. They clearly articulated support for this strand of scholarship and developed the responses into interpretations of the meaning of this dimension as more than 'scholarly teaching'. The text examples above move the question from theory into areas of practice. They have not talked about teaching techniques, or about chalk board practices, or that good teaching is a scholarly activity. They have articulated towards understanding the dialectic relationship between *pedagogical knowledge* and *content knowledge* (Paulsen, 2001) into what Shulman (1987) calls *pedagogical content knowledge* which 'represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of the learners, and presented for instruction' (p. 8). The respondents are in accord with Shulman's (1999) interpretation in 'scholarship of teaching....requires a kind of going 'meta', in which the faculty [educators] frame and systematically investigate questions related to student learning' (p. 13) essentially with the aim of advancing practices.

There is, however, a quiet voice of concern that has begun to emerge. The data is now indicating that 15% of the respondents, when asked to specifically consider whether the scholarship of teaching and learning should be considered as 'scholarship' are uncertain, not in agreement, or want to see it more specifically located in the research/discovery domain. At least some of the discourses began to link this dimension to teaching, and to isolate it as a reflection on effective teaching. There were some clear

examples of this discord in the texts, and the texts included are typical of this category of responses:

*'I'm not sure I understand the question [should teaching and learning be considered scholarship], teaching and learning are processes'*

*'I teach what I have researched, I teach well, but I'm not sure that's where I practice scholarship'*

*'Teaching and learning are processes that use scholarship and research, but in and of themselves they cannot be scholarship'*

*'I think teaching is what I do, not really a 'scholarship' dimension'*

*'If effective teaching is researched, it could be considered scholarly activity, but I don't understand how it quite becomes a scholarship on its own, no it's not really scholarship'*

In continuing to examine the data and interpret the meanings I hoped to make more sense of this emerging disparity, and it is perhaps helpful to continue on through this section of questions before seeking to establish a more confirmed pattern.

The second question in this section asked respondents to consider what the benefits would or would not be, of instituting the scholarship of teaching and learning as a scholarly dimension. I am now aware that some of the participants have become alienated by this section of questions, and that being asked to expand on an area with which they have become uncomfortable will be problematic. The purpose of this question was to draw out areas of practice where tangible benefits/disadvantages might be apparent, or to see where practitioners might indicate a symbiotic relationship. The data flowed from the first question into this second question, with the same division of opinions and perceptions.

The majority were able to articulate connections which were reflected in the discourse, and described how valuing the scholarship of teaching and learning could offer advantages:

*'providing greater insight into how people actually learn and then applying it to what they know'*

*'the benefits would be appreciation of the complex ways students learn, and we teach'*

*'we'd have more effective instructors and HE might even reform itself'*

*'value would be placed, not just on research, but on what universities should be doing...teaching and learning'*

*'we'd have better teaching, better learning...an all round good'*

There appeared in this category of respondents to be a sincere conviction that the dimension of teaching and learning as scholarship is essential to the theory and practice of higher education.

I am turning now to the responses that were not supportive, and that followed the trend that was established in the first question of this section. There were a number of statements that seemed to indicate a discomfort at this stage with the theoretical position of teaching and learning as scholarship. For example:

*'I'm not sure there are advantages'*

*'including teaching and learning as scholarship is questionable'*

*'I am yet to be convinced we could evaluate teaching and learning as a scholarship'*

I am reminded at this point that the first responses, in the first section of this questionnaire were virtually unanimous in support of all the dimensions proposed by Boyer (1990). However, the data is indicating a continuing tendency to detach the

scholarship of teaching and learning from the broad domains included in a diversified view of scholarship.

The third question in this section was a very open question that asked the respondents to suggest what changes that they thought might improve the teaching and learning process. It obviously followed a series of questions that had been focused on scholarship which contextually located the question without formalizing boundaries. I hoped to ascertain if the participants thought that the practices of teaching and learning would be improved by developing the dimension of scholarship of teaching and learning in *practice*, and how, in turn, that might affect student learning and teaching. I was aware that I was introducing student learning as a topic, somewhat embedded within the discourse, but I wanted to direct the discussion towards outcomes.

It is not surprising that in the data the division identified earlier continued to evolve. Those who thought teaching and learning should be a dimension of scholarship continued to articulate support indicated in statements such as:

*'knowledge would advance exponentially because pedagogy would be as important as knowledge'*

*'the students would get a better deal'*

*'the university want good student outcomes, valuing teaching and learning as much as research output would be a huge improvement and make me happier'*

In contrast there were a number of non-responses from the same respondents who had voiced reservations about the dimension of scholarship of teaching and learning which seems to indicate they continued to be uncomfortable or uninterested in this section of questions.

Those who did respond noted:

*'research can establish effective teaching, it is the students responsibility to learn'*

*'I think your questions are skewed, and your definitions are skewed, students are responsible for learning'*

*'teaching and learning are independent of scholarship'*

*'I teach my classes about my subject knowledge, it is their responsibility to be prepared to learn'*

This seemed to further establish a division of thinking within this dimension, and also reveals that for some teaching and learning would appear to be compartmentalized and isolated from the other activities that define their scholarly academic life.

In this section of questions one distinct category has emerged from the data. Also present are signs that although initially all respondents endorsed Boyer's multiple dimensions, on deeper examination the scholarship of teaching and learning are potentially problematic for some:

- Strong endorsement of the scholarship of teaching and learning in theory and in practice with clear benefits to the educational community

In revisiting this section and gathering the emergent categories from the data it would seem that there has been a change of heart for some of the respondents which were not apparent in the initial discourses. As I noted in the first section, the early responses are now not entirely consistent with the opinions being expressed in this group of questions. For a few the overall 'package' of Boyer's dimensions seems to be more appealing than the contents. It is the same respondents who voiced agreement with my opening questions/statements about the broad definitions of scholarship who are now

uncertain whether the scholarship of teaching and learning is really scholarship. The responses in this section seem at odds with the initial emergent categories, and perhaps indicated more deeply held opinions. In discussing the issues that are being revealed, it might be worthwhile to consider Ball's (1995) opinion which discusses, amongst other issues, what he believes to be the reconstituting of teaching from 'an intellectual endeavor to being a technical process' (p. 266). Ball (1995) discusses this functional quality when 'intellectualism, science or scholarship often only seem to be regarded as valid and useful when weighed and measured by concrete outcomes' (p. 267), leading me to question if teaching and learning are being seen by a few to be a technical process rather than intellectual endeavor. Kreber (2003) conducted a study concerned with conceptions held by university practitioners who have recognized 'expertise' in teaching and learning and regular academic staff (whose areas of expertise lay in differing academic fields) to ascertain any similarities or differences. Kreber (2003) found that the experts associated the scholarship of teaching and learning with notions such as research into and on teaching practices, peer review and disseminated research on teaching and learning. The regular academic staff on the other hand focused on the practice of teaching, or good or effective teaching methods. In considering Kreber's (2003) findings it may be possible that my research findings are consistent with the notion that it is the level of engagement with the practices of teaching and learning that encourage some to consider it a more scholarly dimension than others who see it as more of a necessity in the university community. This is clearly an issue which I need to consider in more depth.

In summarizing the findings of this section, the majority not only supported Boyer's dimension of the scholarship of teaching and learning, but were able to articulate the theory into practical and useful applications. However, a small but important disengagement with the philosophies is being voiced.

### *Questions on Reflective Practice and Self-critique*

I think it is helpful to draw in a detailed discussion of the language, and the meanings implied through its use, as the axiomatic nature of educational vocabulary contains powerful connotations. As previously discussed, I have used 'reflective practice' as opposed to 'reflexive practice' as I found it to be a less contested term and offered the more universally accepted language. I wanted to extract meaning and perceptions of the *practice* and not confuse the issues with contested language. Although there have been many interpretations of reflective practice there is a common thread that runs through them all. The modern use of the term 'reflective practice' is strongly associated with Schön (1983; 1987; 1991; 1995). It is the concept developed by Schön 1983 and in 1987 that encompass much of the epistemology and ideology of the practice. These two books, amongst others (see Ball, 1995; Cervero, 1988; Loughran, 1996/2002; Steier, 1991) are highly influential in the discussion of this and associated philosophies. Reflective practice is often applied by teachers, in teaching, as a tool to develop the quality of their professional practice. Loughran (1996) gives a solid definition of reflective practice as the 'purposeful, deliberate act of enquiry into one's thoughts and actions through which a perceived problem is examined in order that a thoughtful, reasoned response might be tested out' (p. 21). This illuminates the practical nature of this philosophy and its ease of application in teaching, as it appears to provide a pedagogic tool for the craftsman to use.

In (1987) Schön argued for a new 'epistemology of practice', that practitioners bring situations of 'uncertainty and uniqueness' to the classroom and skilfully practice 'reflection-on-action' (thinking about what they have done after they have done it) and later 'reflection-in-action' (thinking what they are doing while they are doing it); although this distinction is often subtle. In Schön's reflective practitioner model much of the learning that takes place in one's profession comes in response to the problems of the practice itself. Schön (1987) uses the *swamp* analogy (which he later used in his discussions of scholarship) in his theorizing, defining a 'high, hard ground' where there are identifiable solutions to problems, and a 'swampy low-land' where technical/rational solutions are hard to find (p.3). Schön (1983) argues that practitioners depend on practical experience, tacit and intuitive knowledge, and reflection-in-action to solve the problems encountered in professional practice. Schön (1987) maintains that our knowing is in the actions of our practice, and he continues 'reflection tends to focus interactively on the outcomes of the action, the action itself, and the intuitive knowing implicit in the action' (p. 56). The knowing or thinking about one's values, sometimes about one's problems and sometimes about the implications of one's practice are central to the reflection process, along with consideration of the implications of theory and actions, (significance and relevance). The image that Schön (1983/87) and others are presenting of the reflective practitioner is one of the practitioners embedded in practice and in the lived world.

Ball (1995) suggests that in a fundamental way reflection helps teachers develop into intellectuals as opposed to technicians. This is part of the contemporary move away from a positivist, linear approach to teaching. The linear approach encourages practitioners to work in a prescribed way, as opposed to encouraging flexibility and responsiveness. The process of reflection, and Ball (1995) in his writing, both encourage the recognition that teaching and learning are far more than prescription; that they involve a personal social construction of the educational encounter, the pedagogical

moment. It would seem that reflective practice is about encouraging practitioners to draw on knowledge derived from both 'research/history' and their own experience both new and old, to build a repertoire of solutions to ambiguous problems that continually shift. Reflective practice involves 'thinking' and 'inquiry' (perhaps uncertainty, enthusiasm and curiosity) in order to be at all effective. As Schön (1983) puts it:

When someone reflects-in-action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependant on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case. His enquiry is not limited to a deliberation about means which depends on a prior agreement about ends. He does not keep means and ends separate, but defines them interactively as he frames a problematic situation. He does not separate thinking from doing, ratiocinating his way to a decision which he must later convert into action. Because his experimenting is a kind of action, implementation is built into his enquiry. (p. 68)

This 'reflectiveness' requires critical thinking, the challenging of assumptions and the ability to explore imaginative alternatives. To be really effective, reflection must move beyond the technical rational. The practitioner is in control of his or her actions and the analysis of those actions, and must therefore be equipped to be systematic and analytical or decide another route, but it is the *thinking* that facilitates the process.

In its broadest definition, or perhaps a commonly accepted understanding, reflective practice requires teachers or practitioners to question their own values and practice, in a constructive critical analysis. In addition to these pragmatic questions, we should also be asking political, social and moral questions. There are many other models in educational practice that conceptualise reflective practice (Cervero, 1988; Schön, 1983; Steier, 1991) and in essence it is agreed to be: a) the thinking or describing of an incident/task or problem, b) analysis and 'deconstruction' of the above, c) theorising and conceptualising imaginative approaches to the incident, and finally d) putting the theory into practice. In essence then, it involves a systematic inquiry into the practice itself

which can only be carried out successfully if the practitioner has the ability to examine and flexibly scrutinise such things as social constructions, values, assumptions and emotions, in conjunction with the skills to critically reflect.

It may be that reflexive practice is a more suitable term than reflective practice although both words have connotations outside of the educational domain. The word *reflection*, in general/common use is a mirror image, a replication of an image, (in education, practice or a critical incident), it reproduces or mirrors back that which it is shown. On the other hand a *reflex* is a response, it is not just a *replication* of what is seen (or felt), but it denotes an action or feeling which answers some stimulus or influence. Reflexive practice embraces the ability to be aware of one's socially constructed self, of prejudices that are more often implicit than explicit, of the experience of tacit knowledge, self-knowledge and self-identity. It is in the use of a 'deconstructive process' that a differentiation between reflective and reflexive practice becomes more apparent as reflexivity engages with this process of understanding and exposure and 'deconstruction'. I use the term 'deconstruction' cautiously, it is most familiarly appropriated from Derrida's texts (1967; 1976; 1990), and here I intend to convey the process of revealing and exposing, unpacking the elusive, as a strategy and as a way of engaging.

Steier (1991) defines reflexive practice as being conscious of ourselves as we see ourselves, almost a turning back of one's experiences upon oneself. Although a concise definition might seem desirable, it is unlikely that it will describe all possibilities and concepts associated with reflexivity. Perhaps the closest we can get is that described by Steier (1991), that it is considering one's socially constructed self interacting in practice with others, and then adjusting our actions accordingly. It is responsive, emotional and 'feeling', as well as critically analytical and epistemically progressive.

This development of reflexive practice has itself evolved through the process of reflection. Both concepts share a theoretical framework, and could possibly be considered to therefore share the same epistemological basis. However, the practice of reflexivity is

not just personal, but also looks to the identity of the knowledge and how and what it constitutes. It is concerned with the relationship between what we *know* we consciously do and what we may not realise we sub-consciously do. As Lather (1991) describes, the reflexive act brings you 'back into the narrative' in such a way that you may be able to identify 'contradictory privileges and struggles' that are woven into the fabric of policy, practice and theory (p. 506).

So in being reflexive one is finding out about oneself, about pedagogical moments and about the multiple ways we are constituted in society. It is not easy to observe reflexivity, and assigning it merit in a right and a wrong way, you can only *be* reflexive. A fundamental difference between reflective practice and reflexive practice is the ability of the latter to be deconstructive in approaching analysis. This practical application integrates the notion of praxis.

This is countered by Schön's (1987) theorising of the notion of professional artistry where the practitioner responds to the uncertain, volatile and complex situations. Schön (1983, 1987) in devising a reflective practice model that encompasses this 'epistemology of practice implicit in the artistic, intuitive process that some practitioners bring to situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict' (p. 49) is himself offering a practice that accepts a degree of learning. He is offering a technique that is applied situationally, and constitutes professional knowledge.

An important aspect of this study was the analysis of the perceptions and understandings higher education practitioners have of reflective practice and self-critique. I have deliberately linked reflectivity and self-critique in this analysis, and in the questionnaire, but I am not assigning one meaning to both descriptions. Boyer (1990) used self-critique as one of his six standards (clear goals, appropriate procedures, adequate resources, effective communication, significant results, and careful and

thoughtful self-critique) by which to assess the four dimensions (discovery, application, integration and teaching/learning). I therefore wanted to apply his language to my study, but include the additional lexicon of *reflection* which is related, and more frequently used in education. Boyer (1990) did not expand very much on his meaning of self-critique, and how he thought it differed from reflection, but it would be unfair to unduly criticize this position as his untimely death meant he could not fully expand his philosophies as interest grew in his ideas. That work was left in large part to his colleagues who have continued to develop his notions of scholarship (in large part the Carnegie scholars Glassick, Huber, Hutchins, Maeroff, Shulman etc.). Glassick et al (1997) progressed Boyer's work through development of strategies of assessment and combined the idea of Boyer's self-critique and the theory of reflective practice into reflective critique. Glassick et al (1997) summarise the standard as being a series of questions that need to be addressed:

'Reflective critique – Does the scholar critically evaluate his or her own work? Does the scholar bring an appropriate breadth of evidence to his or her critique? Does the scholar use evaluation to improve the quality of future work?' (p. 36)

They do elaborate to some degree that it should include awareness of ones practices, and seeking out the opinion of others. What went right or what went wrong? They also include looking at taken or missed opportunities, however it could be criticised for what Ball (1995) would call technical rationality as previously discussed. It may also come close to what Macdonald and Tinning (2003) warn can be the rhetoric of teachers who acquire a few technical skills and the educational jargon as a panacea for their practices. Returning to Ball (1995) who considers that in a fundamental way reflection helps educators develop into intellectuals as opposed to technicians, there does seem a

degree of prescription and shallowness to the guidelines suggested by Glassick et al (1997). One possibility is that these are considered *workable* protocols that stand a good chance of success, and that more complex philosophies are less likely to succeed and therefore are not suggested as guidelines for assessment. Reflective practice involves contextual thinking and critical inquiry in order to be at all effective. It must take into account the context and one's socially constructed self. In HE, if it is to be truly effective it must inquire into epistemological questions to encourage engagement with the larger picture. It is quite possible to practice technical reflection, and to believe that it is providing deconstruction of practice and be almost unaware of the existence of other influences (social, political, ideological). I am interpreting Derrida's (1976) *deconstruction* to be the unravelling meanings from, for example, texts, structures, or knowledge itself. Deconstructive analysis can be used as a way of examining the assumptions and intentions that have been formed, and to identify complexities of power and authority. For example, the way knowledge is distributed, constructed, selected, organised and represented encourages assumptions about its *absolute* status. In the case of reflective practice, the act of reviewing what one has done is very different from deconstructing practices.

At this point I will turn to the questions and responses of the participants, where three categories emerged from the data and were divided into three almost equal groups.

The opening question concerned what reflective practice meant to them in their professional life. I wanted to tease out a link between the theory and the practice without offering too much direction. The first group of respondents were those who apparently

engaged with the philosophy of reflective practice and/or self-critique. They articulated strong summaries of the theory as it related to their practice. For example:

*'reviewing what I do, how I interact with my students, how I modify and try to improve what I do in the classroom (or on-line); also, it means how what happens in the classroom informs my research'*

*'reflective practice would be the art of reviewing one's goals and objectives to assess achievement. It also means to reflect upon your profession, what you teach, how you teach, how students learn....and what style of learning works for students...the ability to become a better [educator] through reflection'*

*'I use reflection to review what I do, to see what I might have assumed, to connect my students learning directly to my practice...it takes time'*

This group of respondents, approximately 33%, are providing a full engagement with the philosophy, they may have omitted to include some aspects but demonstrate an embraced attitude towards the practice in their work. They articulated a developed reflective practice that links classroom practice, student learning and personal practice. In searching through and analysing the data, no distinct demographic group was identifiable; these responses had no other patterns of gender, formal teaching qualifications, or experience. It was not possible to ascertain in the analysis of the data *why* or where they had gained the skills indicated. There are some indications that this group of respondents connected reflective practice (possibly reflexive practice) and self-examination and evaluating their own impact on the situation and on their own assumptions.

In my interpretation of the data, through the responses given to me, I became sensitised in this group of questions to my impact on the research, in a complex and

unsettling way. I had asked these respondents to consider their perceptions of 'being' reflective, and in doing so have strongly 'recognised my own role in the research, our [the] reciprocators are, seemingly paradoxically, given greater voice' (Steier, 1991, p. 180). As Steier (1991) suggests, in attempting to hear their voices I may have provided a *meeting place* where my respondents and I connect our ideas or what Steier calls an ecology. He suggests that the researcher is embedded in an ecosystem, a collection of ideas and constructs, that allow claims to emerge through our understanding of the situation and it encourages growth or expansion. I related this idea to the eco systems webs of interdependency, and the relationships that develop, support and constitute almost intact self supporting entities. I am wondering if I have, by asking the questions triggered a change or a heightened sensitivity that the respondents are in some way mirroring the question, supporting a thread that connects through the environment. This has led me to consider if much of the actual practice of reflection is tacit until disturbed by an action (a vibration in the web?), i.e. in this case, the researcher. I had not asked for evidence, such as note taking or journal entries and the responses elicited demonstrated mostly cognitive actions. In the question asked I am looking for a connection from the theory into the practice. For those who are engaging actively, they have been able to reciprocate by providing a voice that emerges in accord with the theoretical practice. This is an area I am going to deliberately leave 'open' until I feel more confident about interpreting these findings.

The second group of responses, again approximately 33%, not only had considerably shorter answers, but also narrowed their comments to one or two 'acts' that

they considered constituted the theory in practice. The texts contained discrete concepts such as:

*'looking back'*

*'thinking about (what has happened)'*

These short answers are typical of this group of responses and depicted a very linear monochromatic sense of the practice. There was no evidence of contextualising practices, or of critical analysis, but a strong assertion that the purpose of reflecting was simply to retrospectively consider practice or what has happened. This category of respondents also articulated some 'goal orientated practices', for example:

*'I evaluate my performance each time I teach'*

*'taking time to look back, to look closely at whether what you're doing is having the expected results'*

These statements considered only one aspect of reflective practice, for example, looking for results is dependant upon expectations. Expectations may have been decided by the educator and possibly include seeing only anticipated achievements and not appreciating *what* or *whom* has been excluded, and how it is contextually located. This group of practitioners appear to be primarily interested in results, and I am wondering if they have framed their teaching in such a way that this is of central importance. They may view the purpose of teaching as transferring knowledge which the learner has to receive, a technical rationality (Steier, 1991). This category of outcomes was exemplified in the following statement:

*'after a period of instruction one reflects upon the degree of understanding absorbed by the students and revises/adapts the next round of preparation and instruction'*

I am not certain that this demonstrates anything more than testing out differing teaching techniques and looking for results. This group of respondents have, at best, engaged with only a superficial understanding of reflective practice and self-critique, and appear to consider its value to be a method of assessment of student learning and retrospective quality control of their anticipated outcomes. This raised a question for me to reflect upon, and around, in analysis of this data. Was I seeing in these responses evidence of an epistemology of professional practice that is the result of the ideologies upheld and valued by the institutional structures? This is an important issue to develop further as it relates to perceptions of practices within the domain of scholarly activities. It is possible that embedded in answers to my question about reflective practice are indications that the actions of the educators (at least 33% of my respondents) are reinforcing the mechanisms for valuing scholarship. The dichotomous relationship between what the institution values and rewards is reflected in how the community constituents behave. In this instance a practice, or non practice, could mask attitudes towards the embracing of the complex and diverse dimensions of scholarship. It may also indicate McLaren's (1989) 'ideological hegemony' (p. 176) in which power, social practices and meanings are given a privileged place in policies and practices thereby reinforcing them and disguising such things as inequitable relationships and authority.

The third group of responses, 33 %, were silent. That is, they did not complete this section of the questionnaire, and therefore did not answer this question (or the subsequent questions in this section) on the meaning of reflective practice in their practice.

This constitutes voices that should be heard, albeit in what is not said! They all continued on to complete the final section of the questionnaire concerned with research, teaching and learning and can therefore not be considered morbidity (Brown and Dowling, 1998), lost to the research project. However, they were obviously not prepared to share their opinions. There was no distinct emergent category to tie in these non-responses to any of the other categories. Although it could be possible to link this disengagement to the strand that had begun to emerge of alienating the scholarship of teaching and learning from the other dimensions of scholarship as reflective practice is clearly strongly aligned to teaching and learning. This group of respondents had all initially endorsed Boyer's multiple dimensions of scholarship, and no pattern could be found in the subsequent responses on the questions concerned with the scholarship of teaching and learning. It is impossible to determine why they had not engaged in a discourse in this section without revisiting the same respondents and specifically asking them that question. It could have been many things such as ambivalence, a problem with the question, or a lack of engagement with the philosophies being discussed. However, two thirds of the respondents *did* participate in this section so I feel reasonable secure that the wording of the question was not the problem.

This section proved to be the only whole section with non-responses or silences which has made in many ways a complete analysis of this section problematic. To engage in an interpretation of a silence is a challenge, it appears that I might easily fall into the trap of making assumptions that I cannot verify with empirical evidence drawn from the data. I do however think it is very valuable to analyse and it should not be overlooked or considered any the less descriptive. As Becker (1991) notes, 'there are many varieties of

silence, even in English. There is the unsaid – things I could say but choose not to, and the unsayable – things which the language, not just a speaker, leaves unsaid’ (p. 233). If I apply Becker’s (1991) notion of choosing not to say then I am left with the uncertainty as to *why*. If it is the language that has formed an alienating function then perhaps it returns to the notion that reflective practice is for some Polanyi’s (1967) ‘tacit knowing’ and it may be difficult to articulate an action that is embedded in practice and rarely isolated in discourse? This distinct group of non answers in this section offered at best a tantalising glimpse of an underlying problem with engaging in a discourse of reflective practices. It also started as it were, to remove the Emperor’s clothes stripping away a comfortable layer of rhetorical practices that are proving to be a little less substantial and not entirely visible to everyone’s eye. It may prove a fruitful area to further explore.

The second question in this section of questions asked the respondents to comment on whether they thought reflective practice was a valuable concept or if they used a different analytical framework? On the surface this question is very closely linked to the first, but I hoped it would draw out any responses that indicated a preference for reflexivity or alternative practices. The two thirds of the responses fell into one consistent category of support. All those who had made responses to the first question agreed it was a valuable practice, and very few offered any additional comments to those they had provided in the first question. It would seem that the most useful purpose of this question was to reinforce the earlier responses. These respondents thought it was valuable.

The final question in this section asked the respondents to consider how much of their class time is spent lecturing as opposed to other teaching styles? This question was used to give a richer picture of the practitioners practice and to identify how much, if any

time is spent in a didactic style. The established trend of non-responses continued for this question which completed this section, therefore there were 30% who did not answer this question.

Of those who did respond they all acknowledged that they spent between 30-50% of their time lecturing and combined the remaining class time between discussion or other interactive actions. The participants did not elaborate in any great depth beyond stating the percentage of time allocated to the differing activities. This may in part be due to the nature of this questionnaire data gathering technique, it can be problematic to elicit detailed views on both teaching (and indirectly learning) without being able to interact in the process of gathering information. Devlin (2002) encountered this problem and designed an instrument that included such items as examples, asking respondents to assign numerical percentages to factors, and requests for descriptions that help or hinder learning/teaching environments. Devlin (2002) used a combination of direct and indirect questions, questions about self and others, to gain detailed information which could then either indicate directly or act as deductive reasoning on perceptions of teaching and learning. Devlin (2002) considered this process was able to 'seek detailed information about student perceptions of responsibility for learning not previously possible' (p. 300). She also continued on to propose that in its questionnaire format her study provided an opportunity to reflect, and that the information gathering is enhanced by the use of subsequent interviews to draw out more detail. In considering the responses I gathered at this stage of my research project I was inclined towards considering this question in my questionnaire in the net casting bracket. It has produced some consistent

indications of how much time is spent lecturing, and some comments that enrich the picture such to how they diversify their teaching such as:

*'I use a myriad of teaching and learning opportunities'*

*'I use presentation and discussion'*

However, I had not been able to reach the non-responders with this question and therefore feel much remains unanswered and incomplete.

In summarising this section of questions on reflective practice and self-critique two clear categories have arisen, and one category that continues to lay beneath the surface and was not yet fully formed but which began to connect a strand through from the earlier questions. I will examine and analyse this textual thread in the summary discussions. The evident emergent categories from this section of questions were:

- Incomplete engagement with the philosophies of reflective practices
- A reluctance to enter the discourse on reflective practices

In summarizing the findings in this section of questions, the first question produced evidence that 33 % of the respondents fully engaged with the philosophies of reflective practice. There were fully descriptive discourses articulating the different aspects of reflective practices. In contrast, the remaining 66 % of respondents either declined to engage in the discourse, or expressed concepts that lacked definition and resembled retrospective thinking or looking back at what has passed in a linear pragmatic fashion.

The second and third questions on whether the respondents thought it was a valuable framework, and how it manifested itself within their teaching styles confirmed the first responses. The division of engagement with the concept stayed consistent.

In considering this section I seem to have unwittingly touched an emotive issue. I have followed my research proposal tracing through the general concepts of Boyer's (1990) dimensions, through to the scholarship of teaching and learning, and focussing on the framework of reflective practice or self-critique (and whether, as suggested, it could be used as an assessment tool for the scholarship of teaching and learning).

I had deliberately not *connected the dots* in this section concerned with reflective practice as I thought exposing *assessment* as a purpose for reflection would bias the answers. The emergence of a lack of engagement for the majority with reflective practices seems to link in some way to the notion that teaching and learning is not, as yet, considered a dimension of scholarship and therefore not prioritised. If, as the data suggests, 15% had disengaged with this concept when asked to consider it in isolation, the trend to not engage in reflective practices would be consistent with that value system. As I have stated, this was an underlying, deeply embedded theme which was gradually gathering an identifiable image.

#### *Questions on Research, Teaching and Learning*

The final group of questions focused on research, teaching and learning and the tensions that are often felt to exist between the prominence given to research over the practices of teaching and learning. I expected these questions to expand on the predominant institutional values and norms that prevail at most universities and are manifested in the practices of the academic community.

The first question in this section asked the participants what emphasis they placed on research, and why? This straightforward question provided some illuminating answers. It also encouraged back the lost respondents. This could be in part because the

question was not as contested as the questions on reflexive practice, or because it enters the familiar territory of research in the context of the university environment.

The responses fell into two categories that somewhat overlapped. Firstly, the majority, approximately 80% placed a high priority on research and attributed much of the value to the embedded institutional culture. Typical of this group of responses were the following comments:

*'I place a high emphasis on research, it is what is expected of me'*

*'I do it because it is my job....and I work on it all the time'*

*'I get paid to research, it is also so important for tenure'*

This group of respondents indicated that it was a requirement of the academic working environment where research is predominantly valued, rewarded and recognised. This is consistent with the answers that were given in the first section of questions on institutional priorities. This issue of what is required of the academic community overlapped into the second category of responses.

Nearly all of the remaining responses (20%) also placed an emphasis on research, but for subtly different reasons. They placed curiosity and the desire to add to the body of knowledge as the predominant reasons for conducting research. This more philanthropic act was still interwoven with acknowledgement that it is a requirement of the institution to be research productive. Examples within the texts of these perceptions are:

*'I do research because I am curious – and because my university encourages me to. It is not my natural talent, but I work to maintain an interest and presence in the research world'*

*'I am naturally curious about/interested in specific fields and desire to pursue research. In addition, promotion and retention require evidence of publication of scholarly research'*

*'my research helps others, other practitioners, it adds knowledge, that's what motivates me. It is also necessary in the uni environment'*

There was a general consensus that the participants were research active in response to the demands of the university. This issue may be an indication of why there is some reluctance to embrace the scholarship of teaching and learning as a dimension of scholarly practice as it does not yet receive much significant value or recognition from the institutional reward structures.

The next question turned to teaching and learning as opposed to research, and asked the respondents to discuss the emphasis they place in that domain. Interpretation of the data has provided evidence that all the respondents are now of one voice, with very little disparity. Typical of the discourses were:

*'teaching (and learning) takes a high priority with me. It's the most basic aspect of our business'*

*'I love to teach – and I work hard at that job'*

*'I place the highest emphasis on teaching and learning...(sic)...I want to make it possible for our students to learn'*

*'teaching and learning are fundamental to me and my practice'*

*'teaching and learning are the heartbeat of the university'*

In examining the data there was a consistency in the responses in this section that linked back through the other questions. The respondents who had valued the scholarship

of teaching and learning were now articulating an emphasis or importance in their practice of teaching and their students learning. The symbiotic relationship between *valuing* the theories of teaching and learning and placing importance on the *practice* would seem predictable and expected.

Turning back to the second section of questions in this questionnaire, it had focused on the scholarship of teaching and learning, and provided data indicating that approximately 85% of the respondents supported this dimension as scholarship. In this section of questions that same cohort are articulating continued emphasis, but the remaining 15% have now returned to placing a high value on teaching and learning having earlier discarded the notion that it should form a scholarly dimension.

This data raises some interesting questions about legitimising practices, or at least attempting to understand the disparity between considering teaching and learning to be of great importance and a core value, and yet disengaging from the philosophies that would more formally recognise it's importance and render it a problematic subject within the domain of scholarship. It also, through the critical analysis of the data, developed a thread that connected the institutional ideologies to the epistemologies of practices. Are the deep-seated institutional values and norms about academic practices excluding appreciation of a single domain of Boyerian philosophies, contrasting with the actual value and importance placed on it in practice by practitioners? In keeping with my holistic reflexive research method I will re-visit this concept when I can discuss the complete analysis of the data and can locate it within context of all the gathered information.

The final question asked the respondents if there were any changes they would like to see made at the institution regarding the prioritising of research, teaching and learning. This question should have provided data on how the participants as practitioners would, or would not, implement change to secure the academic environment they desired. It also comes at the end of the questionnaire, and probably does not secure the same enthusiasm that might have been present at the start.

This question produced a complex picture. Approximately 50% of the respondents strongly advocated incorporating Boyer's (1990) multiple dimensions of scholarship, and these respondents had consistently and inclusively supported these concepts throughout the questionnaire. They articulated the following text responses:

*'I think [the university] should follow Boyer's framework more than just giving it lip service'*

*'adoption of a broader definition of scholarship'*

*'it is time to change and adopt Boyer's ideas of scholarship'*

They also commented on practitioners being encouraged to pursue their natural areas of strength through this design and not being forced to, for example, conduct research when they excel at teaching (the reverse also being true). There were a number of these comments within this category, for example:

*'I'd like to see more differentiating of staffing within units [departments] allowing faculty [staff] to follow their natural talents and expertise within the units – and still find professional rewards'*

The second group of answers approximately 25 % felt that the institution already values teaching, learning and research. They commented that:

*'I teach at a university that values both'*

*'this university already values different aspects'*

This group of respondents had earlier articulated the opinion that the institution was expanding to include a more diverse value system, although there was not a complete consistency in their answers. This is an area that would benefit from further investigation in a second phase of research as it complex and unclear. However, if I combine the first two groups of responses, I now have 75% who remain since the first questions about scholarship supportive and in favour.

It became a little more unclear in the remaining responses, as they now advocated and promoted the notion that a balance is desirable. The final category (25%) responded by commenting on the value of a balance of academic endeavours. They promoted the notion that a tension between the different elements is dynamic and stimulating.

*'there will always be camps that value their type of knowledge base as superior to those based in the practical arts. It is a useful tension'*

*'I think we are looking for a balance'*

*'I think all elements compete and should bounce off each other'*

These responses appear to consider the idea of an appropriate and equitable equilibrium important, although they do not express how they would view an imbalance of values, or whether that now exists? My interpretation is that they are advocating a balance that allows all dimensions to co-exist and for none to be marginalised, but that there is a competitive edge that works as a benefit for a dynamic environment. I think that any inconsistency in the answers to this question may lie in the subtle interpretation of what they believe exists now, and what they would like to see happen in the future, which

was not always clear in these discourses. It may also reflect some characteristics of institutionalisation, where change can be viewed as unsettling and disruptive.

A final opportunity was offered to my participants to comment in any way they wished, and for most they obviously felt that enough had been said! However, this informal forum did draw out some fascinating commentaries from about 10% of the participants. I decided that as this did not form a formal section of questions, and was not delineated by a section heading, I would include a few of the more informative discourses in full. This is a representation of what the respondents wished to convey and acts as a signpost from which I hope to infer meanings within the context of this study. The following extracts are reported in full:

*'We should all be very concerned about this debate. The "academy" continues to heap on expectations – but not time, energy, or opportunity for the traditional kinds of scholarship in every discipline. We must begin to define this whole idea more broadly and let the experts in the disciplines translate that into the appropriate kinds of scholarship that work in their institution.'*

*'Frankly, I'm tired of the academic snobs' who pretend that there's only one way to be a scholar. That's not accurate – and not a positive way for any of us to proceed as we lead the next years of work in the academy'*

*'Let me comment by saying that I received my degree from the University of Florida. At UF we had a program for professors to be assessed on teaching and learning as well as research. You may want to look through the material or contact the president's office to receive the information, it may help you further in your studies'*

*'What good is research if it cannot be imparted to the masses. Scholarship is not a social tea activity. It is vibrant, passionate, intriguing with great minds challenging others. The classroom is where it explodes. I have learned far more from my students than I have ever taught them'*

*'This is such an important debate, reviewing how narrow universities values have become is long overdue. I cannot wait to be part of the revolution that sees Boyer's ideas imposed on the academy'*

The voluntary nature of this postscript section encouraged the voice of strongly held opinions and gave freedom to speak out in an unrestricted fashion. These discourses are few, but they are pertinent. The comments above are typical of those made, and reinforce the need to debate the issues covered in this questionnaire.

In concluding this section on research, teaching and learning are three main categories:

- Research is highly regarded and valued and responds to ideologies of the institution
- Teaching and learning are considered core values of paramount importance to the practitioners
- Boyerian concepts should be adopted by universities, but must be balanced

In examining and summarising the categories that emerged on the value of research it can be interpreted through analysis of the data that this is influenced by the value placed on it by the institution. The majority, 80 %, gave the impression that they adapted their practices to meet the value and reward system embedded in the institutional structure. The expectations of the university are perceived to revolve around research

output. Braxton et al (2002) contend that the existing prevailing reward structure built into many university structures supports the dominance that research enjoys, and that this institutionalisation of views of scholarship impedes the acceptance of more diverse concepts. The academic who rejected research could be assumed to be doomed.

The second category of valuing teaching and learning highly proved an interesting conundrum. It has been implied that the university values *research* above other outcomes, and yet the participants have indicated that they see *teaching and learning* as the core and most vital element. The dichotomy that seems apparent is that practitioners value research very highly because the institution rewards it, yet they actually view teaching and learning as the most critical element, but it is not recognised and institutionally rewarded.

The final category of instituting Boyer's (1990) multiple dimensions of scholarship was unanimously embraced, and yet the underlying strand that had run through the previous data indicated that there was some disengagement with the dimension of scholarship of teaching and learning. This is where I found it was difficult to reconcile all the component parts. On the one hand teaching and learning was highly valued by all the practitioners (but not necessarily the institution), considered the core and most vital practice, but the value of teaching and learning was not necessarily considered highly enough by all the participants to be a dimension of scholarship. The concept of Boyer's (1990) broadened dimensions of scholarship clearly includes teaching and learning, so I am left with some uncertainty as to whether this means my participants would for the most part embrace the structure but reject this one dimension, or at least

find it difficult to assimilate? Perhaps there is a fine line where values and rewards have impacted on practices and principle?

### *Summary and Discussion of the Findings of Phase One*

In taking a holistic reflexive stance towards conducting this research (Bleakley, 1999; Hollaway & Jefferson, 2000; Steier, 1991; Usher & Edwards, 1994)) I am able to turn it inside out, or to move my position so that I might view it differently to, as Fishman and McCarthy (2000) suggest, see things in a new light and delve into areas such as assumptions, tacit knowing, power and hegemony. Hollaway and Jefferson (2000) argue 'for the importance of the whole in understanding a part' (p. 57) and advocate using and revisiting all the data to assist in interpreting the contextual meanings and finding evidence lurking in unexpected corners.

It has been helpful to me in my research to remind myself that, as Macdonld et al (2002) note, 'reflexivity entails an awareness of oneself as a knowledge producer who "generates" rather than "collects" data and so as far as possible must write themselves into their studies' (p. 141). Through this recognition that my research is a retold tale, written by my hand, I am addressing issues of judgement, as well as the more frequently noted issues of power and assumptions. This is not to confine my reflexivity to the personal. As Usher and Edwards (1994) contend it 'does not simply direct our attention to the problematics of the researcher's identity but also the 'identity' of the research (p. 148). I am recognising my social contextual self, and that of the research, and the interconnectedness of both in the act of writing research. Although it is anecdotal, my conversations with others who are actively involved in the community of researchers

(experienced and inexperienced) claim that it is the *judgement* of peers that causes some of the greatest anxiety, as offering up research lays bare the otherwise private thinking, and dissemination is indiscriminate.

I have taken all the elements of the questionnaire, all the emergent categories, and re-examined how they might develop into a coherent detail picture or tale. This is not to deny the incompatible or discursive practices that do not readily dovetail into the whole, but to give them the prominence they deserve within my research project. I will start by returning to the research question:

*What are higher education educators' perceptions of Boyer's (1990) multiple dimensions of scholarship, focussing on the scholarship of teaching and learning and its relationship to Boyer's (1996) standard of 'careful and thoughtful self-critique' (p. 135) in higher education practice?*

I have tried throughout this research to stay focussed but be aware of the peripheral, to welcome the strange, unexpected or perplexing that develops through the process of *doing* research. I would find plenty of company in acknowledging that qualitative research can produce such an overwhelming amount of data that it can be very difficult to keep your head above water (Merriam, 1988). There are areas in this research project that are confusing and inconclusive, and I will draw attention to those as an important part of the whole.

I am not going to seek to find conclusions or *an* answer to my research question. I want to avoid, as Silverman (1993) suggests 'the temptation to jump to easy conclusions just because there is some evidence that seems to be leading in an interesting direction' (p. 144). My spiral research methodology encourages a continuous accumulation of

knowledge or understandings, and I can re-focus or re-direct my attention in response to the research findings of this first phase, into the second phase, without having to say 'here is the answer to the question'. I can instead say, for example, 'this seems to be increasingly likely, but I cannot yet be sure, let me see if this is still the case from this direction?' In the realms of interpretation, it renders problematic the idea that you can be certain what may constitute meaning or significance. This is not to be indecisive, or in the realms of Silverman's (1993) *anything goes*, but I claim can be authentic, credible, reliable and valid research through the rigorous methods I have employed. I am aware that many researchers shy away from using some of these terms in (qualitative) research. However, at the start of this research project I proposed an argument for not polarising one research methodology against another (for example qualitative versus quantitative and the ensuing epistemological considerations) and adhering to the systemic values within those traditions. Therefore, I enter a plea that any conceptualisations of validity and reliability etc. are to be found in the sagacity of the discourses and the quality of interpretation.

By being effectively critically reflexive, I can examine my own assumptions, beliefs and biases (but only where I can recognise them) in the interpretation of the research. I can question how my research is contextually framed. The reader external to this study is also *positioned* and views this research through a lens of their own making, and over which I have no influence.

As this first phase concludes, it becomes vital for me, *essential*, to find within the aims of validity, credibility or believable research the *honestly held* perceptions of my participants. As Garrick (1999) suggests 'interpretive accounts can inadvertently

marginalize the voices they are supposedly highlighting. They do this by telling someone's story back with additional perspectives, additional authority. In other words, the researcher becomes a colonizer of the subjects through re-telling *their* stories' (p. 152).

I hope therefore, in telling the tale back, not to edit (own) all that I survey, but to gather otherwise solo statements into a collective narrative and publish it in such a way that I do not impose *my* preferential reading, but as accurately portray opinions as is possible for me.

Both the subjects, and the reviewers of my research are embedded in the academic culture, it is, in a sense, a dangerous liaison. If I am not completely transparent, those that I interpret will find fault, and those that review the research will find no accord. It is a fragile balance.

#### *A Taxonomy of Perceptions*

I have reviewed the findings of the questionnaire by revisiting the salient points of each of the four sections and the categories that emerged in each area. I have then reconsidered the research as a whole for significant issues that translate across and through the different discourses. I hope that this will provide tangible threads of evidence to support interpreting the textual dialogue in the way that I have, and draw together some of the otherwise disconnected discourses towards a collective understanding.

#### *Section 1 – questions on scholarship*

The questions that focused on perceptions of scholarship produced the following categories:

- Agreement and embracing of Boyer's multiple dimensions

- Allocating responsibility for defining scholarship to the institution
- The majority felt that the institution values research/publications
- The meaning of scholarship in practice is interpreted in multiple ways

The textual analysis of the discourses implied an overall perception that Boyer's philosophies are a desirable framework which, for most, is in contrast to the existing institutional structure. The participants also provided evidence that articulating scholarship from theory into commonly held practices is problematic.

### *Section 2 - scholarship of teaching and learning*

The second section of questions focussing specifically on the scholarship of teaching and learning produced this next category of perceptions:

- A strong endorsement of the scholarship of teaching and learning in theory and in practice with clear benefits to the educational community

This in turn revealed the more deeply embedded perception that for most (85%) the scholarship of teaching and learning belongs as a scholarly dimension and that this is a consistently held opinion throughout the questionnaire. However, for 15% of the respondents this dimension is problematic but embedded as a sub-text. They were all articulate in endorsing Boyer's (1990) dimensions until specifically asked to support teaching and learning as a dimension.

### *Section 3 – reflective practice*

The next bracket of questions on reflective practice and self-critique produced the following insights:

- Only on third fully engage with the framework of reflective practices

- One third considered it a valuable conceptual and analytical tool but were not engaging in the practice effectively
- One third disengaged with this group of questions completely

These findings indicate that, for more than half of the respondents, there was a problem fully engaging with the reflective practice framework, or, at least in the discourses. This was either demonstrated in a lack of conceptual understanding or by declining to enter into the discussion in the questionnaire. This raises questions about either its effectiveness in practice or the value practitioners are placing on analytical frameworks in teaching and learning. In turn this raises questions about any value that is located in the practice if it is intended to be used to aid assessment as has been suggested by the six standards established from Boyer's (1996) proposals.

#### *Section 4 – research, teaching and learning*

This final section of questions probed further into the emphasis and priorities placed in the different domains and the following categories were derived from the data:

- 80 % placed a high importance on research as a response to the ideological framework of the institution, 20 % valued research for other reasons
- All respondents highly valued teaching and learning and considered it the core practice
- 50 % would like to see their institution adopt Boyer's dimension, 25 % think it already does, and 25 % are concerned that a balance be found

This indicated some contested areas, for example that the priorities of the institution are not necessarily reflecting the desires of the practitioners. It also reveals some increasing concerns that if the institutional values were to alter it might upset the

equilibrium that is established and presently defines, rewards and supports professional practices.

In concluding this first phase of research, I wanted to return to the structure I have used to examine these discourses. The questions were interrelated and overlapping, mirroring Boyer's (1990) dimensions of scholarship. This structure allows me to blur the distinctions between categories and consider the areas where perceptions are not clearly located or defined. The overlapping also means that consistency may be found in some answers that are reaffirmed and further substantiated throughout the questionnaire. For example, those who initially supported all of Boyer's (1990) dimensions also actively participated in reflective practices, and valued teaching and learning as the most essential element of the educational community. This presents a detailed strand of thinking that demonstrates a connection through the discourses and the praxis. This deconstruction of the texts also views the meanings as not fixed in the language or the contextual location, but shifting according to how the many factors may come together as suggested by Kenway (1992). As previously noted, I was not exclusively seeking comfortable stable patterns in this discourse analysis, but hoped to also identify the awkward and divergent areas.

However, in returning to the underlying strand that threads through these discourses, and overlaps but does not surface as a clearly articulated opinion, I hoped to connect some of the contrasting findings and understand what this might demonstrate about perceptions of Boyerian scholarship. This subterranean layer lurked below a superficial embracing of all that defines Boyer's (1990) concepts. At the start of the questionnaire (on the surface) everyone welcomes these diverse and multiple

interpretations, but below the surface are concerns about valuing what is seen as a *practice*, that of teaching and learning, and how that could transform into a *scholarship*. Admittedly, this opinion is only exemplified by a few in the second section of questions, but by the time we reached the third section of questions on reflective practice a definite disengagement with a practical analytical framework for teaching and learning was apparent.

The problems with 'reflective practices' are not restricted to the interpretation, theory and practice. It is a problem in itself to ascribe a meaning to the term as was demonstrated in my pilot questionnaire. This recognition that 'reflective practice' has contested meanings and understandings is echoed in the demonstration of multiple interpretations of the meanings of scholarship. Again, it is difficult to find a unified interpretation.

Reflective practice has entered the lexicon of the educational community where it receives little critical analysis because of its appeal as a commonsensical notion. (Smyth 1992). It is in part its rational nature that has allowed it to permeate practice in such an uncontested manner. As Smyth (1992) states, 'terms like reflection have become an integral part of educational jargon that not using them runs the risk of being out of educational fashion' (p. 286). Yet this appears to be leading to a lack of unified meaning, or perhaps to meaning many things to many people. The questionnaire data included statements such as '*I look back at what I have taught and thinking about what I do*', which would appear to be a very linear interpretation of the practice. There were other statements for example, '*I review my teaching, and my students learning, considering*

*how I might improve both – I never take anything for granted'*, which provided an indication of a more complex interpretation.

This enters into the discussion the recognition that reflective (or reflexive) practices have been noted to operate at varying levels, and this again can be seen to an extent in the data from this questionnaire. A number of authors have categorised different levels of reflective practices (Tsangaridou & O'Sullivan, 1997; Schön, 1987; Van Manen, 1977/95). Although these different researchers find different characteristics they all find common ground in acknowledging distinctions between such features as technical and practical reflection (Van Manen, 1977). Technical reflection being essentially thinking about actions, and practical reflection includes understanding contextual influences as they relate classroom practices. This raises many questions about the suitability of reflective practices as they are presently situated to be used to assess the effectiveness of the various scholarly dimensions. This in turn could easily lead to further disengagement in the notion that the scholarship of teaching and learning is as worthy as a dimension of scholarly practice if the assessment tools are ineffective or contested. It is in this area that it would be possible to see unfavourable comparisons made with traditional scholarship assessment tools (most usually applied to research – Boyer's dimension of the scholarship of discovery) and this in turn could act as a barrier to the inclusion of the scholarship of teaching and learning. Essentially, any new (or alternative) dimensions of scholarship claiming legitimacy within the institutional structures of the community of educators must demonstrate a recognisably high academic standard that can match established practices, although it has its own distinct academic/research characteristics

that render direct comparison inappropriate. This is a discussion that holds central the issues of power and institutional legitimacy.

Remaining with the discussion concerned with reflective practices, an area of caution arises for me in analysing this data as I am uncertain, through the devices I have chosen, how to measure those who believe they are practicing reflection when it appears, according to the theoretical literature they are not. Is it a question of the value they place on the practice, the investment needed to effectively practice reflection, or do they consider that they *are* effective reflective practitioners? Could it be as Macdonald and Tinning (2003) argue 'less about a personal, moral self/teacher and more about a public performance in line with codified practices' as demonstrated in teaching standards that specify reflection (p. 83)? Reflective practice could easily operate as a self-surveillance mechanism that attributes authority to practices that need assessment, in this instance, the practicing of the scholarship of teaching and learning. The concern here is that if this is a standard by which the scholarship of teaching and learning is to be measured then it must be consistently understood and applied if it is to be useful. It must contend, or win over, those who responded in the questionnaire with negative comments about including the scholarship of teaching and learning as a dimension, if a restructuring were to evolve from Boyer's (1990) dimensions.

This 'public performance' that Macdonald and Tinning (2003) mentions seems to relate to how individuals construct themselves within the hierarchical structures of the institution. The institution defines and shapes how the constituents themselves can maintain the functions of the university, whilst also shaping their professional identity. This again raises issues of power and hegemony.

The way in which professional identities are influenced by the way they are situated in educational communities is discussed by Usher & Edwards (1994) who contend that, for example, the processes of appraisal and professional development attributes values and constructs the professional identity of practitioners. Usher & Edwards (1994) claim that this discourse of accountability, 'the attributes of which are constructed as neutral norms' conceals the 'effects of power from their operation' (p. 113). It is within these constructs that value is attributed, measured and assessed, and it is within this ideological and epistemological debate that it becomes problematic to introduce shifting priorities and new frameworks. It also raises concerns over attempting to introduce multiple dimensions of scholarship without dismantling the existing template of assessment and procedures for evaluation. It would be similar to applying the same tests of validity to qualitative research as are applied to quantitative research. It would seem central to this debate concerned with the institutional epistemology and ideology, and the structures that support the educational community to examine hegemonic influences. If I use the term 'hegemony' as Apple (1990) did to refer to 'the central effective and dominant system of meanings, values and actions' (p. 5) that holds the power to effect a dominant culture it is possible to discuss the promoting of *one way* of presenting institutional knowledge and the systems that reward it. Therefore, the scholarship of teaching and learning must present itself, and be accepted as a legitimate form of knowledge, and be rewarded within an equitable framework of recognition. Under the present dominant culture it would appear that the framework is not flexible enough to encourage assimilation, and that the constituents of the dominant culture are to a large degree framed by the hegemonic culture.

The underlying strand that I have traced found its roots in the discourses of some of the practitioners' who appear to superficially value all forms of scholarship, but in practice are less committed to the scholarship of teaching and learning. This was exemplified in the shift from initially all the respondents embracing Boyer's (1990) dimensions, to the reduction to 50 % who unequivocally embraced all of the dimensions by the end of the questionnaire. This continues with disengagement with critically reflective frameworks, and acknowledgement of any value they might bring to the practitioners' practices. This appears to be linked to the institutional structure where teaching and learning are not perceived to be a priority in the academic reward system.

This in turn flows through to the perception that reward and validation are external to teaching and learning practice, that the institution externally constructs and validates the educator. This draws in the responses that prioritised *research* as the institution's priority, and returns to the topic of power, hegemony and validation.

It would appear from the respondents that the institutional policy, external to practices, conceptualises academic work. The policy, goals and structures of the institution shape a value system that is adopted by the community of scholars, prioritising as it would appear, *research* above teaching and learning. This seems to contradict the internal values of the practitioners themselves who, although they valued research highly, also all responded by asserting that teaching and learning are most essential elements of the educational community. The strongly held opinions of what the institution values were found within the texts, for example, '*publish or perish*' and '*publications, publications, publications!*' and indicated that this framed the academic's professional persona, at least in performance rated practice. This raises an important issue that

revolves around whether the community of scholars are expressing the opinion that they would themselves like to see a change of prioritisation, i.e. raising the profile of teaching and learning into that of a scholarly practice, or whether they simply hold research, and teaching and learning, as mutually important dimensions of scholarship.

This is an area that needs more investigation before a more complete picture can emerge. However, what is made clear is that the institution has prioritised the domain of research in the opinion of virtually all the respondents. As Schön (1995) noted, the institutions 'hold conceptions of what counts as legitimate knowledge' (p. 27) and that they may be built into institutional structures and practices. In Schön's (1995) opinion the epistemology of the modern research university encompasses 'technical rationality', by which he means 'clear, fixed, and internally consistent' (p. 30) systematic knowledge, which is supported by its ways of knowing and legitimising knowledge. He considers, as mentioned before, that an 'epistemological battle' will be needed to alter the ideological and epistemic nature of the institution, and introduce such mercurial practices as teaching and learning as scholarship. On the other hand, Boyer's (1990) proposals, and the subsequent development of his ideas have proposed a mechanism to validate and structure implementation of the diversity of scholarships.

The issue of 'tacit knowing' has continued to be an underlying possibility throughout this research. The lack of responses to the questions on reflective practices, and the number that were thinly articulated could indicate that this is a distinct area of tacit knowledge. Schön (1995) discusses Polanyi's (1967) notion of tacit knowing as it relates to practice:

Our knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feel for the stuff with which we are dealing. It seems

right to say that our knowledge is in our action. And, similarly, the workday life of the professional practitioner reveals, in its recognitions, judgements, and skills, a pattern of tacit knowing-in-action (p. 30)

It is worth considering this notion of 'tacit knowing' as it applies to reflective practices in action, and the responses from my participants. It is possible that they encountered difficulty in articulating an analytical framework that they habitually use, but are rarely asked to critically examine. On the other hand, it may be that reflective practices are, as Smyth (1992) suggests, education jargon evacuated of any real meaning but serving the purpose of appeasing assessment needs.

This suggestion that reflective practice could perform a 'governmental' or a technical regulatory practice is explored by Macdonald and Tinning (2003) who propose that this possibility means that teachers or educators must be encouraged to 'ask questions of schooling, society and themselves' (p. 98). This approach to reflective practice rejects the notion of the practice as a regulatory or assessment mechanism and encourages exploration of 'control regimes' (p. 92) that might otherwise remain unaccountable and unexplored.

It also draws in discussions of technical rationality as it relates to practice and the Aristotelian notions of 'techne' (technical knowledge) and 'phronesis' (practical wisdom), and how these, sometimes competing, modes of reason can seek to regulate and guide human action. Dunne (1993) discusses the conceptual tension between theory and practice, technical knowing and practical understanding and explores the possibility that they cannot/should not be so strictly compartmentalised. Dunne's (1993) complex writing invites the reader into the deep philosophical arguments about the historical traditions of phronesis and techne, but alerts us as to how absorption of a practice, such as reflection,

can become entangled in a *technical* discourse. If too much emphasis is placed on a technical, rational and procedural approach it belies the balance of power, it competes with emancipatory praxis which could uncover awareness of hegemonic practices. This is in some ways concomitant with theory for its own sake or policy for obscure reasons, as Schön (1987/1995) suggests it could be the theorists are on the high, hard ground, and the practitioners in the swamp. Henderson and Kesson (2004) suggest that it is possible for practitioners to occupy both positions, to intertwine practical wisdom and critically informed knowledge of wider contexts into an empowered practice, that balance is a key issue.

Another possibility is that practitioners who acknowledge that the external validation of the institution is focussed on research see expenditure on teaching and learning analytical frameworks as an area of unrewarded effort. This leaves more questions than answers, but does indicate that, as a standard by which to assess the effectiveness of the scholarship of teaching and learning reflective practice is in very dangerous, uncertain territory. This makes it a key issue to further explore.

A final examination of the discourses, in the last of the sections, had indicated a realigning of opinions about 'Boyerian' dimensions, moving towards the concept of 'balance' in the institutional definitions of scholarship. Some participants had remained consistent throughout the questionnaire with promoting full adoption of all Boyer's (1990) conceptual framework. Others respondents seemed less inclined towards a complete restructuring, favouring instead an equilibrium that might be less traumatic, perhaps warding off Schön's (1995) 'epistemic battle'.

In returning to the research question, higher education educators' perceptions of Boyer's (1990) multiple dimensions of scholarship appear to be supportive, although qualified. They are resoundingly supportive until the dimensions are segregated, when the emergence of some uncertainty arises over the scholarship of teaching and learning. Although the data did not provide a substantial number of respondents who were disenchanted with this dimension of scholarship, it did provide a cause for concern over the use of reflective practice as a standard by which to measure the scholarship of teaching and learning. The lack of value attributed to reflective practices was echoed in the institutional reward system which was considered by nearly all to revolve around research, and would need to change if other dimensions were to be adopted. This overlaps the ideological values held by the institution, where the professional identities of the practitioners are largely formed through the validation of specific forms of knowledge.

## Phase Two

### *Introduction*

This second phase of my spiral methodology encouraged me to reconsider my research position. My focus was able to shift to considering where my previous research phase had led me, how successful it had been, how to determine the best way forward, and where inquires were most likely to contribute to answering my research question. This phase is my second tale from the field and may, as Denzin and Lincoln (2003) suggest:

assume several forms: confessional, realist, analytic, grounded theory, and so on....(sic) the interpretive practice of making sense of one's findings is both artistic and political. Multiple criteria for evaluating qualitative research now exist, and those that we emphasize stress the situated, relational, and textual structures of the ethnographic experience. There is no single interpretive truth (p. 37)

I returned again to the shadowy areas of what, in the practice of presenting inquiry, is valuable or meaningful to my research, and what is peripheral and insignificant. I have decided, after careful consideration of the alternatives, that it is valuable to continue including and acknowledging the debates (or conversations) surrounding the research processes. In the messy and uncertain world of research in education, these debates provide some illumination and transparency into understanding and contextually locating my research. I will however, be closely referring to my own methodological map which determines a structural shape to frame and display what might otherwise be indeterminate and confusing. Referring back to my spiral methodological structure, the subsequent phases in this dissertation are intended to form sections that could be easily disseminated through appropriate research outlets, and therefore need to be concise or close to publishable length. There is a compromise between this aim and meeting the requirements of a PhD dissertation, but it is not an insurmountable problem as these phases form only a part of the

larger whole. The aim is to keep the phases as focused as possible, to rely heavily on the grounding gained in the first phase, but to encourage the flexibility of being able to re-focus attention towards the most interesting emergent themes. To this end I will refer back to earlier discussions if they are able demonstrate or explain recurring issues to avoid being repetitive. The description of my chosen method will be more detailed than necessary for journal publication, but I will be assuming a degree of shared understandings arising from my earlier section on methodology. I will continue to introduce my 'boundary conversations' (Fishman and McCarthy, 2000) where I think they are illuminative, but aim to keep them succinct and essentially explanatory and descriptive.

My methodology has encouraged, following the first phase, a retrospective, reflexive analysis of the data gathered and the emerging discourses. I found this pause a constructive process. By having determined and planned a hiatus I freed myself from the guilt of halting progress and felt relieved that I could re-address my research issues, consider what progress (if any) I was making in answering my research question, and render problematic assumptions that I might too easily have made about the meanings and perceptions of my research participants. In essence it has involved stepping back from the canvas and assessing the picture being created. An invaluable part of this process included the discussions with my research advisors who offered critical analysis of the research to date, and thoughtful, perceptive contributions towards progressing into the next phase (conversations with Lewis & Hayes 2004). These conversations should not be underestimated in the shaping of my doctoral dissertation as they influence my research choices, or at the very least trace through in indeterminate pathways leaving residual elements or footprints. They are influential discussions.

I found that this reconsideration of my progress enabled me to contemplate my next move, akin to the craftsman checking the tools, considering the raw material, and referring back to the

design. These can be very uncertain prolonged moments, the moments before a commitment, or they can be brief pauses or checks that do not alter a confident momentum, a momentary glance. These actions often go unrecognised as they are masked by the practices-in-action, the tangible evidence of doing research or being creative. However, I hope by including these features I have demonstrated a degree of insight into my thinking, and a high level of research honesty.

In reviewing my critical analysis of the previous data, I searched for issues that had emerged through the first phase, and deserved more focused attention in this subsequent phase. This second exploration has been able to specifically target the emergent themes, and whilst this may be seen as a lateral move I have taken great care to remain aware and connected to the key focus of the original research question. As I progress into this phase I will guide the reader through my decision-making process, the structure of phase two, and the process of conducting and analyzing the research.

The decision to use one method over another in this second phase has been arrived at through consideration of the alternatives available, the suitability of a given method to achieve the desired insights, and the compatibility of a specific chosen method to fit within the framework of my spiral methodology. I have heeded Hammersley and Atkinson's (1983) warning that 'one should not adopt a naively "optimistic" view that the aggregation of data from different sources will unproblematically add up to produce a more complete picture' (p. 199). This has again led to my peripheral conversations forming an important part of my research process and is opened up here for consideration as an integral and important facet of this research project, and as one of my colours on the canvas.

This second phase will be divided as follows:

- An introductory section

- A discussion of the method chosen and the implications
- The data collection and interpretive reflexive analysis
- A holistic critical analysis of the data
- A discussion of findings and their relationship to the first phase

This second phase can be viewed as having a dialectic relationship to the whole, referring as it does in a to-and-fro manner from what we think we know, and how that relates to the knowledge we might be gaining. It again holds central the ability to be reflexive, and the method utilized will explicitly demonstrate that characteristic in seeking, and demonstrating authentic empirical research.

The phase two *introductory section* will relocate the research question within the newly established territory gained through the initial research data collection, and subsequent critical analysis. It will discuss the issues that arose from the analysis of the data in phase one, and carry forward the emergent themes that arose and offered potential as interesting and salient areas for renewed focus.

The *method section* will expand on arriving at my chosen method for this second data collection, a review of significant literature on the method, and debating the relevance of my selected participants. It will also include a thorough account of the way the research method was shaped, including method structure, style and analytical framework.

The *data collection* section will form the heart of this phase (with my analysis) as it demonstrates my attempts to draw out further understandings of the perceptions and opinions of my respondents. This section will gather the data into a cohesive form that can be holistically considered. I have also devoted a section to contextually locating the participants of this study to purposefully enrich our understanding of their contributions and connect the data to those

participants. This will provide the rich descriptions encouraged by Gerdes and Conn (2001) to offer the reader descriptive insights. It supports my desire to understand the locus of the actions of my participants, their social interactions and their individual orientations and perspectives. In the critical analysis of the data in this section I will include a reflexive component that I have designed to offer some authentication of the data by offering it back to the authors for assessment (member check) of its ability to correctly interpret the meanings of others. This is more than the checking of a transcript, it includes deciding if my interpretation and analysis are true representations of their opinions. As such it represents a potentially dangerous opportunity to be criticised!

The *holistic critical analysis* of the data draws together the four participants' responses so that I can consider the data collectively and search for commonalities or differences. I was especially interested to capture the characteristics expressed as they related to the dimension of scholarship within which they were located.

The final section, the *discussion of findings*, will draw together the salient issues in this phase and relate them to the emergent themes from phase one, suggesting where the third phase might most fruitfully concentrate.

### *Significant Issues*

To conclude this introduction I will return to the consideration of the emergent themes of phase one. This reconsideration of the findings and the subsequent decisions on where to direct my attention in the second phase are somewhat subjective. As individuals we read accounts differently. The issues that I chose to concentrate on may not be the same as another researcher, and therefore I claim no infallible way to determine the route forward. It would also be quite possible to return to phase one after phase two. This might enable consideration of other issues that arose in phase one and might subsequently appear more important. The door is not closed.

I have used two criteria to determine the issues I thought deserved further investigation. The first was the prominence of emergent themes, and how it related to informing my research question. The second surfaced through the more indeterminate emotional responses that play on inquisitive curiosity, triggering a more instinctive gut feeling, a tacit knowing, that it would be interesting to look into a certain issue(s) in more depth.

Therefore, I will use this introduction to establish the territory of the questions in this second phase, and the method section to provide a rich description of the structure and form that they take. The areas I have decided to focus on (indicated in the first phase) cover:

- Issues concerned with including teaching and learning as a dimension of scholarship
- Questions focussing on the varying interpretations of reflective practices and self-critique (and how that impacts on its use as an assessment standard/tool)
- How the prevailing epistemology of the educational institution is reflected in the ideologies of its community

### *Method Section*

In many ways, choice abounds for researchers today, but not all that is available will sit comfortably with the individual researcher, or indeed offer viable research opportunities. I returned to Eisner's (2001) opinion that 'form matters, that content and form cannot be separated, that how one says something is part and parcel of what is said.....the form of representation one uses has something to do with the form of the understanding one secures' (in Sparkes, 2002, p. px). This central idea, has from the onset, helped me focus on the shape of my research. It has influenced my consideration of how a second chosen method would compliment the first, and encouraged the recognition of the aesthetic nature of *picture painting* in research words the thoughts of others. I

considered a variety of different approaches which included a larger questionnaire to involving different education departments in different locations, interviews, focus groups and a quantitative question and answer survey. I also considered sending a second follow-up questionnaire to all the respondents who had indicated a willingness to participate in future research asking them to expand on their initial answers, concentrating in specific areas.

I decided after consideration and consultation (Lewis and Hayes 2004) that I needed a method that could further personalize the emergent themes and provide detailed, in-depth descriptions of the perceptions, opinions and practices of Boyer's (1990) dimensions of scholarship. I had become aware through the analysis of the previous data that there may be some superficial opinions that masked contradictory and more deeply held perceptions. To unearth and delve into these more secretive discourses seemed to require an in-depth approach, more in-depth than another questionnaire. I needed to be able to gently challenge my participants if I sensed they had entered contested areas, or voiced contradictory responses. I wanted to be able to deconstruct the rhetoric contained in the discourses and bring into play something of Matthews (2003) ideas of a *third effect*. Matthews, as a photographer, describes this *third effect* as reading two different pictures into one understanding. For example, she suggest that a photograph of a pile of human bones when placed in the same reference as a second photograph of weapons or guns can produce a third effect by the reader merging them into one perception (or assumption), *that of war*. War is the assumption; the pictures are the prompts.

This contextualizing of assumptions is complex, but I am interested in the possibility that scholarship, in the structure offered by Boyer (1990) may hold intact *pictures* of scholarly dimensions, and that there is a possibility of a 'third effect' emerging in the data I have collected to date. Without my reflexive pause I suspect that I would have missed this opportunity to creatively

reconsider the research data and explore other ways of seeing. Cole and Knowles (2000) reiterate this possibility claiming that reflexivity affords the inquirer the chance to ‘shed new, perhaps brighter light on understandings...’ (p. 3), by encouraging inclusion of a whole range of personal knowledge and the repositioning of thoughts, ideas and ways of seeing. I will return to the notion of a ‘third effect’ when discussing the outcomes of this second phase. However, for this method section I will concentrate on clarifying my choice of method, and expanding on the structure employed.

The desire to address more detailed opinions and perceptions and to be able to interact and guide the research process more purposefully influenced my thinking. I therefore decided that I would conduct a small number of interviews, but maintain a shape and form that is in keeping with the aesthetic structure of my methodology, and would concentrate on gaining access to the complex and more intimate perceptions of my respondents. A review of some of the literature concerned with conducting interviews provided a starting point in shaping my method. There is an almost overwhelming amount of literature to guide researchers, and in practice it is a case of fishing appealing and relevant texts from the literary pool. Of those that I consulted, the following proved informative and included, Atkinson, 2004; Cohen et al, 2000; Cowen and McLeod, 2004; Gubrium & Holstein, 2003; Hammersly 2003; Hannan, 2001; Hand, 2003; Jagielo, 1998; Kvale, 1992; Schamberger, 1997; Seidman, 1991; Silverman, 1998; Speer, 2002; Wetherell et al, 2001. From this investigation, the possibility of interviewing as a conversation looked most suitable.

I concurrently consulted literature focussing on the analysis of talk with the aim of exploring different possibilities, not just in the conducting of interviews as conversations, but in the analytical possibilities for the data. This included Fairclough, 2001; Gerdes and Conn, 2001; Hammersley, 2003; Hayes, 2001; Jagielo, 1998; Kogan, 1998; LeCompte, 2000; McHoul and

Rapley, 2001; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Seidman, 1991; Slattery, 1997; Speer, 2002; Spradley, 1979; Spradley, 1980.

There is a wealth of literature within the field of nursing and healthcare where interviewing and talk/discourse analysis, especially with small numbers (and with a reflexive philosophy), is a well established method. I did not therefore restrict my exploration to discipline specific resources, but included any relevant sources of knowledge from which to develop a structure and method suitable for my purposes. This made me critically aware of the perils of being inadequately prepared. Kvale (1996) warns of the dangers of being naive about the complexities of conducting effective interviews warning that it appears simple to do research using interviews, but that a lack of preparation and reflection will produce ineffective and invalid results. This is not to suggest that there is a concrete formula that will guarantee high quality results, but that interviews (and analysis) should be afforded the same respect as any other research method, and therefore rendered problematic. Schamberger (1997) believes that not enough attention is paid to the standards and quality of interviewing as a research method, especially considering how many researchers employ this method. Schamberger (1997) is also critical of the lack of preparation before embarking on this method, suggesting that researchers often venture into their qualitative data collection phase without knowing how to conduct an interview properly, the result being a plethora of low quality research.

Having heeded these warnings I have shaped my thinking through the advice of researchers experienced in research interview techniques and text/discourse data analysis. I am reluctant, as Silverman (1993) suggests to fall into identifying this research within an exclusive category (p. 26), however, some clarity may be gained by using commonly understood terms that can engender a shared understanding. Therefore, this research phase has been essentially interpretive and

ethnographic, aiming as it does to describe and interpret human behaviour within a cultural, contextual location. It also found commonalities within the qualitative research paradigm as I have not provided any quantitative evidence. It is interpretive.

An extension of that interpretive paradigmatic identity would bring in discussions of hermeneutical interpretations which draws on the work of Gadamer (1960/1975). Hermeneutics is the study of the interpretation of discourses and texts, searching as it does for common and valid understandings within the texts. These research and philosophical terms offer resources of prior knowledge, or extended ways of understanding and can provide thought provoking discussions. In some senses I have sifted through the explicit research terms identifying any that I consider to be explanatory, or descriptive, and that enable me to circumvent a prolonged debate of my specific research identity (which I explained in detail the first phase). This is more to demonstrate acknowledgement of existing research knowledge, than a desire to locate this phase of the study into any established territory. However, I considered some clarification necessary as this research phase has both autonomous and dependant characteristics.

Through investigating the variety of possible interview techniques I established a check list based on Kvale's (1992) recognition of standard criticisms of qualitative research interviews. By establishing some of the areas that attract criticism, I was able to systematically address each issue and ascertain any significant potential problems for my research. This problematising of the practice of conducting interviews is part of my process to establish a quality research endeavour. I synopsised Kvale's (1992) taxonomy addressing the concerns surrounding the conducting of qualitative interviews into the following points:

1. They are subjective not objective
2. Not trustworthy, but biased

3. They are not reliable, and rest on leading questions
4. Interpretation of meanings depends on the individual
5. It is not a formalised method as it is too person-dependant
6. It rests on subjective impressions which render it invalid

Addressing these issues forced me to consider my explicit intentions in this phase. I moved the process forward by answering the previous concerns as they related to choosing an interview technique. My investigations of the different options for interviewing and subsequent analysis led me to consider 'conversational interviews' as a good choice. I related this option to the previous concerns and developed the following guidelines within that propositional framework:

1. I recognise my own subjective position within the research, but can claim some outsider stance that encourages some level of objectivity. I think this is beneficial
2. The conversation interviews are trustworthy in that they represent an accurate account of opinions that add to our understanding
3. A 'conversation' will not rely on pre-set questions, but on discussion areas allowing the participant to exchange in a dialectic manner the balance of power
4. My interpretation of the meanings within the data will be returned to the participants affording them the opportunity to authenticate or dispute the interpretations (member check)
5. The person-dependant quality of this method is embraced as a strength
6. The subjective impressions are cross-referenced to previous data and subjected to critical analysis

### *Interviews as Conversations*

This exercise of problematising the interview method, and my proposal to use conversational interviews proved useful in sharpening the focus into critical areas, and forcing me to question my own assumptions about its suitability as a method:

The interview as conversation offers an opportunity for me to develop a method that is a very good structural and aesthetic fit within the spiral methodology. It also meets my requirements of offering a mechanism that has the potential to reach the more personal, subliminal perceptions of my participants, and sidesteps more contrived interview techniques that may tend towards eliciting rhetoric (Brown & Dowling, 1998). Keeves and Lakomski (1999) also encourage the use of conversations suggesting that 'this methodology may end up probing more deeply than aggressive questioning techniques' (p. 137). Seidman (1991) upholds the potential of the method, using in-depth interviews (or conversational interviews) noting that:

In-depth interviewing's strength is that through it we can come to understand the details of people's experience from their point of view. We can see how their experience interacts with powerful social and organisational forces that pervade the context in which they live and work, and we can discover the interconnections among people who live and work in a shared context (p. 103)

Although conversational interviews may appear to be essentially listening and talking with people, it can be done in a systematic and purposeful way to provide legitimate knowledge. The word *conversation* has less formal connotations than *interviewing*, implying a less formal setting and a more casual approach. This may appear to be the case to the participants, however as a researcher, I approached the process with the same level of preparedness.

Cole and Knowles (2000) offer practical advice on developing this method suggesting different possibilities for the structure:

These research conversations can range from brief interactions during the normal course of activities to extended interviewlike sessions. Regardless, as researcher you will guide the conversation in the direction of your inquiry, having thought through and articulated a purpose for your inquiry and a set of questions to which you want answers. In a more structured conversation, it may be helpful to use a conversation guide – a list of predetermined questions, topics or areas to be covered during the session. These same questions guide less-structured interactions but are likely to be less evident and more sporadic. Alternatively, such conversations might be set up by an agreement to keep focused on a particular issue with a provision for free-range commentary. (p. 90)

Cole and Knowles (2000), Silverman (1994), Gubrium and Holstein (2003) and Kvale (1996) all offer several alternative structures that can be employed. Also noted is the importance of contextual location. Coles and Knowles (2000) discuss the influence of context, implying that conversations are more effective, and more likely to take place in natural settings (p. 90). Silverman (1993) points to ‘contextual sensitivity’ which calls for a recognition that participants produce their own social context, and that ‘apparently uniform institutions’ take on different meanings in different contexts (p. 8). He also advocates that researchers should be wary of simply importing their own assumptions about the relevance of a context and its stability as it is differently interpreted from varying positions, implying that natural settings are themselves contextual. Relating this to my study, I should be aware that the institutional setting has variable meanings, and that discourses will vary according to how and where the talk is accommodated. There is a lot of instability. Educators’ discussion on educational practices in the context of a department meeting will differ from casual conversations over a coffee; the *purpose* and the *setting* both have an impact. Imported into this environment is my impact as a

researcher and my ability to be sensitive (aware of my influence, my socially constructed self, and my assumptions etc.). The acknowledgement of *self* was incorporated into my interview structure and becomes apparent in the practice and the analysis.

It seems appropriate to follow this discussion on issues surrounding context with acknowledgement of power relations in any face-to-face data collection exercise. I tackled this issue with an open mind as I could not fully determine the plays of power that might be evident until after the research was conducted. It did however seem important to register the impact of power relations on my research exercise before the practice had begun, and to have taken any precautions I could to minimise the influence, or at the least be alert to the possibilities. I believed I presented a non-threatening figure, I was not a colleague, I was not employed by the university, and I had no apparent agenda (other than my research work in writing a dissertation) that would impose judgement on my participants. It seemed that taking some time to develop a rapport with my participants would be important, as well as encouraging a casual atmosphere. As Hayes (2001) notes when discussing the meaning of non-participation in educational research, 'much as researchers may try to be 'non-participants', the need to build trust and motivate participation means it is neither possible nor desirable for the relationship between themselves and their subjects to remain wholly detached' (p. 28). By acknowledging my involvement in the process, and by rendering such issues as *power* problematic, I lay bare rather than cover up the complexities of the practices of research in the social world.

Burgess (1993) sees the notion of interview as conversation as providing the opportunity not only for more in-depth research but also claims it is based on a sustained relationship between the informant and the researcher. I recognise the development of a 'relationship', but it is questionable as to whether 'sustained' applies in this instance as the

duration is short and quantifiable. Gubrium and Holstein (2003) note that an interview (in conversational form or otherwise) is usually an 'asymmetrical encounter' in which an imbalance of power exists because the 'interviewer solicits information from an interviewee, who relatively passively responds' (p. 30), revolving as it does to some extent around information and knowledge. In the situation of my research, I think this is a substantially reduced likelihood. The relationship between interviewer and the interviewees holds far less polarised characteristics of power and knowledge, and is more complex. I am a research student in the company of the professionals (academics), and both parties have access to knowledge in the domain of the subject. If an imbalance exists it may well be in reverse. If I follow the general advice of Harvey Sacks, who is considered by many to be 'the inventor of the study of conversation' (Silverman 1998, p. 23), I need to tread cautiously around becoming too embedded in the theoretical concepts of such things as *power* and *culture*. These problem finding concepts tend to propel the researcher into commonly accepted explanations and inhibit proceeding inductively. Sacks (in Silverman 1998, p. 61) was inspired by the data, he considered the text to be a 'product' which would give him access to understanding the 'machinery'. I find it difficult to precisely grasp what Sacks (1992) means by 'machinery', as it seems a somewhat purposefully illusive term, but by employing the inductive qualities he proposes I feel that it indicates all that *works* to make something *so*. In looking at conversation and texts as the 'product' we may see traces of how it is made. Sacks (1992) also suggest that interview data can be suspect arguing that:

The trouble with interview studies is that they're using informants; that is, they're asking questions of their subjects. That means that they're studying the categories that Members use...they are not investigating their categories by attempting to find them in the activities in which they're employed (LC1: 27 in Silverman 1998, p. 60)

In relating this back to my use of conversational interviews, although I want to be sensitive about issues of power relations in the process, I do not want to become too bogged down by 'bringing problems to the data' (Silverman, 1998, p. 59).

### *Analysis of Conversational Interviews*

It is important to clarify here that I am not locating this research loosely in the domain of discourse analysis in all its guises, or *conversational analysis*, all of which have heavily researched conceptual frameworks. I have instead consulted a variety of relevant literature (mentioned earlier) on analysis of texts and discourses and sculpted through this a mechanism suitable for analysis of my data. Within this I recognised my participants' location in HE, and their familiarity with the practices of conducting research. This requires an especially sensitive approach to analysing the data gathered as the social constructions of the participants may impact their responses.

I did not intend to use this review of the possible analytical tools to form a prescriptive mechanism for analysis of my research data, but rather to structure a knowledgeable way I could enter the conversational interview process and avoid the sloppiness indicated earlier by Kvale (1996) and Schamberger (1997). By determining at least some of the structure to be used in analysing the data I could minimise the possibility of ending up with a considerable quantity of data and little idea what to do with it.

I wanted, on the one hand, to guard against locating the research within an 'a priori' design with an inflexible analytical framework, with the possibility that this would establish and influence what would constitute findings of significance and meanings (Gerdes and Conn 2001). To move in the other direction would be to allow the analytical techniques to emerge from the data and only plan for broad contingencies (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). I decided to

blur the two distinctions, determining that I did need coherence, and to somewhat determine an analytical approach, but that I should remain open to other emerging possibilities for analysis of the data at a later date.

The debate surrounding the analysis of data emphasises the critical nature of getting it right. That is not to say that my interpretation must be foolproof, but that the *process* must stand up to critical examination if it is to provide credible new understandings. This does not confine it to established methods but places value in transparency and honesty. This discussion is to some extent avoiding issues of validity and concentrating on other ways of demonstrating sincere interpretations of others meanings. Hayes (2001), amongst others, suggests that we replace the concept of validity suggesting that the emphasis should be on:

the extent to which the respondents' narratives are *credible* (whether they stand up to close scrutiny and provide believable accounts) and *dependable* (whether respondents are genuinely disclosing their feelings, beliefs ideas,) etc. (p. 25) (author's emphasis)

This then places the onus of credibility and dependability of the research, not only in the data collection process, but also in the quality of the interpretations of meanings. The use of categories and themes appeared to have been very successful in phase one, where I provided a thorough account of the relevant literature expanding on the use of this method of analysis. My initial temptation was to employ this method again. I repositioned that background knowledge into the domain of conducting interviews as conversations and reflected on the various options available to me as researcher. I also investigated different alternatives for understanding how the texts would become constituents of any categories or themes.

There is a rich background of knowledge in the many forms of analysis of talk, including critical discourse analysis, text analysis, conversation analysis, and applied

conversation analysis. The key to navigating these pathways seems to be destination orientated. I am concerned with semi-structured discourses/conversations in and around an institutional setting, rather than casual or accidental interactions or spied on chatter. I am more concerned with understanding meanings in voiced opinions and perceptions on the topic of my research than the structural content of the texts, such as 'speech-exchange systems' or 'turn taking' (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 47). My analytical structure need not focus on the minute detail of the pauses or sequencing, but it must not miss concealed or tacit meanings in the language or the tone of the discourses. I can therefore look towards the diversity of *critical discourse analysis* for guidance on conducting analysis as according to Fairclough (2001) 'there is no 'party line', as others sometimes seem to think, and no unification of theories or methods' (p. 25). Critical discourse analysis embraces a diverse approach to language which includes concerns, amongst many others, of how the discourses interconnect with the contextual social world of the communicator.

This inclusion of the bigger picture, of how the talk relates to the lived life echo's my desire to locate the analysis of the data in connection to the earlier and subsequent phases. It also holds central the ability to deconstruct the texts and examine what relationships, if any, they have to epistemological, ideological and hegemonic issues; the issues that surround, interact, influence and constitute the community and the lived life of the academic.

I considered an alternative of presenting the interview conversation text in full, to minimize my interpretation and invite the reader to become interactive in the interpretative process. There are a number of studies presented in this way that claim validity in allowing the voice of the subject to be uninterrupted, to speak for themselves. Crapanzano's (1980) ethnography *Tuhami: Portrait of a Moroccan* has minimal interpretation included and leaves

the reader to interpret much of the account for themselves. This obviously reduces the voice of the researcher (author), but relies heavily on the subject's ability to articulate meanings and renders wider contextualisation problematic. I was concerned that presenting my transcripts with a minimum amount of interpretation would complicate my ability to weave in findings from the first phase, but I kept an open mind.

I also considered, and rejected using computer generated software programs (of which there are a number e.g. ETHNO, QualPro etc.) for analysis. This was partially because I wanted a more intimate familiarity with the data, it had something to do with (a lack of) confidence in technology, but most strongly it revolved around ownership and control. As a craftsperson I determine what my tools do, and this is a difficult skill to unlearn. I also feel Schamberger (1997) has a very valid point when she talks of the skills needed to successfully interview, she notes, 'the interviewer has to listen on more than one level at once, e.g. the content of what is being said, the meaning the interviewee attaches to it, what is communicated via body posture, the voice quality, movements, and so on' (p. 29). This then needs to be acknowledged in the analysis, and the ability to capture these nuances is lacking in computer software programs. Following this train of thought, my concern was that a computer program would reduce and represent the discourses/texts as *data*, and as such would be re-framing and de-contextualising them. There may be some research projects where this is valuable, but it would be a disadvantage in my research. However, I have noted Kvale's (1996) endorsement arguing that 'computer programs for analysing interview texts may save the qualitative researcher much drudgery of analysis and thereby enable concentration on meaningful and creative interpretations of what was said in the interviews' (p. 174). However, I remained sceptical.

Through investigating the analytical possibilities I became aware that I was developing a strong sense of *how* I wanted to conduct the analysis, and *why* I needed to be able to deconstruct the discourses in a certain way. I realised that my efforts to equip myself with a thorough background had to some extent been a defensive, insecure research process. I wanted to make sure that I could do what I wanted to do, and be able to defend my choices.

I therefore developed an analytical framework that encapsulated my key research priorities of reaching a detailed understanding my participants' meanings and perceptions, and relating them to the prior research findings. To do this I proposed to deviate slightly from the more traditional transcribing of interview data, the search for themes and categories, or the detailed examination of every spoken utterance. Instead, although the conversations would be recorded, and transcribed, (and supplemented with note-keeping), I wanted to be able to concentrate on the overall gist of what was being said, to capture the most pertinent sentiments, and highlight any critical perceptions (should they be voiced) for the most focussed analysis. I had become aware through the first phase that possible concerns and contradictions were unlikely to be obvious at first glance. I would have to be prepared for the possibility that educational and institutional rhetoric can act to conceal more honest perceptions. I have already sharpened the focus of the question areas through critical analysis of the data from the first phase, so in some senses this phase is a case of dismantling any barriers that might be preventing access to concerns or miss-interpretations. I hoped my analytical process would be most obvious in the handling of the data, in the ways I reconstruct others meanings, and in my efforts to expose the way I have proceeded through the reconstruction process. My efforts will focus on keeping others meanings intact, but threading them into the previous material.

The more informal interview structure (interview as a conversation) would offer a less structured environment. I anticipated that, ideally, I would be able to create an atmosphere where the talk could somewhat flow freely (McHoul & Rapley, 2001). This places less importance on the language used, and more on the meanings implied by the language. It is closer to a casual conversation where we would not expect every word to be considered imperative or even thought through, but that we share an understanding of what is being communicated. I also felt I needed some secondary way to authenticate any interpretations I would make. In keeping with this aim, and my reflexive methodology, I would return my interpretations of the individual conversational interviews to the respective participants. This is commonly referred to as a 'member check' and Carspecken (1996) defines this as 'showing your subject some of your reconstructions' (p. 141) and asking them to comment on the material. I would be asking them for more than verification of my interpretations, I wanted them to critique and respond to my interpretations, and for that to be included in the research itself, hopefully in its entirety. This process evolved from my sensitivity to my privileged position as researcher or *editor*, and I sought, by returning the interpreted transcripts to the *authors* to gain the authentication I desired. This could seem a precarious arrangement, as my respondents may well be critical of my interpretive work (they are clearly making a judgement) but I think it will provide interesting tangible evidence, and moves the research into a more accountable arena. It is important to stress here that I am entering into an agreed 'pact' with my respondents. I wanted to avoid any possibility that they would give my interpretations only casual attention and perhaps not invest the necessary critical thought to the textual discourse analysis. It therefore became a priority that we were all in agreement about the nature of the

venture and the importance of an honest and open response. The interview method and the analysis will therefore follow this structure:

- A 'guided' interview as conversation
- Analysis of the data for interpretation of meanings
- Returned to participants for commentary (member check)
- Second analysis of the data including the reflective response
- Relating phase two to the findings in phase one

### *Questions*

This method of data collection is obviously by nature less formal than an interview. It revolves more around the shared understandings, the negotiated search for meaning, and the to-and-fro of an exchange of information. My participants would be able to ask me to enter the discourse around areas of uncertainty, or to clarify my meanings to enable them to focus in the areas of my research topic. However, I would aim, as much as possible, to introduce a discussion question and then get out of the way!

Therefore, rather than *set* questions, I followed the advice of (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003) and developed a pool of topical points (question pool) that would encourage conversation in a direction but not prescribe or restrict in quite the same way. This is similar to Speer's (2002) prompts which aim to encourage discussions but do not specifically confine them. As such it allows the respondent a degree of control over the research agenda, but still looks to gather topic-focused information.

I also made notes to myself that focussed on the central issues, the very specific issues that had arisen in the first phase so that if I felt I was not able to keep the conversation focused enough I could resort to asking a specific and direct question. Seidman (1991) argues that if the

interview structure works to allow respondents to make sense of their experience for themselves and for the interviewer, then it has gone a long way towards achieving an authentic account. Therefore this developing of a collection of questions was to be considered as a flexible and negotiated area dependant upon individual conditions. The question pool is included in the Appendix D.

### *Participants*

Following the decision to use conversational interviews I needed to determine the best choice of participants. As I have previously mentioned I wanted these to be in-depth situations where I could explore the more intimate perceptions of scholarship, and gain some insights into the possibilities of the theories in practice. I wanted to hear scholars talking about scholarship in their own words and avoid educational rhetoric. This establishes the practicalities for using small numbers as this method would obviously produce a considerable amount of detailed data. I will not return in any depth to the debate surrounding the justification of using small numbers as this issue was discussed in phase one, but I will include here some of the relevant literature that led me to confidently proceed. I reviewed Bassey, 1999; Gubrium & Holstein, 2003; Kvale, 1996; McHoul and Rapley, 2001 amongst others. I noted in particular Seidman (1991) who states on discussing participant numbers 'enough is an interactive reflection of every step of the interview process and different for each study and each researcher' (p. 25).

There were a number of different options available for participants. I could randomly draw from the pool of respondents from the first phase (albeit those that had indicated by including a way to contact them a willingness to participate in future research phases), I could ask for volunteers, or I could select a purposeful secondary sample.

I found some guidance in Glaser and Strauss's (1967) ideas of a 'grounded theory', one that implies that a theory is somehow generated and emerges from the data rather than a 'preconceived theoretical framework' that is informed by data (p. 45). Although I am not concentrating on the generating of 'theories', I did feel this linked into my phased spiral methodology by suggesting that my first phase has generated a momentum (in place of theory) and direction that can shape the next phase, in some sense it had 'grounded' it. I also reviewed Patton's (1990) suggestion of *purposive sampling* where subjects are selected because of some particular characteristic. This demonstrated that there were examples in the relevant literature of researchers targeting a very specific group, and excluding others. I also noted James's (1963) sage comment that 'the man usually hailed as representative is never quite typical, is more subtly compounded than the plain up-and-down figure of the stock characteristics' (p. 177).

I also turned to Boyer's own framework for inspiration. His generating of intact but overlapping scholarly dimensions in four distinct areas seemed to offer an interesting possible structure. I explored the possibilities of identifying four participants from the original questionnaire who would, at this moment in their careers fit into each of Boyer's (1990) dimensions. This would offer me the opportunity to explore the emergent themes from the first phase and hear a diversity of voices, or a collective narrative, and relate it directly to Boyer's (1990) proposals. By restricting the participants to four, I would also be able to encourage detailed data to emerge and be analysed for the connection between Boyer's (1990) philosophies and practitioners' practices. Furthermore, it would also enable me to delve into the interpretations of reflective practices, which had emerged as such a contested area, in a way that would be inclusive of divergent interpretations and experiences. Gubrium and Holstein

(2003) see this discerning of participants in terms of ‘activating interview subjects’ (p. 32). One other aspect that drew me towards this structure was the ability to be able to include Mathew’s (2002) concept of a third effect, and directly trace this into Boyer’s (1990) dimensions.

In order to find suitable candidates I cross referenced my original respondents against curriculum vitas and published works looking for evidence of where their academic careers had most strongly developed. I also drew on advice through conversations with department colleagues when looking for suitable participants. Gerdes and Conn (2001) consider this ‘asking around’ to be a complementary practice for identifying additional key informants in a research project, allowing as it does for the subjects of the research to partially influence the direction of the research. They note that it is ‘contrary to the *a priori* researcher-directed and randomized approach to sampling’ and ‘generally represents the preferred method of subject selection amongst most qualitative methodologies’ (p. 188). Although Gerdes and Conn’s (2001) statement is very broad, it does serve to illustrate that some consider this to be an acceptable practice.

I used such indicators as *Teachers of Excellence* award winners, community school links and extensive publications of both basic and functional research to identify Boyer’s (1990) four different domains within the profiles of each potential participant. I was able to link those traits in the potential participants into Boyer’s (1990) four domains, *teaching and learning, application, discovery* and *integration*. There was, of course, a degree of overlapping, especially in application and integration where the distinctions in Boyer’s (1990) domains are the least easily discernable. I also experienced some problems recruiting willing participants in the domain of both discovery and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

At this stage, in understanding why that might be, I am drawn towards considering that, for the *discovery* participant, this project in itself will take time away from the priorities of being research productive, thereby explaining why a research orientated practitioner might not consider it a worthwhile exercise. It may be that those in the community of practitioners who prioritise research above other dimensions would not willingly allocate time to an external student's research project.

The difficulty in recruiting a participant who would consider they are located within the dimension of scholarship of *teaching and learning* could well be because they do not find it so easy to obtain tenure (permanent contracts) and are therefore not so prevalent in the community of scholars.

On the other hand, the act of being a participant in this research project demonstrates practices that are scholastically multidimensional, and this will need to be recognised in the analytical process. I am certainly drawn towards concluding that if the existing climate of the institution does not recognise and reward those who would fall into the category of the scholarship of teaching and learning this contributes in a large way to explaining why I have found it difficult to identify a candidate. As it transpired I was able to achieve my aim by recruiting a practitioner who had achieved tenure many years earlier and before the dominance of research was so evident in the requirements for permanent employment.

The process of finding suitable, and willing participants, included establishing an equitable balance in a number of characteristics. I also chose participants with similar professional experience (they were also of a similar age, although this was a secondary consideration to experience). They were all tenured (permanent contracts) and were well established in their institution. The conversations were conducted at the convenience of the

participants, and in a location of their choosing. I have used pseudonyms for all four of the respondents to preserve anonymity.

### *Data Collection*

Before conducting my first conversational interview I enlisted the help of a volunteer to act as an experienced critical friend, creating as it were a pilot conversational interview. This enabled me to practice my technique and gain confidence. I used their advice to refine small areas, although we both considered it worked well. I was able to adjust the question pool slightly, and included a prompt about how my participants used reflective practice in their professional practice. I was able to prepare my time management better by noting how long my pilot interview took, how aware I needed to be about covering all the issues, and not overstaying my welcome! The most helpful outcome was gaining confidence.

Before interviewing my four participants they were asked to sign a consent form which appears in the appendices. The data were gathered in January and February 2005.

### *Contextually Locating the Participants*

Following my analytical framework I have provided descriptive pictures of my four participants so that my reader has some indication of the personalities behind the data. I included in this discussion which dimension of Boyer's (1990) scholarships was the most appropriate fit for each of the respondents. I have therefore preceded each of the conversation interviews with these vignettes.

### *The Data and Interpretive Reflexive Analysis*

As previously described, a question pool was used as the guide for the conversations, and, although I was conducting four separate conversations, I resisted any temptations to include any references to previous discussions. I did not experience any problems concerned

with keeping the conversations fresh, and tried as closely as possible, and without being restrictive, to follow a similar pattern with each respondent. The four participants did demonstrate differing levels of engagement with the topic and this is demonstrated in the complexity and length of the data and my analysis. In the first instance, the data and analysis are presented together as an interpretation of the conversation which was then returned to the respondent for their comments (member check or respondent validation). Further critical analysis follows this process and includes a holistic consideration. I have represented the texts exactly as they were offered back to the respondents and differentiated them in single line spacing and coloured font. This is to clearly distinguish them from the main text of this dissertation. I have also included the intact responses of the participants to my interpretation of their opinions.

#### *Participant 1 – Boyer's Dimension of Discovery*

Caroline is welcoming, and has chosen to conduct this meeting in her office. The surroundings revealed orderly bookshelves from floor to ceiling, a considerable amount of filing, and one or two personal items. There was a strong sense of professional space (rather than personal space), and perhaps due to the overactive heating which could not be personally controlled, it felt very much a part of a larger whole. She was quite formally dressed, with a traditional style and neutrality that could be acceptable in diverse situations, from non-teaching through to more formal interactions. Caroline had time constraints, but had opened up a slot in a busy schedule to talk to me. She is a very experienced educator with a considerable publishing record and a number of active research projects. Her curriculum vitae is extensive and has included considerable publications, administration posts, and recently overseeing a large grant. She teaches mostly graduate classes now, and has started to conduct more online

classes. Her teaching reviews are good. She is on a number of College (department) committees, and has chaired several, although she keeps peripheral involvement to a minimum in order to concentrate on her research.

The atmosphere was relaxed, although she was curious about my methodology and asked me to explain how this segment of the research was located in a larger picture. She chatted for some time about her own research projects and her collaborative work with other researchers and students. She enjoyed working with her doctoral students who are involved in data collection exercises where she subsequently conducts the analysis on any data gathered. She located herself in Boyer's dimension of discovery.

I began the conversation interview by introducing myself and the general topic I hoped we could discuss. I was careful not to be too explicit about the specific aspects I was interested in, hoping that a circuitous route would encourage tacit understandings to emerge rather than educational rhetoric. I have reproduced below my interpretation of that conversation as it was re-presented to Caroline.

The following is a synopsis of our conversation focusing on Boyer's (1990) dimensions of scholarship, and the surrounding issues. You may notice that some areas of our discussion are not included as I have concentrated on issues that relate directly to my research question. However, it is important that my selective process has not altered your intended meanings and has maintained the contextual location of your expressed opinions. I have purposefully only included a minimum number of direct quotations which is in keeping with the interpretive style of critical discourse analysis that I am employing.

As part of a reflexive research methodology I would like to invite you to review my interpretations and comment at the end as fully and freely as possible. I am especially interested in how closely you feel this synopsis represents your opinions and perceptions, and if, following our discussion you have anything further to add. Please be critical of any areas I have misinterpreted or where I have not fully understood your meanings.

I felt that your overall opinion of Boyer's multiple dimensions of scholarship was supportive. (*Caroline: 'I think it would be a good framework to work in, in the college of education'*)

You conveyed a recognition that faculty excelled in different dimensions, and that it was important to recognize and reward diverse attributes in the faculty (staff) within the College of Education. Your concerns focused mainly on issues surrounding the institutional ideology of the university, and how that may, or may not be reflected in the practices and policies at College (department) level. You implied that significant changes, such as implementing a structure that rewarded diverse dimensions of scholarship would need to have unilateral support especially at the institutional policy level. It would be essential for the College to be operating a structure that was supported by the institution.

When I asked you to identify a category or dimension that you felt most closely described your professional work, at this time, you identified Boyer's *discovery* as the most comfortable fit. You described your professional work as being strongly located in research and that teaching was something you were assumed to be able to adequately practice. (*Caroline: 'the assumption is that you are a satisfactory teacher and even if you are not if your publications are outstanding you will get tenure and promotion at this institution'*)

You were able to provide anecdotal evidence of colleagues who could be considered to fall into other dimensions, a highly research orientated professor (educator) who keeps his teaching to a minimum, and a professor who excels at teaching and learning but carries out minimal research.

When we focused on *the scholarship of teaching and learning* you were less certain that this could be considered a dimension of scholarship in its own right (*Caroline: 'it's hard to see it as a scholarly practice in its own right'*) although you highly value teaching and learning as it relates to your research and practice. In considering this question further you thought the scholarship of teaching and learning should be included, and you understood it to cover excellent practice in the dimension and research into teaching and learning.

You were familiar with the terms 'reflective practice', 'reflexive practice' and 'self-critique', although you do not use any of these frameworks in a formalized manner. You critique your teaching practice through review of class materials, thinking back over how a class has progressed. (*Caroline: 'I've heard the terms before, but its not a term I really use, I mean I think about and reflect on what I do, my thinking about my courses informs how I teach and I do change my courses every semester, I adjust them to what I'm reading in the literature and the feedback I get from students'*)

You have not had any professional training in reflective practice, reflexive practice or self-critique techniques and have developed your own interpretation of using this type of conceptual framework within your teaching practice.

I would like to invite you to comment on my synopsis of our conversation, and make any changes or additions below.

### **Caroline's response:**

I think this is a fair representation of my views on scholarship and teaching and have nothing else to add. Good luck on your dissertation project.

### *Participant 2- Boyer's Dimension of Integration*

Tom is an approachable and open personality with a ready smile. He was enthusiastic about being a part of this research project as he enjoys academic debate and was interested in my research. Tom has a youthful appearance, concealing some of his considerable experience in the academic world. He is contemporarily and casually dressed, with hints of the unconventional. He has a diverse and comprehensive curriculum vitae which includes some years as a school teacher and administrator, a considerable number of research publications, a number of books, and he has been instrumental in the designing of a new degree. His teaching evaluations are excellent, with his students commenting on his good rapport and diverse teaching style. He has taught in the university for a number of years and is considered an established member of staff. He sits on a few committees, and is chair of one. His office door, which is nearly always open, reveals orderly surroundings with a rich selection of academic literature on the bookshelves. This slightly controlled environment is counteracted by some family photographs and travel mementos. I noticed that he was warmly greeted by colleagues in casual encounters, and accepted the one or two interruptions during our conversation in a relaxed and informal way. The first impression is of a confident outgoing personality who has a strong sense of humour and a genuine interest in his academic world and the community that constitute it. There was a hint, in the way that he dressed, and the slightly unconventional office that he might have a rebellious streak, although his apparent flexibility gave no indication of a confrontational attitude. He chose his office as the setting and kept the door slightly ajar.

The conversation was relaxed and flowed easily, and his obvious familiarity with Boyer's work was both an advantage, and a disadvantage! It meant that I had no room to manoeuvre around my meanings in the conversation, and he challenged me on several occasions to expand or explain precisely what I was asking. This participant located himself in the dimension of integration.

I introduced this synopsis with the same opening paragraph as I had used for participant 1.

I felt your overall impression of Boyer's multiple dimensions of scholarship was supportive and approving, although you questioned whether it was the only available alternative. You felt that it was valuable to be able to find ways to isolate and identify practices that constitute and define scholarship (*Tom: 'They do make sense...if the purpose is to put scholarship into categories. I think you do have to do that because scholarship is such a broad term'*). You thought that the framework might encourage a more harmonious faculty (staff), that it would enable faculty to be able to locate themselves in areas of their expertise. This would then reduce the slightly apologetic and weak position of practices other than research orientated productivity, which you felt dominates the academic community.

You felt that you would be able, at this point in your career, to find a comfortable fit within the framework (*Tom: 'Yes, I can see a category where my work would fit, a category that I could work within'*). You identified integration as the most suitable dimension, although you thought there was some possible overlap into application, (*Tom: I interpret what other people do, my work is based a lot on looking at theories and research generated by others and re-interpreting it into a more accessible form...or opening it up for discussion in a more available way – sometimes things really don't make much sense in the larger picture until someone else re-interprets it!*). You expressed the opinion that during your career (to date) you had moved through different dimensions, and would certainly have located yourself at one point foremost as a researcher (Boyer's dimension of discovery). You indicated that you felt the emphasis in the United States was predominantly on research and far less (in higher education) on teaching and learning.

Following this area of focus in the discussion you felt that the academic community was influenced strongly by the research ethos, and that this privileged the dimension of research (discovery) over other possible dimensions (*Tom: 'absolutely, new professors usually do what they are going to be rewarded for, I mean promotion and tenure (permanent*

contract), and even though people would like to tell you otherwise, that is the way it is.....so that relates to a dominance of discovery scholarship, or basic research')

When we discussed allocating value and importance to the four dimensions you expressed the opinion that all aspects were important in your opinion, but that different groups might place value in varying areas. You made connections across the dimensions, relating and interconnecting them (Tom: *'discovery leads to, for example cures for diseases, if you don't have the scholarship of teaching and learning supposedly teachers wouldn't be critically analyzing what they are doing (sic)....if there wasn't application we wouldn't have people applying theory to practice, ...if we didn't have integration we wouldn't have people who were commenting on theory and transforming it into social discourses....suggesting ways in which the theory can move forward'*). You expressed a strong commitment to the notion of differing dimensions being included within the institutional structure or ethos of a university. However, you expressed considerable concern that the hierarchical nature and institutional ideology decides what is valued through the reward and tenure system, and that its epistemological beliefs would have to change with the implementation of a more holistic interpretation of scholarship. You noted that in your opinion the institution, although it was unlikely to admit it publicly, places research, or discovery scholarship, at the top of its hierarchical structure, and that teaching and learning in particular was of far less importance.

When we talked about the scholarship of teaching and learning, and whether it could take its place as a scholarly dimension in its own right you voiced some concerns. The two specific concerns you voiced were policy orientated and the theory in practice. You considered it essential for the institution to value the scholarship of teaching and learning through implementation of a workable structure. Secondly, you were concerned with how the scholarship of teaching and learning works in practice, you were uncertain about the shape it would take and how it would be assessed (Tom: *'I think there are two issues, one of them would the scholarship of teaching being valued by the institution you work in, the other factor to do with that is how does the scholarship of teaching and learning actually work, is it workable?'*)

When we moved the conversation into the area of reflective practice, reflexive practice and self-critique you voiced a conviction that it had become somewhat of an axiomatic term freely used by educators but little understood. You said that although you knew what to say in order to sound as though you were practicing self-critique, in practice you rarely did more than reconsider or re-evaluate your practice. You considered yourself a thoughtful practitioner, but that was not interpreted into any formal framework. You did not think, given the circumstances that very few people practice effective reflective frameworks or that it would be a good standard by which to measure the scholarship of teaching and learning. You gave some explicit examples of how poorly you thought the theory was practiced

*(Tom: 'Reflective practice if it is done properly, should include such things as measures of social justice and all that stuff...as well, not only saying that bit went well, which bit didn't ....which is what a lot of people think reflective practice is. I think I try to use the students as a sounding board ..(sic) ask them if the course is meeting their expectations etc. but I know that is not really reflective practice').* You continued on this theme to say that perhaps being truly reflective or reflexive in your practices could be quite scary, that you might start to question your belief system and that it could have an almost destabilizing quality. You did, however, end by stating that it would be a good idea if we all examined the ways in which we sometimes unwittingly perpetuated such things as gender inequity, and that effective reflexive practices are one way of exposing those hidden elements.

I would like to invite you to comment on my synopsis of our conversation, and make any changes or additions.

### **Tom's Response**

I'm not sure that I thought other scholarship dimensions were weak. They suffer from a lack of status, particularly among the discovery people. I have always thought it is they who need to change their view rather than us educating them. I do place myself now in integration, in my work I do get into practical applications of the theory as well, so I suppose that would be overlap into application. Obviously, integration and application are very closely linked.

I'm especially concerned that 'reflective practice' has become a proxy for good practice. This is not the case. Nor should reflection be used a measure or assessment of one's teaching, I know very good teachers who are not reflective, and some who profess reflection but are hopeless. It drives me nuts when I sit on senior meetings in the College of Education and they all drivel on about reflective practice, and all they're talking about is lesson evaluation.

I think you have done a great job of interpreting our conversation; you have captured the essence of my meanings and haven't used narrative to dilute the debate. This is how I feel about this topic at the moment.

### ***Participant 3 – Boyer's Dimension of Application***

Laurie has again chosen her office as the setting. In her office she has made an effort to create a 'home from home' atmosphere with plants, pictures, coffee maker and fridge, camouflaging the more usual file cabinets and academic books. It has a warm ambiance. She is dressed in a very unremarkable fashion, in a way that would be very difficult to describe if

asked at a later date to be specific. She is an experienced and tenured member of staff, although I understand her research record was considered thin and caused some difficulties in the process of obtaining tenure (permanent contract). She is quietly, but confidently spoken, and took some time to clarify the purpose of my research and how I would be assuring confidentiality. She was very interested in the work of Boyer, and was familiar with his framework and the multiple dimensions. She confidently located herself in the dimension of application. She was also interested in my methodological structure and how I intended to analyse my research. We spent some time in casual conversation before I began to tape record and focus the conversation on the topics I wished to discuss, indeed I had to slightly retrace in order to capture the opening moments of our focused discussion. She closed her door.

This third participants' synopsis was again introduced with the same explanatory paragraph encouraging her to consider the following interpretation of our conversation.

I felt your overall impression of Boyer's multiple dimensions of scholarship was very supportive. You expressed considerable familiarity with Boyer's (1990) framework, and noted that it would encourage a greater recognition of the different facets that should be included when considering what counts as scholarship. You could see positive ways in which it could impact both the way your own work is perceived, and that of your colleagues (*Laurie: 'I don't think you can find a better match, especially for somebody in pedagogy, and I think it shows us that there are multiple ways and a variety of things that we can do that inform the practice of others, and inform our own practice...'*). My impression was that you felt strongly that if Boyer's framework were to be in place in your institution your work would be viewed quite differently, and that much of the work with which you are involved would have far greater value (*Laurie: it would be wonderful because I don't think a lot of what I do is valued by all people'*). You noted that establishing recognition of the value of practices other than research productivity would create a more equitable environment bringing currently undervalued and somewhat subdued practices into mainstream recognition.

You felt very comfortable locating yourself in Boyer's dimension of application (*Laurie: 'Yes, absolutely'*), and articulated many salient examples of how your professional work would fall into that category, and include some overlap into the scholarship of teaching and learning

*(Laurie: 'to me not only conducting research, but writing text books that will help others improve their performance, working with others to help them improve their teaching effectiveness, doing accreditation type things...I think all of that plays a part ...and I want my research to be something that's important to me, and I want it to impact my students....').* You could also clearly identify colleagues who you felt could be located in other dimensions, and that they would then be able to concentrate on their areas of interests or strengths rather than being expected to contribute in all areas. *(Laurie: 'I think what I see is that some individuals get brought in because of their research and it's like ....you are going to have to teach classes...and so they go through the motion....').*

When we discussed the scholarship of teaching and learning you thought it had a rightful place as a scholarship dimension. You also explained that the way you apply your research to your teaching was an example of that in practice. You perceived that although you would locate yourself strongly in the dimension of application, your involvement in pedagogy inevitably meant that you overlapped into the scholarship of teaching and learning. You did not indicate any concerns with implementing the scholarship of teaching and learning in practice, and gave the impression that it would be a welcome change to see formal recognition of excellence in both 'application' and 'scholarship of teaching and learning'. You felt that, in the present climate, teaching (and learning) was considered secondary to research, and that this had a negative influence in the educational community of both teacher and learner. You highly value both teaching and learning, and application, regardless of the value placed on those professional practices by your institution *(Laurie: 'there were times on my temure track when I was told to slack off on my teaching (in order).....it would help me to get more publications out...and I just said ....I can't do that, you know, ...this is critical!')*

When the conversation moved into discussions of reflective practice, reflexive practice or self-critique you enthusiastically articulated your use of reflective practice in your work. You gave many examples of how you practice reflection, how you encourage (require) your students to become reflective practitioners, and your involvement in group professional reflective sessions following collaborative teaching *(Laurie: 'Each of us would watch one another and give feedback as well as just reflecting on how we thought things went....what we might do differently next go around ...I haven't done any journal writing but I'm always reflecting. It's just a part of me ...what would I do differently, how would I do this, what would work better with this particular group of students....').* You are a strong advocate of reflective practice and would consider it a requisite component of the scholarship of teaching and learning. When we delved into how reflective practice might best be explained you felt it strongly consisted of considering how things had gone, whether the learning outcomes had been met, what concerns might be apparent, and what changes might be made to improve both teaching, and the students' learning. You often take time to reflect

following a collaborative teaching session in the form of de-briefing (*Laurie: 'we do most of the reflection...I mean we de-brief, we just got back from practicum so we de-briefed together as a group and the clinical teachers will do so as well in the schools....they will give some feedback with the students...share what thought in terms of how it went'*). You acknowledged that this process can be very time consuming, sometimes confessional, and sometimes therapeutic, and that you can see a change in the ability of the students to articulate this type of reflective process over time (*Laurie: 'student teachers have to write reflection, ...why would they do it differently, have you met your objectives...and what do you think caused that to occur....(sic) over time they get really good at reflecting because they do it early and often'*). From this section of the conversation I concluded that reflective practice, as you described it in action, forms a seminal part of both your professional practice, and the practice of your students. You would consider it a valuable assessment tool when considering the scholarship of teaching and learning in practice.

When the conversation turned to the role of the institution in defining values and rewards in academic work you expressed the opinion that the ideology of the university was narrowly focused. It was your opinion that they valued research at the expense of other dimensions, and that any deviation from this philosophy would have, at this time, to be practiced at College (department) level. You implied that the prioritizing of *research* by the institution may impact on the quality and value placed on the teaching and learning experience of the student (*Laurie: 'I think we have to hold true to giving our students the best opportunity we can, and that takes more time from other priorities such as research'*). You thought that if a broader interpretation of scholarship were to be introduced an ideological change would need to be made by the institution, however, you indicated that this seemed unlikely in the present climate (*Laurie: 'I think the university is far, far away....I think it's not quite at the other end of the spectrum....but almost'*). My impression of your personal philosophy as it applies to the institutional structure was that you practice a professional balance in your work that places high value in areas that are, in your opinion, the most important, but these are not necessarily the areas that are likely to be rewarded (*Laurie: 'sometimes here I feel I bang my head against the wall...but I'm not going to change what I know (to be right) ...and if the fit isn't good...too bad'*).

I would like to invite you to comment on my interpretation of our conversation, and make any changes or additions below.

### **Laurie's Response**

After reading your interpretation of my perspective based on the interview, I think you've done so with great accuracy. I found nothing that did not

coincide with the perspective I attempted to convey relative to Boyer's dimensions of scholarship. I enjoyed doing the interview and will look forward to reading your research in the near future.

*Participant 4 – Boyer's Dimension of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning)*

Rhonda was very enthusiastic about our meeting, welcoming the opportunity to discuss what she considered to be a very topical subject. She was in the process of applying for a further promotion and was facing the difficulties of translating her professional strengths into the institutional structural landscape. She arranged for us to meet in her office, which had an established feel, as though she had staked a territory and made it her own. The room was somewhat cluttered and looked disorganised, but presented a friendly mixture of academic paraphernalia and homely touches. She was ebullient and open, casually dressed and a little dishevelled. She has been at the university for more than twenty years, and has seen what she considers to be many changes and a huge expansion. Her teaching record is outstanding, her research output is considered adequate, and her work on campus wide committees is considered excellent. She is highly knowledgeable on the topic of scholarship, having chaired a number of committees over several years to investigate developing a functional framework to meet the changing demands of a modern university community. She would consider she falls into the dimension of the scholarship of teaching and learning, although her research output and her service work also closely fit with Boyer's dimension of application. She started the conversation with the door open, but closed it after a few minutes. She was talkative.

I again prefaced this synopsis with the same opening paragraph I have used for all my respondents.

In our conversation you conveyed a complex and thorough understanding of Boyer's (1990) multiple dimensions of scholarship. You spoke passionately about perceptions of scholarship, and the changing campus community. Your

overall opinion of Boyer's multiple dimensions of scholarship was highly supportive (*Rhonda: 'multiple dimensions of scholarship are a wonderful idea, thank god for that idea!'*). You expressed the opinion that the community of scholars needs to embrace this framework as an evolution of the university campus into a diverse and multifaceted institution that values distinct and multiple areas of expertise in its faculty. You powerfully supported the adoption of the principles encompassed in Boyer's philosophies, whilst noting that this is likely to be a gradual process with some research/discovery focused practitioners being less amenable to adapting their thinking. You felt that the ideological stance of the basic research or discovery focused practitioners privileged their dimension over others, and that they had difficulties with relating the principles of multiple scholarships in varied situations (*Rhonda: 'people who come from straight research, discovery research [mostly from the sciences]....I don't believe their views will ever change, maybe they get a little nicer about describing their views....maybe a little less arrogant when they describe how important their research is....(sic) but typical comments would be "well I don't know how it is in your discipline, but in mine....." meaning mine is better than yours!'*).

You related Boyer's framework to your own experiences, noting that you could identify your professional practice overlapping into more than one dimension. You described your professional identity foremost as a teacher, with a strong commitment to service. Your research focus most comfortably fits with Boyer's description of application, although you have not placed a high priority on your research activities at the expense of the other professional activities described (*Rhonda: I am not a research person, I do research because I should for promotion, merit raises etc. ... I do enough to keep the wolves away from the door'*). You agreed that amongst your colleagues you would be able to identify practitioners who would clearly fall into one or more of the dimensions. You gave anecdotal evidence of the problems faced by a colleague in another department whose professional practice did not fall within the existing guidelines of that department for promotion and tenure, and who would have benefited from the adoption of a more diverse framework (*Rhonda: 'a woman was denied tenure because they did not value the type of professional work she did, but there is a changing tide'*).

When we discussed the importance of teaching and learning as a scholarly dimension you felt it had a vital role to play. You felt, however, that teaching and learning were not equally valued by all faculty members, and in all disciplines. You described a division between those who placed research at the heart of their practice, and those who considered teaching and learning to be the essence (*Rhonda: 'they see teaching as just something you do, a part of the job, its like you have to go to the office/you have to teach...we have all heard the language "teaching is of primary importance" ....when it comes down to what people do, what they think of as their job, people from the pure science mode see their job as "I'm a researcher", and "I teach to be allowed the privilege to research" ....'*). You implied that, at present the institutional

emphasis was on research, but that this should change, and with it would come more recognition of the other dimensions of scholarship. You described the scholarship of teaching and learning as excellence in practice and excellence in theory, again emphasizing locating it at the heart of practices.

When the discussion turned to the institutional ideology, you believed that a dramatic shift would need to be made in order to adopt Boyer's principles. You described a community that is research dominated, but that there appears to be considerable support to evolve the institution into a more equitable and wide-ranging professional environment. In your opinion this is most likely to happen in a 'trickle up' fashion, where Colleges (departments) are encouraged to develop autonomous faculty manuals that incorporate the principles of recognition of diverse dimensions of scholarship, and can therefore employ those principles in practice (and the retention of staff). It was your opinion that this ideological shift needs to be instigated at policy level, but will be most evident in the gradual changes of the individual departments to incorporate policy into practice. This would maintain the ability for some departments, if they wished, to decide that their priorities would still focus on research or discovery, and this would be reflected in their faculty manual.

When we discussed the role of reflective practice, reflexive practice or self-critique in your professional life you enthusiastically endorsed using reflective practice (*Rhonda: 'Oh yes, oh my lord....its how I am about everything...I think back on things in the day!'*). You described it as an integral facet of your work, in your own practice, and the practice of your student teachers. You described your own reflection as a constant process of evaluation, of debriefing and consideration of how things are progressing. You require your student teachers to use this conceptual framework to evaluate their practice, and build reflection into the syllabus of your own classes (*Rhonda: 'one of the requirements for my student teachers is that after they have taught a class they have to come back and do reflection, they have to talk about what went well, what didn't go well, what kids misbehaved, and why didn't you do something about it.....what should you have done, what could you have done etc. etc.'*). In your graduate class you noted that your students plan ahead for reflection, and that they again reflect on what has occurred. You agreed that reflective practice is often therapeutic and confessional, and that you are now secure enough in your own teaching to embrace practicing reflection openly and publicly.

You felt that reflective practice, as you have described, is an effective way to evaluate teaching and learning, and that it may be applicable to the scholarship of teaching and learning.

You commented that the climate of the campus is changing, and that although this is slow, it brings with it changes in attitude of its constituents. This gradual epistemic change breaks down previously entrenched positions and embraces previously sidelined practices. In your opinion the priorities of the professoriate should be less on advancing personal careers and more on providing the very best of educational practices (*Rhonda: 'there's the attitude that people who are not in pure science areas are not as good, they have got*

*to get beyond that...we police our own, but where that falls apart is where we have people who just don't do their job....they don't take it seriously...and taking it seriously is helping the climate to change....it has to change from "if you're not a pure researcher you're nothing" ....').*

I would like to invite you to comment on my interpretation of our conversation and make any changes or additions below.

### **Rhonda's Response**

On the values of the university, actually—this is currently shifting—but I'm not sure the emphasis across our campus is wholly on research—yet. I think many people believe we are shifting and should shift in that direction—while others hold to the high standards of teaching excellence, especially in undergraduate education which has been the hallmark of our university. In summary, I believe the institutional emphasis is shifting toward one on research—but it's not arrived yet!!! We actually have one overall Faculty Manual for our campus—it's the "big daddy" that governs all the other rules. Then, in each college, school, or department (it differs some depending on the history of the group, there is a sub-manual—we call it their Code of Operations. This code includes all the rules of the specific discipline on campus; it must be approved by a Faculty Senate committee, by the Faculty Senate, and by the Chancellor, so it's taken seriously. In other words, if something appears in the CODE, we have to do it. Thus, for change to occur, the smart system is to insert the wanted changes in the code. Oops—I forgot to mention that the code is changed only by a majority vote of the permanently tenured faculty in the college, school, or department, so you can imagine that changes are very slow and deliberate. But changes do and should occur. It's actually quite a good system—it allows faculty to in many ways "govern" themselves.

Overall, I'm amazed at how well you've represented my ideas. You make me sound really good!!! I'm floored by some of my quotes—I actually remember saying some of those things—and they read well to me now. I'm very comfortable with your "take" on our discussion—thanks for being a really good and careful listener. Perhaps that tape recorder made it a bit simpler for you—but it takes a solid understanding of the issues to be able to interpret all this information. Certainly, your own scholarship is evident already in this work.

To return to my boundary conversations, it is apparent that I have been very fortunate with my participants, in that they have substantiated my interpretations of their meanings. I feel that I did run a risk returning the synopsis to the respondents, more so in agreeing to publish their comments, good or bad, in full. However, I think this has been a

very illuminating data collection, and this second phase is developing a quite different character to the first, allowing as it seems a candidness to emerge. I think, however, it would be naïve to assume that the reasonableness of a discourse indicates an uncomplicated and passive acceptance of change.

### *Holistic Critical Analysis of the Data*

In this section I have considered the four narratives, and how they interrelate. I am interested in the perceptions of the respondents as they connect to both the scholarship dimension with which they have identified themselves, and the broader discussion of multiple dimensions. Throughout this discussion and analysis I have remained focused on the purpose of this second phase and my intention to gain more knowledge concerned with:

- How the prevailing epistemology of the educational institution is reflected in the ideologies of the community as they relate to scholarship
- Whether Boyer's dimension of teaching and learning should be considered scholarship
- The varying interpretations of reflective practices etc.

As I have employed a form of respondent validation I feel I can claim a strong authentication of the interpretive account. In phase one of this methodology I, (and independent others), identified categories and themes. In this second phase, and in this reflexive consideration of the data, I am immersed further in both the gathering of the information which concentrates on those themes, and how that will subsequently relate to initial findings. The trustworthiness and credibility of my claims to understand the significant themes in the opinions voiced is to be found in the risky business of returning the interpretations to their origins. I heeded the warnings of Hayes (2005) that it could easily have backfired, and that my participants could have changed their minds, wished they had not been

outspoken, or simple not agreed with my analysis. However, I decided to employ this strategy and take the risk, and in doing so I gained the independent verification that I had both identified legitimate themes, and re-interpreted them accurately. I have also reminded myself that these actions, and the opinions and perceptions I have interpreted must always be seen as multilayered and constituted, rather than written in indelible ink. Denzin and Lincoln, (2003) caution the researcher on claiming too readily to have simplified answers to complex questions, and instead embrace multiple possibilities for discovery in compound layers. This includes recognising the *situatedness* of my participants, and the dimension of institutionalisation that normalises policies and practices as they become commonplace in everyday life. Seidman (1991) notes:

Every research method has its limits and its strengths. In-depth interviewing's strength is that through it we can come to understand the details of peoples experiences from their point of view. We can see how their individual experiences interacts with powerful social and organisational forces that pervade the context in which they live and work, and we can discover the interconnections among people who live and work in a shared context (p. 103)

In this holistic analysis I want to discuss the four participants' opinions as they interrelate and conflict. I will unite the four discussions under the three focused areas I am concerned with, and examine what understandings I have gained through this second phase of the research project. I will also include how and where the characteristics of the dimension of scholarship with which the participants identified themselves are evident, and how that provides insights into their perceptions. I will attempt to discover if there are some overarching discourses and opinions that thread through all four responses and provide evidence of the educational climate. In the last section I will relate these findings to the first phase and suggest what shape the third phase might take.

### *Collective Opinions*

There were a number of issues where shared interpretations, perceptions and opinions were expressed in accord.

### *Support for Boyer*

All four respondents indicated support for the philosophies of Boyer's (1990) multiple dimensions of scholarship, and three of the four were highly enthusiastic (the research/discovery orientated participant showed slightly less commitment). It was my impression, through the discussions, that Boyer's reconsideration of what scholarship means, and what shape it might take, have begun to be assimilated into ways of thinking and knowing, albeit at different levels of engagement (not structural for example). It seems that the fifteen years following Boyer's (1990) publication promoted an academic discussion on scholarship that has moved from the peripheral and into the mainstream (at least in the US). Zahorski (2002) credits Boyer with 'igniting an energetic national conversation that maintains its vitality to this day' (p. 1), and builds upon the original premise offered by Boyer. This is evident in the familiarity of all four respondents with the work of Boyer (1990/96) and others, and in the agreement that the campus climate is discussing and contemplating change (and at some universities has implemented changes). Braxton et al (2002) consider institutional acceptance of Boyer's (1990) perspectives, suggesting that 'change is a slow process at the majority of educational institutions, and many innovative programs may actually never become part of an institution's daily life' (p. 71). They imply that in some senses it has to become institutionalised on three levels; structural, procedural, and incorporation to have long term prospects. It also seems important to recognise that the constituents of the community of

scholars must incorporate the ideologies and practices into their daily professional lives, initiated by the discourses, and practiced with supportive policies.

### *Institutional Responsibility*

This introduces a second shared opinion. All of the participants identified the structure of the institution as the most powerful influence on the accepted characteristics of scholarship. The epistemology of the institution defines and decides what will count as scholarship and knowledge through, amongst others things, its tenure and promotion guidelines and its employment policies. It allocates and mediates value. This directly relates to Boyer's (1990) observation that on campuses 'there is a recognition that the faculty reward system does not fully match the full range of academic functions and that professors are often caught between competing obligations' (p. 1). A second major factor in this recognition of university power relations is the dissemination of knowledge, which at the moment is largely considered to be research publications or similar (exhibitions/productions) restricted to high status peer reviewed publications or similar. Again, this control dictates what will be identified as legitimate practices of scholarship in the academy and obviously impedes the implementation of Boyerian principles.

This dominant hegemony maintains the status quo by recognising, valuing and rewarding only certain practices, and privileging certain forms of knowledge. All four respondents were in agreement that this structure would need to change to accommodate Boyer's (1990) multiple perspectives. This in turn alters the location of power. For example, the recent traditional dominance of the basic/scientific research community would be diluted by recognition of other equally important facets. This potential change in the balance of power may account for the resistance to change alluded to by one of my respondents (Caroline,

located in the *discovery* dimension), and appears mainly located in the basic/pure research domain. It also returns again to Schön's (1995) proclamation that it is impossible to fully introduce Boyer's (1990) dimensions of scholarship unless there is a change in epistemic thinking. It would not seem possible to simply overlay this structure where the existing claims to legitimate knowledge and learning are allowed to remain entrenched in a dominant hegemony.

### *Bringing Balance to the Campus*

A final confidently shared opinion was that all the respondents could conceptualise a more balanced faculty if the strengths of individuals were enhanced rather than the existing alternative of expecting all practitioners to excel in all areas. All four respondents could easily provide examples of colleagues who they thought would welcome the opportunity to relinquish responsibilities in areas that were not their strengths (for example the excellent researcher who has poor teaching evaluations). Boyer (1990) does not suggest that practitioners can escape demonstrating the capacity to adequately practice all the facets of academic life. For example, 'all faculty should establish their credentials as *researchers*' (p. 27), this is usually demonstrated firstly by the completion of a dissertation and then subsequently by publications. They should also consistently stay in touch with developments in their discipline, and appreciate how to effectively encourage a teaching and learning environment. Boyer (1990) also believed that 'it is unrealistic, we believe, to expect *all* faculty members, regardless of their interests, to engage in research and to publish on a regular timetable. For most scholars, creativity simply doesn't work that way' (p. 27).

The simplistic reading of this philosophy is that membership of the community of scholars requires a demonstration of the ability to meet fundamental standards of academic

ability, and also to understand all of the contributions that create a successful community of higher education. Universities are not the right location for researchers who have no interest in students, or teachers who are not concerned with research.

### *The Prevailing Epistemology of the Educational Institution*

In this section I am going to consider how the data informs our understanding of institutional ideology and epistemology, and where and if opinions differed depending on the location of the participant within Boyer's (1990) framework.

Boyer's (1990) claims that universities and colleges 'pay lip service to the trilogy of teaching, research, and service, but when it comes to making judgements about professional performance, the three are rarely assigned equal merit' (p. 15) seems to still ring true today in this research project. Where there has been movement is in the discussion, and in the recognition that change would be desirable. As previously noted, all four respondents are advocating adoption of Boyerian principles, and they were all familiar with the language of multiple scholarly dimensions. They all agreed that institutional change and structural change would provide the vehicle for changes in practice. These collective opinions and the recognition of a desire to change the balance of demands in academic careers may appear united, but in practice there may still be the tendency toward a hierarchy of functions. It seems unlikely that the dominance of research as the fundamental tenet by which to measure and value practices within the institutional structure will be easily usurped by a suddenly democratic vision of equally shared and valued dimensions; in no small part because this is an ideological change.

It was also noticeable that the respondent located in Boyer's domain of *discovery* was perhaps the most reserved about institutional change. There was no question that the overall

indication from all four participants was to advocate changes in the present priorities, but there was a more subtle difference in the passion voiced. This could be explained when examining the data for deep understandings in the revealing of difficulties in obtaining tenure which were experienced by the application candidate, and witnessed by the scholarship of teaching and learning participant. If the area that your academic career focuses on is rewarded and valued (for example discovery/research) by the institution then you are unlikely to feel as motivated towards change as the academic who feels their work is unrewarded and sidelined.

The dichotomy that is developing within this data is that the constituents of the community of scholars are indicating willingness, and in some cases almost desperation for a change in the priorities of the institutional culture, whilst the institution seems to be making few actual changes. This friction between personal values and institutional culture was indicated by Centra (1993) when discussing the relationship between teaching and research, he noted that a basic misunderstanding between faculty members and administrators exists 'either the administrators are not making their priorities about the importance of teaching known or they are not backing up beliefs with action' (p. 4). There does not seem to be much change in the decade and more since he made that observation. All four of my respondents placed the power for change in the policy culture of the institution, in the dominant ideology, indicating that they would welcome the change when the institution implemented it. The one indication of an alternative approach to change came from the participant located in the scholarship of teaching and learning who suggested that individual departments garner some power and could autonomously direct more diverse scholarly practices through changes in department guidelines. However, this 'bottom up' approach fails to tackle issues of endemic prejudice.

These issues, arising from the analysis of the data, seem to be indicating a gulf between the culture of the institution (and by implication the administration) and the professoriate. It seems there is a need to establish common territory about the values, roles, rewards and practices of the modern university in conjunction with practical solutions to implementing a workable structure of multiple dimensions of scholarship.

*The Varying Interpretations of Reflective Practice and Self-Critique*

I have reminded myself that my initial reason for including this area of questioning in both phase one and phase two was to determine if it offered a standardised way of assessing the scholarship of teaching and learning as suggested by Boyer (1996) and then Glassick et al (1997). I originally thought it would provide a lateral way of revealing contested areas or a feasible way of including the scholarship of teaching and learning as a dimension. I am now realising that it has unearthed far more. It has indeed shifted the attention of participants from more obvious direct questions about scholarship, and in so doing has peeled a veneer of educational rhetoric from its supportive structure. Reflective practices are in practice, according to my data, quite different from reflective practices in theory.

Two of the participants clearly articulated a reflective practice that involves thinking about things in retrospect. They spoke as if with one voice about de-briefing, thinking about how things had gone, and confessional and therapeutic journalising. This seems closest to Ball's (1995) 'technical rationality' or what Schön (1987) refers to as a technical procedure 'to be measured by its effectiveness in establishing a pre-established objective' (p. 78). This also brings into the discourse Aristotle's notion of 'techne' as 'taught knowledge' or techniques of practice discussed earlier. Reflection here meets the objective of de-briefing and rationalising the practices by apparent critical examination, without in practice rendering very much

problematic. As Macdonald and Tinning (2003) express thinking must be central to the reflection process. This thinking should not be just a commentary on teaching. 'That went well, I think I'll try that again tomorrow' is not reflective practice. But 'That went well, what was it about my teaching that caused that to happen?' is developing a reflective practice. In this way teachers problematise their teaching. Macdonald and Tinning (2003) consider this a critical distinction:

We consider reflective practice to be an intellectual disposition which functions like a set of lenses through which to view all educational and cultural practices ...the quality of reflection on practice is dependent on the concepts and theories: the ways of seeing; to which teachers have access. Moreover, these 'ways of seeing' will be taken beyond the classroom and reflective practice will be 'applied to' more than the act of teaching. Reflective practice will also engage issues relating to schooling and education as inherently political and ideological social structures. In this sense it will be critically orientated (p. 86)

These two participants who had linear perceptions of reflection were in the scholarship of teaching and learning and the scholarship of application, and both were involved with teaching teachers and very familiar with the literature surrounding reflective practices. Yet the implementation of the theory is superficial when compared to the extensive literature (a few are Bleakley, 1999; Brookfield, 1995a; Briggs, 2001; Evans, 2002; Henniger, 2004; Laker, 2001; Loughran, 2002; Macdonald and Tinning, 2003; Macdonald et al 2002; Moon, 2004; Schön, 1983,1987,1991; Schön & Rein, 1994; Steier, 1991). The scholarship of discovery participant seemed to have very little interest in the framework, and her cursory nod to its value was in explaining that she did think back over things and make changes to classes as a response to new information. The participant in the scholarship of integration was openly sceptical about the gulf between the theory and practice of reflection. He displayed obvious contempt for what he considered to be an overused axiomatic term. He believed that it was educational rhetoric

that is clichéd to cover practices that actually bear little resemblance to the theory, and are simply evaluative.

It seems that this area of questioning has revealed two distinct areas. Firstly, that reflective practice is not all that it is assumed to be, but that is not to say it does not have value. Secondly, that if it were to be used as a standard with which to measure performance in the scholarship of teaching and learning as suggested by Boyer (1996) and others (Kreber, 2001, Glassick et al, 1997) it would clearly need to be established *which* practices we are talking about – reflective practices in theory or the practices of reflection? If the two had been one and the same, then it would have been more straightforward to assess whether a practitioner was successfully employing the conceptual framework, however, because the two are divergent then standardisation is rendered problematic. The term reflective practice has become an oxymoron. It becomes very worrying to assume that this will form a good basis as one of the standards with which to assess the scholarship of teaching and learning which is itself already a complicated and contested dimension.

It would seem unhelpful to introduce reflective practice or self-critique, which invokes multiple meanings, as a way of giving form and legitimacy to evaluating the practice of the scholarship of teaching and learning. It is being described by my respondents as a highly personalised practice, one that appears to be more useful for the processes of practice than the theory of practices. Does it make sense then for it to be used to examine a theory in practice?

Evan's (2002) suggests that the rhetoric of reflective practices offer 'the emancipatory capacity of reflection as a vehicle for breaking away from intuitive, unquestioning practice, from preconceived notions and from habits that reflect conventional, rather than reasoned wisdom' (p. 18). However, she then goes on to admit that her own interpretation of reflective

practice is more to do with looking for ways to improve practices, identifying problems and for evaluation etc. which is in agreement with my data. It does not ask questions about issues of control, of assumptions, of legitimising dominant hegemonic values or the subtleties of reinforcing policies and practices with an accepted conceptual framework.

Although there is some irony in this suggestion as it appears in a book edited by Schön (1991), it is relevant to note Greenwood (1993) who embraces the divergent nature of reflective practices and rejects the development of a unified code suggesting that the purpose of this would be the 'possibility that it will be "adopted" as a device for organisational manipulation rather than organisational democratization' (p. 104). This, I think, is a key issue. As Greenwood (1993) suggests, reflective practices sound like a very good idea, they are acceptable educational rhetoric for desirable practices, as opposed to say, unreflective practice which has an immediate negative connotation. The suggestion from this is that reflective practice as a conceptual framework can work to disguise far more than it reveals as an evaluative mechanism.

From the data I have gathered to date, the adoption of reflective practice as a standard by which to measure the effective practice of the scholarship of teaching and learning is flawed. Its illusive, diversely interpreted nature makes it hard to standardise and measure. The theory does not relate to the practice. The alternative is to agree that the practices will re-write the theory, and that it is transparently recognised as a process of retrospective thinking about what has occurred. Reflective practice may have become, as MacDonald and Tinning (2003) warn 'less about a personal, moral self/teacher and more about public performance in line with codified practices as demonstrated, for example, by the proliferation of teaching standards that specify 'reflection'' (p. 83).

### *The Contested Nature of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*

In this area of enquiry, I was hoping to gather more information concerned with including teaching and learning as a scholarship dimension. Three of my four respondents voiced the opinion that it was a vital component in a well balanced educational community. The only cautious note was sounded by the respondent who had placed herself in the category of discovery, who found it difficult to envisage how this component of university practices could be determined as a scholarship entity. This would appear to have a direct relationship to value and esteem. If little value is awarded to teaching and learning in its own right, if it is always part of a larger 'other', and is something of an assumed practice, then it will have a low profile. A practitioner who has spent many years *learning* about their subject, but has never had to learn anything about teaching and learning, may simply have adopted the attitude that prevails in placing value on knowledge that comes from study.

When it comes to esteem, the ideology of the university determines what will or will not be rewarded and valued. Although the argument could be that all universities require quality teaching from their employees, the reward system locates the practice as a lesser component dominated by other factors. The data in this phase strongly indicated that teaching is just something that you are assumed to be able to practice, and by implication learning will be assumed to have taken place.

Boyer (1990) attacked this attitude, suggesting that the assurance that teaching is considered important by most educational institution is not evident in the reward and value system, and that both the educator and the student lose out. Boyer (1990) considered the lack of status awarded to teaching and learning in many universities creates an environment 'that restricts creativity rather than sustains it' (p. xii). Teaching and learning have to be valued and

afforded the same status as research and publications in a very evident way if the dismantling of any barriers to the implementation of teaching and learning as a scholarship are to be effective.

The participants in phase two (and phase one) all expressed the opinion that implementation of a scholarship of teaching and learning would be a beneficial development. However, there was a note of concern voiced by the integration respondent who could not envision what shape that might take. This should only be considered a problem if the *shape* is expected to conceptually match that of a technical-rational model, which Schön (1983) describes as 'an instrumental means-ends rationality of thought and action which, if it were applied would seriously distort practice' (in Usher & Edwards, 1994 p. 47). This requires recognition that the practices of teaching and learning take a very different shape to basic research practices, and cannot be evaluated in the same way.

#### *Making Connection between Phase One and Phase Two*

What do I understand now that I didn't before? I have more details. In some senses I have listen to these voices in their own educational contexts, and tried to hear in them the complexities of conflicting policies and practices. It was not difficult to get my participants to enter the conversation! It may be a characteristic of the population I am studying that they like to talk, just as politicians like to argue! What was a little more problematic was gaining enough trust to be confident that what I was capturing was personally, deeply held beliefs.

The artistry of my participants is evident in their ability to be very articulate, and through this skill it is possible to paint very complex pictures that conceal the origins of their thinking. In relating this to the first phase, I wanted to explore in more depth the prevailing climate of attitudes concerned with scholarship, and how that related specifically to the

scholarship of teaching and learning. In the first phase the evidence pointed towards a high level of agreement that more diverse representations of scholarship should be encouraged in the educational community. This has been reinforced in this second phase with all respondents that value and recognition should be attributed to the varied dimensions of scholarship. The hierarchy of the different dimensions is still apparent in this second phase with the research orientated participant looking for cognitive evidence of how varied dimensions can be regulated. All the participants recognised that allowing practitioners to focus on their strengths would be desirable.

The conflicting interpretations of reflective practices and self-critique evident in the first phase were reinforced in this second phase, but I was able to identify exactly where the conflicting interpretations are situated. It is in the praxis. If reflective practices are recognised as thinking back, as journal writing, as evaluation etc. then the theory and the practice are assimilated. However, if the assumption of reflective practices or self-critique includes issues outside the personal and into the arena of socio-cultural complexities, for example gender bias, then this is clearly not what is happening in practice. It would seem here that clarity is vital. For example, what exactly do we mean by the scholarship of teaching and learning? What exactly do we mean when we talk of reflective practices? Do we all understand these meanings in a similar manner, is this a shared understanding?

These critical questions will affect any implementation of multiple dimensions of scholarship, and a gulf between the theory and the practices can only lead to misinterpretation. This second phase has raised these issues as a cause for concern.

### *The Third Effect*

In returning my thinking to the third effect I am marrying textual discourses to visual artistry. I am exploring different ways of seeing, ways of knowing and the possibilities that unexpected images will develop. Conversely, it may also offer no interesting alternatives. However, Matthew's (2003) work encourages us to think differently, to be mindful of making assumptions, and in so doing heightens awareness of the ways in which we leap to conclusions especially with the familiar. It's almost as though it becomes a synaptic response.

Apple (1990) encourages the researcher to situate questions, to render taken-for-granted activities as strange, and locate them within a socio-economic and ideological landscape. By doing this he hopes to encourage:

critical study of the relationship between ideologies and educational thought and practice, the study of seemingly commonsense assumptions that guide an overly technical minded field. Such critical scholarship would lay bare the political social, ethical and economic interests and commitments that are uncritically accepted as 'the way life really is' in our day-to-day life as educators. (p. 14)

In introducing Matthew's (2003) conceptual understanding to my research questions I am returning to my earlier proposition that the intact (albeit blurry-edged) 'pictures' of scholarship offered by Boyer (1990) must guard against the assumption that they are neutral, equal or measurable just because they are bounded under a clear category. To concentrate just on the scholarship of teaching and learning, I can see contained in one frame the attributes that have been used to determine the scholarship of teaching and learning, and in a second frame the standards that Boyer (1990), and later Glassick et al (1997) have identified to measure the practices. The third effect is found in the assumption that these two 'pictures' create a third 'picture', a demonstration of a successful dimension of scholarship. The flaw is in the

standards, just one of which I have examined (that of reflective practice) and found the praxis to be lacking.

To conclude phase two, this second phase has provided further and different insights into my research question. It has introduced a very personal quality to the topic, locating the questions within the contextual framework to help another person step into a world, as Fishman and McCarthy (2000) suggest, and to see another's perspective in order to try to make sense of it.

The *sense* that I have made of it is that it is dangerous to assume common understandings or to allocate privilege uncritically to a conceptual framework. In this research there is a clear demonstration of a desire to alter or expand the structures that allocate value to scholarship. All the respondents appear to be in favour of broadening the definition of scholarship in such a way that encourages the practitioner's strengths, and validates the marginalised practices that are at the moment largely unrewarded.

Referring to the data, it seems problematic to make the assumption that reflective practices or similar frameworks will perform the function of assessment in a neutral and uncontested manner. The data from this research phase, and the previous phase, seems to indicate that it is so diversely interpreted and differently practiced that it masks that which it claims to reveal. According to MacDonald and Tinning (2003) 'what we know about reflective practice will depend on the questions we ask of it' (p. 82), and they continue on to question whose understanding of reflection we are talking about, and the shape it takes. It could be that the mask it wears of acceptable self-regulation, of self-disciplined codified practice, hides a face of uncontested regimes of educational practices. Technical reflection does more to reinforce and render invisible dominant practices than it does to deconstruct and reveal

problematic areas. However, in veiling these actions with a cloak of acceptability, even desirability, we endanger the structures it purports to examine.

### **Assimilation of the Findings from Phase One and Phase Two**

Phase one established a background of knowledge and understanding about educators' perceptions and opinions on a number of relevant and interconnected issues. Firstly, there was clear support voiced for Boyer's (1990) multiple dimensions. However, some concerns began to be voiced when the specific dimension of the scholarship of teaching and learning was introduced. It was not easily or clearly understood. Secondly, the responsibility for values in scholarly practices was attributed to the institution. The institution was considered to be responsible for the value system (tenure/permanent contracts and promotion etc.) and thereby dictated what forms of scholarship (and knowledge?) would be valued and rewarded. The third issue that arose was the contested nature of self-critique or reflective practice. The respondents attributed very uneven interpretation and value to the framework. This raises concerns over its possible use as one of the assessment tools for establishing successful practice of the scholarship of teaching and learning. These key issues emerged:

- Educators are very supportive of the implementation of multiple dimensions of scholarship, except the standard of the scholarship of teaching and learning which is not universally understood.
- The institution is held responsible for the dictating which forms of scholarship are valued through its ideology and epistemology.
- Concerns arose over the value attributed to reflective practice, and its contested and varied interpretation.

Phase two focussed on establishing deeper understandings on these issues and developed these emergent themes as discourses for discussion. The four respondents established collective opinions in three areas. Firstly, they all voiced support for Boyer's (1990) multiple dimensions, but this became more passionately voiced with distinct displeasure expressed by three of the participants over the ways institutions of learning have become so narrowly focused on research (Boyer's discovery) in recent years. One respondent remained sceptical about the scholarship of teaching and learning, but as the conversation developed the participant (Caroline) engaged more with the philosophy. Secondly, they confirmed that the institutional structure dictates the value attributed to various components of academic life, and inferred that changes to that structure would be effective and welcomed to implement more diverse interpretations of scholarship. The staff reward system is the most obvious display of this in practice, and supports the institutional ideology. This also introduced the complex area of how knowledge is both disseminated and validated. The third shared perception was that the educational institutional community should embrace a balance. The respondents expressed the opinion that balance is needed, and balance should be sought between the dimensions as complementary facets of a whole.

The area of reflective practice again proved contested in phase two. As noted, reflective practice in theory appears quite different for most people than reflective practice in practice. We should not assume it to encompass the conceptual framework established by theorists and therefore its inclusion in assessment practices is destabilising and problematic. This further exploration in phase two established:

- Support is confirmed for Boyer's dimensions and more strongly voiced. The scholarship of teaching and learning remains the only dimension over which some

concern was voiced. Balance in the implementation of the dimensions is established as a desirable outcome.

- The institutional structure develops as a critical issue in implementing change and is held responsible for the present ideology, and therefore holds the power to establish a change.
- Reflective practice continues to present problems as an assessment tool, and may also be indicating a lack of engagement with a teaching and learning practice.

The combined findings of phase one and phase two have established some clear emerging issues as described. Boyer's (1990) own work entered the broad discourse that encompasses such macro issues as the purpose of HE, and micro issues of personal practice in the campus community. This study has developed through, and from, that discourse and the findings have suggested establishing the following four areas for critical discussion:

*a) Political:* The purpose of HE - connecting the work and mission of the campus to the social, political and environmental challenges beyond the campus and embracing teaching, learning and research etc. as vital equitable components within that community.

*b) Institutional:* Aligning the mission statement of the institution to reward and encourage diverse staff talents and acknowledge the variety of academic activities.

*c) Functional:* Encourage intellectually coherent discussions connecting the disciplines and developing overlapping and interconnected discourses.

*d) Contextual:* Re-defining what it means to be a scholar and conceptually locating the diverse scholarships in a framework that is both valued and accepted.

### *Reviewing the Spiral Methodology in Action*

It seems valuable at this juncture to consider how my spiral methodology is enabling a reflexive and complementary framework to evolve as this research project progresses because one of the outcomes of this dissertation is to evaluate its potential.

I believe I can claim that its value is evident already in this study through the ability to move and redirect the research question through the use of another method within the same research project. Phase one and phase two have begun to build a more complete picture than either method could have achieved independently. The establishing of a place to pause and reflect has proved important and its value was demonstrated in several specific areas, for example, connecting the notion of a ‘third effect’ (Mathews, 2002) to the emerging picture of scholarship in the institution. I believe this thread would have remained unrecognised and unexplored, and as this study continues it may prove a concept well worth developing further in a subsequent phase.

It is noticeable that this spiral methodology acknowledges the dilemma of rigour and relevance that so perturbed Schön (1995) by taking some aspects of an emerging ‘theory’ (the findings of the first phase) and throwing them back into the ‘swampy lowlands’ (p. 27) of educators’ practice. As the picture builds the rigour of research-based theory (and technique) is continuously returned to the problems that lie in the swampy land of practices in HE. This is essential in this project as my research question is located in the heartland of practice and what forms of scholarship are accepted and rewarded. Within this are intertwined questions of how institutions hold conceptions of what counts as legitimate knowledge and how those knowledge claims are validated, possibly through what is promoted as scholarship. An example of this could be that legitimate knowledge is formed through rigorous validated

research (scholarship of discovery), but it may, or may not, be accepted as being formed through the more indeterminate act of making connections across disciplines (scholarship of integration). It all depends on the epistemic structure of the institution.

By employing a new reflexive research methodology with which to examine the topic, I may have been able to go some way towards addressing Schön's challenge (1995) that the new forms of scholarship proposed by Boyer (1990) will need a new institutional epistemological framework. Schön's (1995) challenge infiltrates both the way we practice research, and the way we think about research practices.

My thinking here is that examination of questions surrounding and embedded in the dominant ideology of the educational institution could easily be controlled by the epistemologies tacitly built into the institutional structure and practices. In the educational institution it is especially easy to find complex rhetoric that establishes, without attracting much critical examination, a structure of practice. A good example of this would be reflective practice which is demonstrably incorporated into numerous assessment practices, but in itself has received little contextually located critical examination. Macdonald and Tinning (2003) would claim that in this role reflective practice serves as a governmental and performance regime. There are a vast number of publications on the shelves of libraries presenting various ways of practicing the framework of reflective practice, but very few to be found on whether the conceptual framework in practice is really practiced.

In returning this to my spiral methodology, Schön (1995) notes 'to become skilful in the use of a tool is to learn to appreciate, as if it were directly, the qualities of materials that we apprehend through the tacit sensations of the tool in our hand' (p. 31). The 'tool' demonstrated

here in use is my methodology, and as such I believe it is proving sensitive to the 'material' it encounters and the hand that guides it.

As I proceed on and into phase three the judging of the methodology must lie in the ability of the audience (my reader) to engage with the research project, to locate the multiple layers and trace the places where the developing 'theories' from the data in the previous research phases are informing the subsequent research. The evidence of value in the methodology is in its ability to cultivate an authoritative account of the topic being studied in an accessible, rigorous and creative way. In this research project, this both meets the demands of valid research and yet remains grounded in everyday cultural practices of the educator that are the source of the data, providing a clear-cut relation from practice to theory.

### *Entering Phase Three*

As my spiral methodology enables a more blurred distinction between ending one research project and starting another I will introduce some thoughts of how to progress my research process. It would seem useful, having introduced in this phase an in-depth research method, to consider an approach that might be lateral and complementary to these first two phases in an attempt to transform and transmit the knowledge I am gaining. Possibly, as Boyer's (1990) scholarship of integration might do, 'making connections across the disciplines, placing the specialities in larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way' (p. 18) appealing to those both inside and outside of the world of academia.

## Phase Three

### *Introduction*

I enter phase three with a growing body of knowledge concerning issues that relate to my original research question:

*What are higher education educators' perceptions of Boyer's (1990) multiple dimensions of scholarship, focussing on the scholarship of teaching and learning and its relationship to Boyer's (1996) standard of 'careful and thoughtful self-critique' (p. 135) in higher education practice?*

Phase one used a broad 'net casting' approach gathering the opinions and perceptions of my participant group through the use of a questionnaire. The opinions expressed indicated almost unanimous support for the development of broader concepts of scholarship. However, when further examining Boyer's (1990) framework confusion existed about whether, and how the scholarship of teaching and learning might be located within this expanded view. Further confusion existed about the interpretation of self-critique or reflective practice. The results of this first phase indicated the problematic areas where more intimate and probing questions might be fruitful in providing further perspectives.

The phase two built on the understandings from the first phase targeting areas of uncertainty. Purposeful conversational interviews were developed in response to these findings and closed in on issues concerned with interpreting scholarship, the scholarship of teaching and learning and reflective practice, in practice. This in depth investigative practice added a layer of understanding to the research project, revealing the passionate desire for change and the lack of consensus between reflective practice in theory and reflective practice in practice.

The direction phase three will take depends upon my level of confidence in that knowledge, and my ability to navigate within and around a postmodern educational landscape. As Usher and Edwards (1994) note 'the postmodern is at the very least a

*contested terrain*' (p. 7), and if its qualities can be identified I have come to understand the postmodern as having characteristics that make it untameable and a little unhinged. Macdonald et al (2002) work towards an identity but hold back saying 'postmodernism does not easily fit with any one way of working with data' (p. 143) and that its real value is in making visible that which may have been rendered invisible. It is possibly this 'destabilising', this changing of the angle of vision can reveal the unexpected. The very act of trying to 'capture' a quintessence, to shape it into an indelible form, destroys its unique spirit, and is perhaps misplaced. At some essential level it keeps us exploring the borderlands of research in education, trying the unlikely and uncertain...*releasing the imagination* as encouraged by Greene (1995). In Tierney and Lincoln (1997) I can find a parallel between their positioning and my research on scholarship as they expand:

We are suspicious of those who tell us they have the only methods appropriate for conducting scientific inquiry. We are suspicious of those who tell us they have the final theories on why the world is as it is. We are especially suspicious of discourses that, without thoughtful deconstructing, invisibly shape the ideas which we express, limit the views of reality with which we grapple, and silence those who are not privy to our private languages. And we are suspicious of "genre wars", the particular border skirmishes of academic provinces that declare some traditional important, powerful, legitimate, while others are ideologically impoverished (p ix)

In this postmodern pronouncement I can see the same conflicts that are found in defining what scholarship should look like in a postmodern university culture. In a similar way, Boyer in 1990 was suspicious of the way the university climate had developed, legitimized and prioritized certain practices. He also questioned the dominance of one research tradition and ideological view over other facets of the community campus. He drew attention to areas of practice marginalized and silenced by the ideological preferences of the institution. In some senses, I have come to understand Boyer's proposed framework as the natural progression of a postmodern educational

landscape that is more inclusive than restrictive, more forgiving than dictatorial, and ultimately more rewarding.

In this third phase I want to approach my research questions from a different direction, perhaps also a little ‘unhinged’ and exploratory. As I have noted earlier, I have gathered considerable data and understandings in the two previous phases, and the spiral shape of my methodology now offer me an opportunity to attempt to represent the data differently and to discuss it differently. I am taking the ‘narrative turn’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003).

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) believe that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century researchers are more frequently learning to write research differently, and finding ways to locate themselves in their texts in a way that is sensitive and interconnected. Others on my bookshelf such as; Berger and Quinney, 2005; Bridges, 2003; Denzin, 2003; Fishman and McCarthy, 2000; Sparkes, 2002; Tierney & Lincoln, 1997; Van Maanen, 1988, Van Manen, 2002 demonstrate ways this can be successfully done.

*But here I need to stop. I can see I am in danger of not ‘doing’, and only talking about ‘doing’. I have slipped back into the academic language of my previous phases, and framed myself within the same epistemic structure. I need to explain more clearly. I need not only to say why, but to demonstrate a different discourse in my actions.*

### *Second Introduction*

The dog is completely astonished; it’s 3.30 in the morning. What, short of ‘a rescue at the old mine’ could cause me to fire up the computer at this hour? We have different concerns; hers revolves around sleeping, eating and playing, and mine around finding my third phase and finishing my dissertation. Our dog did not go to bed with *Representation and the Text: Re-Framing the Narrative Voice* and Carolyn Ellis’s (1997) inspirational chapter about autoethnography on her mind.

Despite the hour, I know I have to start now or the morning will bring doubts and the semi-dream thoughts will have been lost to the demands of a new day. How often have I 'written' in my sleep only to find the words are lost in the waking moment?

The first issues I must address are my fears. Will my advisors Jeff Lewis and Denis Hayes stay with me on this one? And will this pass the scrutiny of a dissertation committee and the viva voce? I have tried to reassure myself with the thought that I have worked hard, really hard, to prove the quality of my 'research self' through the previous pages that make up this research dissertation, and I hope that I have done enough to be allowed to take a creative chance. I reassure myself that if I need to, this phase can be relegated to the appendices.

What I want to do in this third phase is return back to a world where the language is more universal, where I don't make the error of allowing academic terminology to slip into authoritarian use and act to alienate. I have tried, and needed to acquire the linguistic skills of an academic, the codified intellectual repartee that denotes 'cleverness'. However, I now want to bring the 'talk' closer to everyday communications, the way people more normally connect, to be more transparent and to expose more of the chaos and insecurity that exists in research work but is seldom mentioned out loud. I want the power of the discourse to be in the conveying of ideas, the open debate, and not in the marginalization of those who do not share the vocabulary or confusing rhetoric. I want to be brave like Carolyn Ellis, and not afraid to say if the Emperor has no clothes.

Carolyn Ellis has earned credibility.

I have not.

She and others have chartered a course.

I would like to follow in the wake.

It is still risky.

Here goes.

*Let me start afresh.*

I thought long and hard about this third phase, and the shape it might take. I toyed with further data collection. I looked at poetic representation. I considered a quantitative survey. I thought of a case study. I read about fictional representation. I knew I wanted a method that could connect the dots of my research as directly as possible to a reader – to maybe stir some flicker of recognition, some empathetic response. Most of all I wanted a real sense of honesty. Then I picked up *Representation and the Text: Re-framing the Narrative Voice* (1997), and I knew it demonstrated possibilities, and I knew this is what I wanted to try to do. Autoethnography.

I am going to be very cautious (actually eliminate) the usual citations within the main text that legitimize and offer authority. How often do those get in the way of the flow of reading until they become all but invisible except to remind the reader that more than one person has constructed an opinion or disseminated research? I freshly remember how I have learnt to cite as I write (it was only a few years ago). How it almost comes as second nature now not to go for too long without external legitimization of my thinking, and not to state a strong opinion without some back-up or external ‘member check’. How often have I wondered if you can have an original thought in educational research if you always have to find a justification? Where is the inspirational thinking? So, I will cite in the abstract analysis.

I am not going to attempt anything close to a fictionalized account which requires literary skills far beyond mine, or the autobiographical genre which requires a more fascinating life, and a strong focus on self. Instead, it will be a research phase that attempts to create a multilayered text that embraces the emotional, personal, creative, and observational, and is therefore autoethnographic. Through the autoethnographic story I will introduce what I have learnt through my research about perceptions of the scholarship of teaching and learning, and reflective practice as an integral feature of that

practice. It is both my tale of a research dissertation, and my observations of my research topic in everyday situations. The inspiration is largely owed to Carolyn Ellis (1997) who also 'restarted' several times before finding her voice(s). Her innovative chapter *Evocative Autoethnography: Writing emotionally about our lives* is fascinating in its construction; it includes the light humorous touch that is so often overlooked in research in education, and it challenges the reader to rethink representation in educational research.

When the hour is reasonable I will restart in earnest.

### *Introducing Autoethnographic Research*

The first problem I face is the format, and how to present my work as autoethnographic research. I have used in my earlier phases the concept of 'boundary conversations' (Fishman and McCarthy, 2000) and I am grateful for their innovative framework. I am also inspired by Lincoln's (1997) perceptions of 'writing in the margins', which includes 'how to choose which self we want to expose, which persona we will risk to audience gaze?' (p 41). So here, as I begin, I make a choice about the issue of 'voice(s)', and to whom I might be speaking; but I do this to open up rather than close down the discourse. As Lincoln (1997) reminds us, the voice we choose for ourselves cannot be a neutral choice, or the audience invisible.

My decision then is to consider my audience as only a handful, an expert handful. I am unconvinced that *all* PhD dissertations offer new contributions to knowledge or expand understandings. I believe this is an illusion. I think the vast majority (including mine) will make good door-stops, nothing more. I think it is far more likely that the value for most dissertations is in the academic journey travelled by the authors, and in their apprenticeship into academic life should they intend to continue. Schuster (1993) calls

this 'professionalization', and continues, 'graduate training inevitably provides a strong measure of socialization to the discipline – the so-called invisible college' (p 31).

My choice of narrative voice(s) is one that I hope will both communicate my research and engage the reader. The main text will be my 'autoethnographic self'. By using autoethnography I mean to bring in my experiences, those when I am immersed in the culture and observe and experience opinions and perceptions relating to my research.....and to be visible, an inscribed figure, in that textual discourse. I hope it is a colloquial voice that is clear and truthful and vulnerable.

The other voice I want to use is 'the abstract self', to analyze and re-frame the autoethnographic narrative as it would more normally be seen in the research world. In this analytical discourse I will use my academic training in writing and conceptualization to justify my meanings. This voice should be authoritative and justifiable and demonstrate connections to the body of knowledge on the subject. Following this dualistic structure, I am writing this as two columns, to indeed 'write in the margins', although the marginalized voice in this instance is the 'academic authoritarian' voice.

Through this structure I hope to be able to discuss the findings of the two previous phases as they weave into everyday life finding parallels, contradictions and theory in practice. I will also include anecdotal issues that arose through the process of conducting research, but had no legitimate way to be heard. How often do the really interesting conversations, the revealing insights, happen in the corridors outside the formal setting or late at night with a glass of wine?

finding the narrative in questions about scholarship and re-framing my voice as evocative autoethnography.

## The Abstract Analysis

## The Autoethnographic Self

Bridges (2003) talks of this 'biographical positioning' as enabling the reader of the research to connect more fully with the topic and interpretation of meanings expressed by the author. Bridges (2003) believes researchers can, through these actions 'engage the reader's feelings and imagination as well as their intellects, to draw them into the story' (p 90). By making myself visible in the textual discourse I am altering the balance of researcher/researched and offering an alternative way of 'seeing' my research.

Autoethnography helps to explore the private, personal and emotional dimensions of research by the use of vivid descriptions of lived experience. As a research method it attempts to connect the reader emotionally and cognitively, including within it the research, the culture and the self (see Bochner and Ellis, 2002; Ellis, 1997). Autoethnography has emerged as an identifiable research strategy (Berger and Quinney (2005), and as a form of textual discourse is beginning to be more widely published as respectable research - as a different way of writing and presenting research. For Denzin (2003) 'these texts are always personal, but always cutting away at the corrosive edges of repressive social structures and social institutions' (p 141). For Ellis (1995, 2004) the method has come to mean looking inward for understandings, and outward at the larger social context of experiences to make sense of what we learn. It is self-reflexive social inquiry.

Sparkes (2002) embraces these varied representations suggesting that 'there is so much to be gained from expanding our horizons and engaging with other ways of knowing' (p 234), but that it is uncertain territory that must earn acceptance through proof of its worth. Perhaps, as he suggests this will come in research that encourages empathetic forms of understanding about 'actual worlds', and challenges the disembodied ways of knowing that claim dominant legitimacy.

It struck me that I had been careful in my previous research work to attempt to include a few personal details of my participants to resist creating a vacuity. I had however avoided including much detail of myself as I was nervous about seeming self-absorbed, and could not see any benefits. However, to connect more completely to *my* interpretation of the research topic I talk of, it might be useful to know a little of me, but this is not a confessional, therapeutic or narcissistic story of self. Nor is this an autobiographical account. I don't want to focus on the *person* instead of the *product*. What I include is still partially selective, and is chosen because I feel it has relevance to the academic me and the research topic. I must keep some of my secrets.

My philosophies on life, on work and play, are shaped in part by the events that have impacted on my world and shaken it up. The deaths of our twin boys, close encounters with illness and watching my son Laurie's courage as he copes with his physical disadvantage, have taught me to be very aware of my values and priorities. These events have improved me as a friend, mother, partner and person. The other great influence has been my husband and friend for more than half my life. He is a maverick, and without his help and humour I would have floundered long ago.

I wear one hat as a craftswoman, and it allows me to feel I have a safety net. I comfort myself that if I fail as an academic, I am still a capable craftswoman. In that world you are judged most often by the objects you create (it is hard to 'talk' a good job!) and it is hard to survive without learning some rules of the trade. Outside that environment I am not so good at remembering rules!

I suspect that I am probably an academic misfit, stumbling into the world of research in education because it was accessible to me, and vicariously through my husband's professional life. I did not have the traditional educational qualifications, and only overcame feeling totally inadequate after completing my Masters. But many things in those other personal experiences changed the way I value life. They gave me the courage to keep 'eyes wide open' to possibilities and try to make the most of every opportunity - but to understand the fragility of life and our impact on others. Along the way came motivating characters, Ken Gale in the Master's programme, Jeff Lewis and Denis Hayes as supervisors, Chris Lee who gave a moment of encouragement at exactly

There is vast literature on 'observation' in research and the many forms it can take. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) argue that it is the commitment to rich descriptions and understandings of the social world that overrides nomothetic stances (p 16). It is as Taft (1999) suggests legitimate to be a participant 'in some part of the normal life of the group' (p 113) and use what is learnt from that participation to produce research findings. It is however, essential to be transparent about the role of self within the research and to provide opportunities for that to be deconstructed and evaluated.

Wankat (2002) suggest a number of palliative measures to reduce stress (p. 35) none of which tackle the systemic problems and are little more than common sense. It is not difficult to find suggestions for ways to treat the symptoms, it is however less easy to find a cure for the 'disorder'.

The pressure to publish can be seen as both a personal and an institutional development. Glassick et al (1997) note 'institutions seeking a national reputation gain[ed] it primarily through the research accomplishments of their faculty' (p. 7). In many institutions faculty need to provide evidence of their research productivity in order to become permanent members of staff and/or gain promotion. This places hidden external and collateral value on 'research' which appears on the surface to place the priority on adding to the 'body of knowledge'. This raises both epistemological questions, and questions which should examine the ways in which professional identities are influenced by the ways they are situated in the educational community contexts. What counts as legitimate knowledge and how knowledge is validated relates directly to what counts as scholarship. Schön (1995) disputes the possibility of implementing new forms of scholarship if the epistemology of the institution remains unchallenged, he sees it as 'an epistemological battle' (p. 35). The reification of the professional identity of educators is evident in the structures that support practices. If publications are central to achieving rewards and being valued, then for most people that will provide evidence of a successful professional identity.

the right time, Anne and Georgette, fellow students and allies....and of course, Tony as my constant sounding board. This is a little of me.

I want to return to the issues central to this research.

**How have the findings in my research investigations related to the culture I experience when I step in and out of that academic world?** (I am transient as some of my time is spent on a remote barrier island, a small fact I try to keep to myself!). **Is what I re-tell confirmed in my encounters?**

I am not an inhabitant of the culture as such, but I am much more than an observer, and I am vicariously linked. I often find my casual conversations especially over the last four years of my dissertation research have elicited little gems of insights. I think in large part this is because I am outside the pack, a rogue wanderer, who does not have a clear identity within the group. Until now I have found no way to include these casual encounters as legitimate research findings. I think they are important.

What I can now introduce into my research are these observations and conversations, the titbits about how scholarship and reflective practice are lived out, as I encounter it. My casual conversations, often over a beer or two, introduce the conflicts of personal and professional life. Many of the educators I come in contact with talk about stress. Many seem to complain, on one level or another about the lack of time to achieve all the demands the job entails. The impact this has on family life, working at home, going in to work at weekends etc. is a measure of the imbalance. Included within this environment are complex problems such as divorce, family bereavements and troublesome teenagers, to name only a few. Perhaps the most frequently heard professional concern is the constant pressure to publish. The pressure palpably builds on those who know that a tenure decision is just around the corner. The build up to this event often begins several years beforehand, and the frenzy to match practices to policies is demonstrable. The ability to give certain practices primacy for tenure seems tacitly and silently acquired. The final two or three years can see a dramatic shift in the prioritizing of professional demands. For some the answer seems to come in the form of multiple authorships. When I looked into the publication records in one department of mainly scientists I could sometimes count eight authors on one short paper. But they all had huge numbers of publications listed on their curriculum vitae. I wondered what role reciprocation played? What, and how much, is a contribution? The pattern of authorship appears to tell an incestuous story of its own.

I count a number of 'rat killers' as friends (my husband warns at my use of this none academic term, but I often hear it used to identify scientists who mainly operate in a laboratory or scientific setting). They make up a large

There are plenty of researchers', for example Snow and Morrill (1995), who believe that 'storytelling' and discourse will devalue (ethnographic) research as empirically grounded research, just as there is a growing body of researchers' who believe it offers authentic and valuable insights. It seems essential to be able to connect these disparate opinions and practices in mutual, respectful dialogue, however this seems problematic. Perhaps this tension could be considered as creating a stimulating environment for growth and research practices? The interaction of mutually discordant voices could represent the educational institution as a dynamic and eclectic entity. Quality in research is fundamental and essential in all research, but measurement of quality must also be examined. Just as with scholarship, what counts as legitimate research, and how that research is validated cannot depend on dominant discourses. Bronowski (1973) noted that we must allow considerable tolerance for uncertainty in the way we report what we have learned from our research unless we are prepared to narrow our minds across the disciplines; it equally applies to ways of approaching scholarship.

Perhaps it is possible that the challenge lies in approaching, in some way, the practices of teaching and learning scholarship as evidence-based and theory-framed thereby presenting learning and student heterogeneity as serious endeavors. This would appeal more readily to those who expect to see specific and easily recognizable attributes when identifying scholarship. Boyer (1990) was keen to emphasize the holistic intentions of multiple scholarships, that they should not isolate individuals but bring people together as facets of a whole. He stated 'It is towards a *shared* vision of intellectual and social possibilities – a community of scholars – that the four dimensions of academic endeavor should lead' (p. 80) and this needs to remain a focus when structuring an environment within which different elements are more equally valued. Zahorski (2002) sees this holistic approach as possibly resulting in 'gestalt, the almost magical effect of the whole becoming greater than the sum of its parts that really makes the difference, creating a transformative energy that permeates the campus culture' (p. 30). This then creates not only advantages for the individual, but for the individual, the learner and the institution as part of a whole.

number of the scurrying population on campus. When we talk of research there is unquestionably a gulf. If I discuss the shape of my research I witness a vacant look in their eyes the minute they realize I'm not providing 'scientific' evidence. They do not have much time for the 'storytellers'. I hear them say 'anecdote has its place; storytelling can be interesting....but it's not research!' There seems to be both a lack of understanding and a reluctance to adapt or even recognize an alternative position. This is not a debate and exchange of ideas it is more akin to entrenched territorial dogmatism. It is critical to acknowledge this attitude when considering the practicalities of implementing diverse dimensions of scholarship. Success will surely not come in the form of superimposed frameworks that leave ideological and ontological issues unexposed and unresolved.

One of my conversations, when I was in the early stages of deciding on my research topic revolved around student centred learning.....'what the hell is that crap' was the cry from one of the scientists. As it turned out I was not sure I could explain what that 'crap' was! But in an unguarded moment, in the backstage setting, a different truth had emerged.....and it had nothing to do with teaching evaluation forms! My scientist friend continued on to talk of his students, 'I tell them what they need to know, if they can't learn it they won't last long in my classes'. This is perhaps because he had never considered there to be any value in student centred learning! Will this same group value diversity in scholarship? Will they embrace different scholarship dimensions that will require a deviation from the evidence based ideologies and values found in basic research practice? I think there are inherent problems for assimilation of diverse scholarship practices that will require a demonstrable advantage before gaining acceptance. It is the 'what's in it for me syndrome?' It could be as simplistic as relieving the dedicated researcher from teaching or university committee responsibilities as suggested by Ernest Boyer, and replacing those interactions with a different format. This could be, for example, seminars discussing on-going research projects. The issue of 'all the other stuff we are expected to do' is one that I have heard voiced on many occasions. These resentments are given very little (if any) forum for open discussion but should inform development of a different structure for valuing multiple dimensions of scholarship. It would seem more responsible to face the dissenting opinions than ignore their obstructive disruptiveness.

When I listen and observe the day to day events that relate to scholarship, and the scholarship of teaching and learning I can feel a wind of change. But in the sheltered environment of the university campus it is a very slow and gentle breeze. In recruiting my participants for the second phase I spent some time talking with a 'Boyerian' convert.

Boyer (1990) would, I believe, identify this as an 'ethical violation' (p. 31). He strongly emphasized the paradox in valuing the scholar who delivers research papers over the scholar who teaches and inspires the learners who constitute and validate the university educational community. The problem highlighted in my encounter is possibly the attempt to locate the new vision of the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) within the dominant hegemonic structure. This failure to deconstruct the cultural constructs of the institution leaves the implicit value system intact and exclusive. If these structures were to be made explicit it would be evident that they needed to be made more diverse and inclusive, and *where* they covertly prioritize distinct practices. The continued emphasis on research productivity locates the SoTL within the dominant structure and thereby seeks to validate it through the existing tenets. At worst, this identifies the SoTL as a 'subject' to be researched, to generate publications, and thereby fulfill the existing institutional requirements. Boyer's (1990) proposal was a re-structuring and reconceptualisation of the roles and rewards, he thought it was unrealistic, and counter-productive 'to expect all faculties to research and publish on a regular basis' (p. 27).

The epistemological questions require as Berberet (2002) states 'both the rethinking of the nature and purposes of scholarship that Boyer initiated and assumptions about truth and the ground rules for determining it that are consistent with the emerging paradigms of the post-modern era (p 94). It is within this debate that territory can be unearthed, disrupted and eventually re-sown with healthier seeds. However, it is also this ground that is the most difficult to fertilize with new growth when it has a pervasive indigenous 'crop'. Schön (1983) convincingly argues that technical rationality is contextually located in both the institution and the professional practice of educators and that even in the act of rendering the model of technical rationality problematic practitioners 'are party to the institutions that perpetuate it' (p. 26) . If this is the case then change must accommodate the notion, for example, that apparently diverse research practices may have hidden within modes of technical rationality and dominant ideology.

She had spent nearly ten years on various university wide committees considering how to introduce broader definitions of scholarship. Changes in the university leadership had thwarted several years of work, but she was hopeful that they would soon be able to implement some changes. But ten years, and nothing much to show! And why should such an interdisciplinary campus wide topic as scholarship be so dependant on continuity of leadership? Does the culture of the campus really rely on an individual to determine its identity?

Other conversations with the hierarchy of the Education Department left me disconcerted. The search for an established member of staff who could be considered to fall into the scholarship of teaching and learning was revealing in its own right. This department professes eagerness to adopt multiple and diverse dimensions of scholarship, indeed says it autonomously is....and after all, teaching and learning should be central to an education department. However, I was firmly told that placing value in teaching and learning is one thing, but *all* our staff must research, research, publish....so here enters a deception. I was so un-nerved by this revelation, which places the focus on the product, and not the process, that I returned to Boyer's work, convinced that I had made some terrible misinterpretation. As a PhD student I have long ago realized that the literature you read that is relevant to your topic (or not) multiplies endlessly. The more you know, the more you realise you don't know! It is an almost totally subjective process of 'sifting', and you can only hope to know enough to be coherent. In returning to Boyer's original work I contrasted it against the fifteen years of progress....or lack there of? I wondered what Ernest Boyer would make of it all?

Other encounters have left me considering if Boyer's dimensions of scholarship are more closely linked to research traditions than is acknowledged anywhere in the literature. The linking of the dominance of basic research and the positivist traditions to the marginalizing of such practices as teaching and learning seems entirely possible if not probable. The theory and practice of education is after all as Schön would say 'swampy'. The most cynical chatter I've heard when discussing scholarship comes from researchers embedded in the quantitative traditions. Although academic literature convincingly talks of the mainstream acceptance of other research paradigms, for example qualitative methods, there are still plenty of academics who do not consider it to be 'proper research'. We have all met them. As the 'messier' scholarship dimensions such as integration and the scholarship of teaching and learning are almost certainly embracing qualitative research methods in their research practices (but not exclusively) they seem doomed to failure when it comes to equality and acceptance.

The dominant ideologies of the institution are reinforced by the practices of the constituents of that community, thereby reproducing the legitimacy of the knowledge constructions. Apple (1975a) when talking of the hidden curriculum, (and here it applies to the practice of post-graduate students) argues that it serves to reinforce the dominant hegemonic structure 'it posits a network of assumptions that, when internalized by students, establishes the boundaries of legitimacy' (p. 99). Unchallenged reproduction in educational practices perpetuates the transmission of ideologies as knowledge and practice, silencing by its omnipresent nature the possibilities of alternatives or conflicting ways of knowing. Silencing alternative practices of scholarship.

Macdonald and Tinning (2003) argue that 'reflective practice has become less about a personal moral self/teacher and more about public performance in line with codified practices' (p. 83). The lack of critical analysis of reflective practices has led to the axiomatic use of the term to cover a multitude of incongruent actions and thoughts. As Martinez (1990) states reflection has become 'the patchwork panacea of teacher educators of all theoretical persuasions' (p. 20). There is a tacit assumption that there is a shared meaning, and that meaning is dependant on the fulfillment of a purpose. For the practitioner, in most instances (and according to my data) it allows a false sense of having critically analyzed assumptions (to name one aspect). For the institution it allows pretence of critical examination to pervade the practices when in fact little has been examined or rendered visible. Bleakley (1999) also raises the alarm over reflective practice which he considers is 'in danger of being widely adopted in higher education without rigorous interrogation of the central notion of 'reflection' (p. 315). This lack of critical examination may allow reflective practice to exist as a regulatory practice, to have 'discursively produced, legitimised, and sustained the 'reflective practitioner' as a professional identity' (Bleakley, p 316). This should raise questions about the implicit and explicit purposes of reflection, and any assumptions we might make about its function.

I attended two research methods classes at my husband's university in the US during the course of my PhD research project, one qualitative and one quantitative. I finished both of them disheartened. My fellow students were kind and bright and shiny, but in my opinion they were becoming products of reproduction in education. If this seems a deviation from the topic it is not, for surely one of the aims of a broader concept of scholarship is to improve the teaching and learning environment for the student. What I encountered in these classes was a researcher who did not want to teach, and an 'old school' educator past her 'sell by date' who would have been happier doing service work (Boyer's application) rather than keeping up with the changing times (it is worth noting here that in a recent survey 32% of professors expected to work into their seventies!). So my focus remains on teaching and learning. However, as a side issue, the system in place for doctoral candidates was so prescriptive that the idea that I was writing in the first person and wouldn't have traditional chapter formats was considered idiosyncratic and slightly lunatic. Mind you, they probably graduated two years ago! Diverse practices were not evident.

Perhaps one of the most surprising issues that has arisen through this project is the uncritical reverence paid to reflective practice and related frameworks. As an educational practice it seems to have been given a remarkably easy, uncritical ride in the literature. Yet what I hear, experience, see, is miles away from the complex practices I read about. Talking about it nearly always brings supportive responses, 'it's cheaper than a therapist!', 'I love to think back over my day', 'I am a reflective practitioner!', but radical and critical analysis of such things as the assumptions about the social world we all inhabit are seldom included. Reflective practice, in use, for most people, seems to be used for evaluation, how well the lecture went, did I meet my teaching and learning objectives etc. Its self governing nature allows illusions and delusions to stay intact. How good is anyone at being really self-critical? The danger with this blanket acceptance of reflective practice as both good and effective is that it can then be adopted to validate practices and policies. The scholarship of teaching and learning is a good example. Reflective practices or self-critique have been unproblematically accepted as a suitable way to measure and assess effective practices in the scholarship of teaching and learning. However, the data from my first two phases suggests that the multiple and diverse interpretations of reflection in practice, what form it takes in action will make it very difficult to standardise. In my work as a craftswoman I have sometimes been amazed at what I miss, even looking again and again has failed to reveal a flaw that has only become obvious when looked at from a different stance or placed under unusual pressure. This artistry is absent in

Goldsworthy's (2002) work is very difficult to measure, first hand experience of it is often limited; the 'lasting' qualities are tacitly absorbed and resurface in unpredictable ways. He recognizes that what lies beneath the surface will affect what is exposed. Many of these qualities can be applied to teaching and learning. The environmentalist George Schaller talks of the cultural void in his perceptions when viewing a new landscape 'I lack awareness of the hidden and intangible forces, the spiritual geography... (sic) I would have to see with different eyes and hear with different ears to define the landscape, as local people do' (p. 53). But in his recognition of other ways of seeing Schaller has opened his mind to the possibilities of contextually invested perceptions.

Matthews (2002) in placing a frame around a scene directs our focus to the content of the picture, the meaning and (assumptions) can altered by the referencing of subsequent pictures. This imagery can encourage 'tacit knowing' and places authority in the framed image or text. As Bleakley (2000) suggests 'self is constituted by its representation rather than its presentation' (p. 412). The assumptions and meanings can be differently emphasized and interpreted for different ends. For example, Rubin (2000) criticizes Boyer's definitions arguing that 'it is easier to define denotatively what the four scholarships are than to understand them connotatively. The categories, though, often seem to be treated as being 'exhaustive and mutually exclusive, leading to questionable validity and reliability' (p. 261). Rubin (2000) saw this as an attempt by Boyer to 'contain' all that an academic does in professional practice and label it *scholarship*, which Rubin believes becomes 'the scholarship of confusion' (p 261). What seems more evident is that Rubin's vision of what he was seeing (reading) was restricted by the way that he looks at things. His interpretation, his glance at the image, has enabled him to leave his conceptual ideologies intact. Possibly, individuals look for different ways to normalize the concepts, and in so doing find the fit inadequate, the picture unappealing.

pragmatic reflexive practice in education, and its loss is hardly noticed.

When considering artistry, if an aim is to see and do research differently as a way of expanding understandings, inspiration and exploration should not be discipline bound. For example, Andy Goldsworthy's sculptures and philosophies are entirely applicable to educational research. He tries to make sense of the landscape around him, to build in it things of beauty, using the materials he finds in the natural habitat. The sense and order he makes of it all is ephemeral, temporary, fragile, impermanent, personal and subjective. The balance between success and failure in his work requires tremendous sensitivity and insight. What he doesn't seek is permanence. What he evokes is an entirely different way of seeing, an unexpected picture, he challenges the viewer to rethink their established perceptions and expectations. It can be breathtaking.

This is why I was excited about using Jenny Matthews' photographic imagery as a way of understanding Boyer's descriptive frameworks of scholarship; it helped me 'think outside of the box' (excuse the pun). Matthews challenged me to re-consider how I intended to render problematic the 'framing' of Boyer's scholarship dimensions. It is easy to tend towards assuming that concepts are complete and intact. However, like the powerful image of a photograph, they can tell a story in a glance, communicating and engaging the reader, but also covertly directing the focus. The frame isolates the picture just as the page contains the text, but there is so much else external to the frame that contributes and influences what you see or read. The image is stripped of context, and is interpreted slightly differently by every gazer. There are of course commonalities, threads that connect and direct the attention, but can I be certain you will see the same image I see?

For Boyer's dimensions of scholarship I am troubled by the disengagement of the purpose of his 'blurry edged pictures'. His original focus seemed to revolve and evolve from a desire, a *passion*, to see the academic community as a more relevant and culturally embedded institution. His 'big picture' was serving individual, societal, environmental and global needs by opposing the narrowing definition of the mission of the academic institution. He did not see scholarship, in all its forms as an esoteric appendage, but rather at the heart of the practices of scholars. Within these scholarly practices teaching and learning are the lifeblood. When I put all of this together, and think how this relates to scholarship in practice, and especially for the scholarship of teaching and learning, I am conscious of the uneven acceptance that still exists. This seems to be most evident in the entrenched views of scholars who are at the moment secure in the dominant ideology of the institution. Maybe, as

Could this be similar to the role Thomas believes 'theory' has come to play in qualitative research? As Thomas (2002) suggests 'theory' has acquired *power*, and is needed 'in order that policy and practice can be influenced, and this reasoning in turn hinges on the epistemic prestige of theory – on its cash value, its credibility as an established way of corraling understanding to enable explanation and prediction' (p. 430). This could apply to Boyer's dimensions of scholarship if they were used to facilitate the established ways of interpreting scholarship whilst appearing to offer an alternative interpretation.

Kezar (2000) suggests 'that higher education literature is filled with research, but very little scholarship – that is, meaningful, important, or insightful' (p. 9). Productivity and value are obviously not synonymous.

For Glassick et al (1997) how knowledge can be responsibly applied to consequential problems forms the basis of the scholarship of application and is exemplified in text books that give practical insights.

The redefining of priorities and the proposing of fresh ways of viewing scholarship needs to be made evident in actions and thoughts, policies and practices. It is, as Schön (1995) suggests, a question of epistemology, and a 'challenge [to] the epistemology built into the modern research university' (p. 26). This requires a dismantling of the structures that support the established value system, and an ideological shift in emphasis. Discussions and publications on *how* to practice SoTL are not synonymous with the *practice* of the SoTL. The dangerous territory to avoid is 'that it becomes far more important for most professors to deliver a paper at the Hyatt in Chicago than to teach undergraduates back home' (Boyer, 1996, p. 31)

my data indicated, the constituents of the campus community will be happy if they believe changes will enable them to concentrate on their areas of strength. Maybe the institutions will see the benefits of diversifying the interpretations of scholarship as a way to continue evolving into relevant, connected, vibrant, multidimensional communities of excellence. But what I think might happen is that Boyer's scholarship will be cherry picked and used as a means-ended vehicle. I already fear that the scholarship of teaching and learning has lost some of Boyer's original intentions, and that it has become a *subject* upon which to publish articles. The pressure to research and publish on a regular basis forms part of the structure that supports the existing ideology of the institution. Establishing a body of research into scholarship dimensions, especially the SoTL, could provide the theoretical basis, the validation, for implementing the policies and act to justify the practices.

The vast increase in research productivity over the last few years avoids questions of value, and whether this increase is matched by a similar increase in knowledge. I remember Jeff Lewis telling me he was most proud of a text book he had written to give practical advice to Special Education Teachers, but that 'it won't count for much in the Research Assessment Exercise, it's not the right kind of publication'. So Jeff's work that meets so well the demands of Boyer's dimension of application has only a minimal way of being counted professionally, except in the grateful hands of the teachers his expertise was directly and applicably able to help. More value is placed on publishing in peer reviewed journals, established for the dissemination of articles, and for a mainly academic audience. The impact of Jeff's work as it directly relates to practices would be distanced from the practitioners who should, and could benefit.

This irony is mirrored in the developments in the SoTL. For example, *The International Conference on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* will be drawing many of those dedicated to teaching and learning away from their students and into the circus of delivering papers, attending conferences, and publishing, publishing, publishing. I have the feeling I am 'shooting myself in the foot' by raising this issue, and it is a value-laden criticism. I acknowledge that dissemination of research is vital to broadly expand a knowledge base, but the danger is that the SoTL is becoming a control mechanism. To take that in an extreme direction, I am raising the possibility that it could be used to control, measure, monitor, implement policies, centralize accountability, and introduce control mechanisms in the form of codified practices. Could it become a wolf in sheep's clothing? If one of the purposes becomes fulfilling the existing requirements of the institutional structure, as in

The complex definitions of the SoTL complicate evaluation. Trigwell et al (2000) and Glassick et al (1997) describe models for developing and measuring the SoTL in universities. However, in practice these may add to the instability as they include for example, reflective practice, which appears to be an oxymoron. The potential then exists, through the lack of transparency for abuse of the new structure so that it may be used for tacit institutional purposes.

Macdonald and Tinning (2001) and Laker (2001) suggest that the common thread that runs through reflective practice is thinking, but that reflective practice has become an instrument of 'governmentality', acting as it does to 'govern' in ways that are ostensibly acceptable. Within this are the hidden mechanisms that construct, control, codify and assess say 'teacher' and 'learner'. Reproduction in education may lead to reproduction in attitudes towards the adoption of diverse and multiple forms of scholarship. What may appear as an essentially neutral value system may, though not in appearance, be based on *power* much in the way Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) describe.

Ellis (1997) talks of 'a place we inhabited before our creativity and imagination were discouraged by our professional socialization' (p. 135). The professional self has to conform to the social norms of the group if one is to perform many of the expected functions, for example, publications.

Ellis (1997) opens up these 'silent co-authors' (p. 120) as integral facets of her writing. She candidly dispenses with the fear that this might in any way devalue her work or raise criticism. Greene (1995) encourages researchers to extend the invisible boundaries, 'educational philosophers have to discover their own intertextuality, extend their minds towards the horizons, shape and reshape their traditions' (p. 7).

researching, publishing and attending conferences the SoTL strengthens the very structure it pretends to re-design.

The fine line in discussing these issues appears to revolve around exacting standards and academic rigor as they apply to the scholarship dimensions. Evaluating practices in dimensions such as *discovery* is less of a problem, you research, and your peers evaluate your work, you publish, your peers evaluate your work again. As my research and much that is published has indicated, the SoTL is far more messy and confused. It seems that this 'instability' has led back to adopting what is 'known', the ways that are accepted, and hence we are back in the game of 'publish or perish'.....full circle.

In these boundary conversations I have found much to disturb my understanding of the scholarship of teaching and learning, and within that, reflective practice. It seems all very well on paper! The impression I have gleaned is that an overhaul of institutional scholarly values would be truly welcomed, but when it comes to hierarchical territory the battle may be hard to win. I have wondered how the cycle will be broken. As an apprentice there were times, and awful jobs, that you were expected to complete because your teacher had suffered in the same way. Technology had in many cases nullified the need, but still you were expected to endure the tedium as part of the apprenticeship and 'a rite of passage'. Is this reproduction of experiences evident in attitudes to changes in values in scholarship?

As I come towards the end of this phase, I am intrigued by the shape it has taken, and how it connects to the previous two phases. I hope, and feel that it has become a research phase that has avoided the 'I just want to get it over with' that other PhD students talk of, I have enjoyed the challenge. I hope in some way I have reconnected with the aesthetic me. As my space runs out, I wonder what form this third phase might have taken if I had not had a fallback skill (my craft design work). I also see traced through it the 'silent co-authors', those who influence my work through texts, editorial advice and professional practices. My aim was to reframe the narrative voice in such a way that it opened up the discourse to some of the silenced areas and in so doing I practiced a reflexively aware research act. I hope that it has not been a dull read, and that it has added a different dimension to the topic of my research. It has felt good to be doing research differently, challenging the way I have developed as a researcher and feeling my way through the tricky landscape of educational research.

## *In Conclusion*

I thought it was important to conclude this phase by returning to the role of reflexivity and how that has influenced my choice of method, and the way I have translated the data through this process and into an autoethnographic account. Returning to the plethora of explanations of what reflexivity means Schwandt (1997) offers this definition:

Reflexivity: (a) the process of critical self-reflection on one's biases, theoretical predispositions, preferences; (b) an acknowledgement of the enquirer's place in the setting, context, and social phenomenon he or she seeks to understand and a means for a critical examination of the entire research process (p. 135 )

Although this is just one of many descriptions of what it means to act self-reflexively it highlights some of the issues well. It brings into the discussion how I have attempted to make my thinking visible, opened it up for examination and consideration as part of the research process. Writing autoethnographically is symbiotic with self-reflexivity. As Tierney and Lincoln (1997) note, 'we are bound as authors by a commitment to intertwine the personal with the professional, because we understood "the personal was political," and "the professional was personal" ...' (p. ix). As a researcher, the discourse presented in this phase has required a focus on many aspects of what it means to learn, and to unlearn, and still hidden from view is the struggle to know when enough has been said to be able to move on. Stretching the data and the research process in a new direction has in some ways become epistemic reflexivity, grounding my ways of knowing through the deconstructing of how and where I have come to know. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) explain further:

Far from encouraging narcissism and solipsism, epistemic reflexivity invites intellectuals to recognize and work to neutralize the specific determinisms to which their innermost thoughts are subjected and it informs a concept of the craft of research designed to strengthen its epistemological moorings' (p. 46)

It is important to clarify that in my research data I have found considerable problems with the uneven interpretation of reflective practice. Yet, here I am advocating my inclusion of self-reflexivity as a valuable concept in partnership with autoethnographic narrative. So, although I am inscribed within the textual discourse of my research, I am also *external* to the research data. The questions I have asked my participants are obviously different to the questions I have asked myself. The answers to my questions and the use my participants make of reflective practice are exposed in the data. The understanding and use I make of reflexivity is found within the pages of this dissertation.

The autoethnographic genre of research encourages examination of self within a social context, embedded in the world we inhabit, touching our emotional vulnerable selves as we interact with the process of conducting research or professional practice. It helps, through threads of the personal, to connect research. It releases, as it were, the trapped butterfly in the web of research, no longer destined to be swallowed up the butterfly is spreading its wings and escaping capture. Autoethnography includes intuition, evocation, and artistry, linking knowing, learning, and new ways of understanding (see Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Reed-Danahay, 1997; Sparkes, 2000/2002). The presenting of autoethnographic research in the narrative form should be 'diverse and engaging' (Ellis, 2002) enticing the reader into the narrative, to enjoy turning the next page and 'learning' something new.

The purpose of this third phase was to take an alternative posture, to look at the data differently, to include the marginalised opinions and perceptions of those closely involved with my research and to shed new light on my research topic. In so doing I purposefully drifted into the deep water of what it means to go through a long process of gathering information and writing research differently. The extension of this process into

a fourth phase continues to evolve looking at ways we can explore the research area; to  
use a most famous split infinitive 'to boldly go.....

## Epilogue

This epilogue is intended to perform several functions. I hope that it will provide a space within which I can, to some extent, stand back and holistically consider my dissertation, and also bring some clarity of thought to the following issues:

- My current thinking on my research questions in the light of my research findings
- Methodological issues - what I know now that I didn't know when I started
- Where future research might develop as a result of this dissertation

*My current thinking* about my research questions is complex, as it should be as I pause at the end of a long project. The salient issues that arose from this investigation into HE educators' perceptions of Boyer's (1990) multiple dimensions of scholarship has unearthed much uncertainty, with some implied areas of sureness.

When I layer and examine the three phases together they build a composite, interwoven picture with clarity and agreement from my participants in two areas. Firstly, the practitioners would like to see an inclusive framework such as Boyer's (1990) implemented in a modern university structure. Secondly, the responsibility for this lies in the hands of the institution, to change the epistemology and ideology of the institutional structure so that it enables, even encourages, a diverse complementary community of practitioners – 'to end the suffocating practice in which colleges and universities measure themselves far too frequently by external status rather than by values determined by their own distinctive mission' (Boyer, 1990, p xiii). Other contemporaneous literature (Becker & Andrews, 2004; Bender, 2005; Bernstein & Bass & 2005; Darling, 2003; Eggins & Macdonald et al, 2003; Fraser, 2001; Fukami, 2004; Greenbank, 2006; Hanley, 2005; Huber & Hutchins, 2005; Kreber, 2005; Nicholls, 2004; O'Meara & Rice, 2005) continues to develop a rich background of literature relating to these issues.

There were two connected areas of uncertainty. The first centred on the dimension of the scholarship of teaching and learning, which appears as a contested and poorly understood dimension. This remains a problematic area, and continues to be identified as a persistent area of concern despite efforts to find a common definition (Bernstein & Bass, 2005; Bender, 2005; Kreber, 2004/2005). The second area of confusion emanated from the suggested assessment standard of reflective practice. It emerged that the rhetoric or theory of reflective practice (or self-critique) is often very different to the practice. This was a devolved issue embedded deeply within the research topic, but this research has raised important concerns that surround the nature of reflective practice as an uncontested element of educational jargon, and therefore its attributed value. It is an area that would benefit from further critical evaluation in research literature (Aunger, 2004; Kreber, 2005; Hatton & Smith, 1995; Macdonald & Tinning, 2003; Moon, 2000).

My current thinking interweaves these complexities and is inclined towards recognising that change in many modern universities is overdue, but that any implementation will initially need to tackle the areas of discord and ambiguity first. Within this debate is the acknowledgment that the net should be cast wide and include such issues as, student learning, institutional organisation, political climate, and teacher education if the implementation is to be complementary and fully relevant in HE. Boyer's son expresses serious concerns (Boyer, 2005) about how his father would perceive the 'progress' that has been made in education, and believes he would be especially concerned about the lack of 'connectedness of things' (p. 40). My thoughts regarding my second research question (my spiral methodological structure) overlap into the second and third bullet points which follow.

*Methodological issues - what I know now that I didn't know when I started* has been at some intrinsic level about *learning to research* as a doctoral candidate. The Pandora's Box of research methods has been prised open and with it comes not more certainty, but multiplying questions and endless possibilities. I am now more aware that my spiral methodological structure is a compilation of existing methods and methodologies, that inevitably any uniqueness is contextual and subjective. In developing my methodological framework I have been influenced by previous work and absorbed, gathered and extracted elements, sometimes tacitly, which were woven into the structure with differing emphasis. Denzin & Lincoln (2005) recognise this interactive process, welcoming it as part of personal history and the ever shifting boundaries of research *in* and *on* education.

Where these influences arise may not always be easily identifiable, however, the recognition that continuing engagement with (research) literature keeps creative ways of researching a possibility and enables the individual to find unique ways of melding the known or newly found, and I continue to learn from literature on research methods (for example, Atkinson, Coffey & Delmont 2003; Aunger, 2004; Cassell & Symon, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003/2005; Evans, 2002; Keeves & Lakomski, 1999; Leech, 2005; Sparkes, 2003; Sparkes & Smith, 2005). Although I acknowledge that my dissertation has similarities that can be found in other methodologies, I can now more clearly see how they trace into the structure. Methodologies such as grounded theory (Charmaz, 2002; Gerdes & Conn, 2001; Glaser, 1993; Strauss & Corbin, 1994), multi-method research (Brewer & Hunter, 1989), a little of coherence theory (Sparkes, 1994; Young, 2001) can all be found within my methodology. The work of Strauss & Corbin (1994) on the evolution of the grounded theory stresses many of the same desired attributes, and the Delphi method (Clayton, 1997) has reflexive and overlapping qualities. However,

through this absorption I also see distinct characteristics and strengths, for example, in my personal methodological emphasis on reflexivity and flexibility (Etherington, 2004; Evans, 2002). Each phase employed both a different method and varying types of analysis, for example, in phase three the use of autoethnography, and this gives the methodology its own character.

It is within this realm that the 'crafting' of my dissertation, and therefore my methodology, and finding my way to research mirrors the skills I developed as a craftsperson. Both require mastery of basic skills, familiarity with tools, and practice. As a jeweller and silversmith I start with a set of skills common to the craftsperson, the flat sheet of metal can be skilfully shaped into a bowl,... but it has to become more if it is to move beyond utilitarian. Most research students must perform a similar apprenticeship, learn the skills, practice the techniques, and hopefully produce and demonstrate their skilful use. But there is something else to be gained and appreciated along the way that is often overlooked that moves the skilfully produced 'object' in unexpected ways. The craftsperson employs dexterity, artistry, tactile awareness, sensitivity and alertness to the impact they are having on the item they are producing. They take the piece and move it beyond the sum of its parts and make it theirs through osmosis. For me, the knowledge and skills gained through the research journey has enabled me to develop my research and my methodology and include such areas as *my* autoethnographic account and the evolving use of *boundary conversations*.

Within this learning process is the realisation that 'uniqueness' is very difficult to capture, that, for example, however extensive a literature search is it will always be constrained, especially when research is not in the easily accessibly public domain. Therefore, there are likely to be others who have also constructed alternative frameworks

that are similar. For example, Waring (2001/2003) has developed a 'the helix model' which builds on the grounded theory with a 3-dimensional spiral emphasis. These research conversations evolved within the same territory, and preceded or ran concurrently with my dissertation and further emphasise that each researcher brings something of themselves to theorising and are contextually located, socially constructed, subjective and selective. If I were writing my dissertation now my early methodological claims would be altered, I hope I would be more skilful. I am in a constant state of learning and therefore inevitably my research self is always 'under construction' (remembering and forgetting!). Therefore, I have included in the appendices (Appendix G) instances of language and theorising that I now believe are either ambiguous, unclear or where I now hold a different opinion in the light of the holistic research experience.

These developments highlight the time-bound nature of research in education and the difficulties of defining the boundaries for personal research practice – where the invisible lines are drawn, and what to include or exclude. I think it is too early to say if there is value in my methodology as it has yet to surface in the public domain, but on a personal level it has worked well to impart a sense of organisation. I now know some of what I didn't know when I started!

As I reflect on the findings, on both my spiral methodological structure and the topic of my research I am struck more by my personal evolution than by any ground breaking new knowledge that will transform HE into an equitable habitat. Perhaps that is a value that will last. This aside is mentioned in an attempt to remain faithful to including my boundary conversations in this work.

The final issue point of *where future research might develop* as a result of the research reported in this dissertation can be broken down into the sensible and the

daredevil. The sensible road might include further investigations into the perceptions of the whole community that constitutes a university campus as it relates to multiple dimensions of scholarship. In particular it would be interesting to diversify the investigation to include both the implications (or otherwise) for the student population, and likewise those in administrative positions who could implement change. Phase four is concentrating on a Dean's opinions of the multiple dimensions of scholarship and how implementation might change the character of the institutional.

It could also be that future research might examine the possibility that there may be a connection between personal resistance to accepting the scholarship of teaching and learning and an individual's research orientation. Future research will be aided by the growing body of knowledge on the topic, as Bender (2005) notes 'Boyer introduced into this supercharged climate a language in which to respond constructively to the public and academic concerns about college teaching' (p 48), and it will be for researchers to help consolidate change. There is also a plethora of research possibilities that might include critical examination of what reflective practice has come to mean (in theory and practice), of how it could be uncritically used as an assessment mechanism (Macdonald & Tinning, 2003), or as panacea for professional practices. This particular 'Emperor' may not have the designer wardrobe it claims, and it is overdue for a rummage in the closet.

The daredevil in me wants to produce creative and innovative ways to research. To counter 'botox research' that is expressionless, numbs the mind, and presents a wrinkle free face of research in education (or educational practice). My personal initiation into some of the methodological debates has opened an unforeseen connection between my 3-dimensional craft training, my educational researcher persona, and my personality. I intend to continue to develop a sensitive, 3-dimensional spiral methodology that

embraces amongst other attributes, artistically creative reflexivity – and strive for the form of representation described by Eisner (2001) that recognises that content, form and representation are essential to the understandings secured (p. 138-139).

I hope to further evolve the inclusion of *boundary conversations* in research. This ‘borderland research’ strays into the personal and private, sometimes secretive, often insecure areas and could indeed be a minefield. The silent research voice or the conversations in the margins are so often absent or ignored in published research, but perhaps they might offer new ways to connect understandings and knowledge. For example, it is within this domain that I could own up and include the struggle that I have had in capturing a long dissertation in a prologue, of what to include or exclude, of hoping it reads well, and wondering ‘what now’? By including this information I may have connected with my reader, conveyed a different aspect, triggered a mutual emotion, and secured a complementary or common understanding.

I also believe there is value in the creative combination of *boundary conversations* and critical analysis, especially in autoethnography, but not exclusively. I have yet to find the structure of my phase three replicated elsewhere, although as noted earlier when discussing methodologies, as a personal research repertoire expands there are inevitably moments when previously unseen research echoes ones own efforts – very little is unique! I am sure that out there in ‘the land of research’ others have developed something similar, or maybe I tacitly absorbed something I had read or seen and will recognise its traces more clearly at a future date.

It is risky to open up research into the personal space and the dilemmas many researchers seem to face, but the challenge is enticing. I have come to believe that rather than a weakness (insecurity), my previous background in a ‘non-academic’ discipline

(jeweller and silversmith) has become my strength. I see research in education as a multi-dimensional, imperfect, creative practice – I only wish it included more humour.

As I read back through this sequential journey I can recognise, written starkly between the lines, an *early* self that was naïve, defensive, insecure, with, at times a mounting sense of my own incompetence and increasing doubts. I read it with that dull sense of *the more you know, the more you realise you don't know*...but also, as I work my way through I can feel, and see in the discourse, my research self emerging because *learning to research* has seductively charmed me, but I am now holding my own and I am not under its spell.

**Appendix A**  
**Email Communication Accompanying Questionnaire**  
**(Phase One)**

Dear Professor,

I would greatly appreciate your help with my PhD study. Please would you consider completing the following questionnaire (which is not very long)? Perhaps you will remember how it feels to be a student researcher and be sympathetic!

My area of research is the meaning of scholarship in higher education. This questionnaire will form only one part of a phased methodology. I hope you will be able to provide me with as much detail as possible, your perceptions are important. **To answer the questionnaire click reply, type in your answers after each question, and then send.** All participants' email addresses will be removed upon return to prevent identification unless the contributor agrees to possible follow-up questions. Attached is a consent form, which I will assume you have read if you participate. Thank you

Julia Craig Laker

**Appendix B**  
**Informed Consent Form for Participants**  
**(Phase One)**

**Researcher:** Julia Craig Laker

**Institution:** The University of Plymouth, UK.

**Faculty:** This will form part of a dissertation for consideration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts and Education, Plymouth, UK.

**Title of Research:** Analysing Boyer's framework of 'careful and thoughtful self-critique' in higher education practice

**Purpose of the Research Project:** To investigate the use of self-critique and reflection, as a strand of Boyer's 'scholarship of teaching and learning' in educators in higher education (HE), their perceptions and experiences.

- I have been informed that the purpose of this research is to expand our understanding of HE educator's experiences and perceptions of self-critique and reflection as it relates to 'the scholarship of teaching and learning', and that the focus of the study, and the techniques used to gather data will respond to the initial findings.
- I understand that my participation will involve responding to a number of questions concerned with the topic.
- The researcher will collect, compile and analyse the data, and will not identify individual respondents throughout the reporting and analysis of the data. .
- I understand that there are no foreseeable risks or discomforts anticipated.
- I am aware that the results of this research study may be published, but that the identities of the participants will be kept anonymous by the use of pseudonyms. Access to transcripts and other data will be limited to the researcher, and a coding system will be used to identify responses and ensure confidentiality. The institution will only be identified by reference to its demographic and geographic characteristics, and with comparison to similar institutions in the UK.
- I have been informed that the research in which I will be participating does not involve more than minimal risk, none physical, and that I will not be compensated for my participation.
- Upon request, the results of this study will be shared with those participating prior to any publication.

Any questions I have concerning this study or my participation in it, before or after my consent, will be answered by Julia Craig Laker at the given email address. I have read the above information and by returning the questionnaire I give consent for the data gathered to be used in this research study.

The content of this 'Informed Consent Form' conforms to **The University of Plymouth Ethical Principles for Research Involving Human Participants**

## Appendix C Questionnaire (Phase One)

The purpose of this questionnaire is to ask educators (in higher education) their perceptions of scholarship.

Please provide as much of the following background information as possible:

### **You and your work**

1. Are you male or female?
2. Do you have tenure?
3. How many years have you been teaching in a higher education setting?
4. Have you had any formal training in teaching? (Teaching License or similar) If so please give details.

### Scholarship

Ernest Boyer's (1990) framework for scholarship defined four distinct but overlapping areas, which he described as *discovery, integration, application and teaching/learning*. Boyer's broad definition of scholarship implies multiple ways of understanding the meanings and values of scholarship.

5. What do you think of this broadened definition of scholarship?
6. How do you think scholarship in higher education should be defined?
7. What do you think scholarship means to your institution?
8. What does scholarship mean to you in your professional life?

### **Scholarship of Teaching and Learning**

I am particularly interested in your views about the *scholarship of teaching and learning*, and whether it can be considered 'scholarship'.

9. Please expand on why you think *teaching and learning* should, or should not, be considered as scholarship?

10. What do you think the benefits would be, if any, if teaching and learning were to be considered a scholarly activity?

11. What changes, if any, could be made to improve the teaching and learning process?

### **Reflective Practice and Self-Critique**

12. What does reflective practice mean to you in your professional life?

13. Do you think that reflective practice is a valuable concept, or do you employ a different analytical framework or none?

14. How much of your class time is spent lecturing, as opposed to other teaching styles?

### **Research, Teaching and Learning**

15. What emphasis do you place on research, and why?

16. What emphasis do you place on teaching and learning, and why?

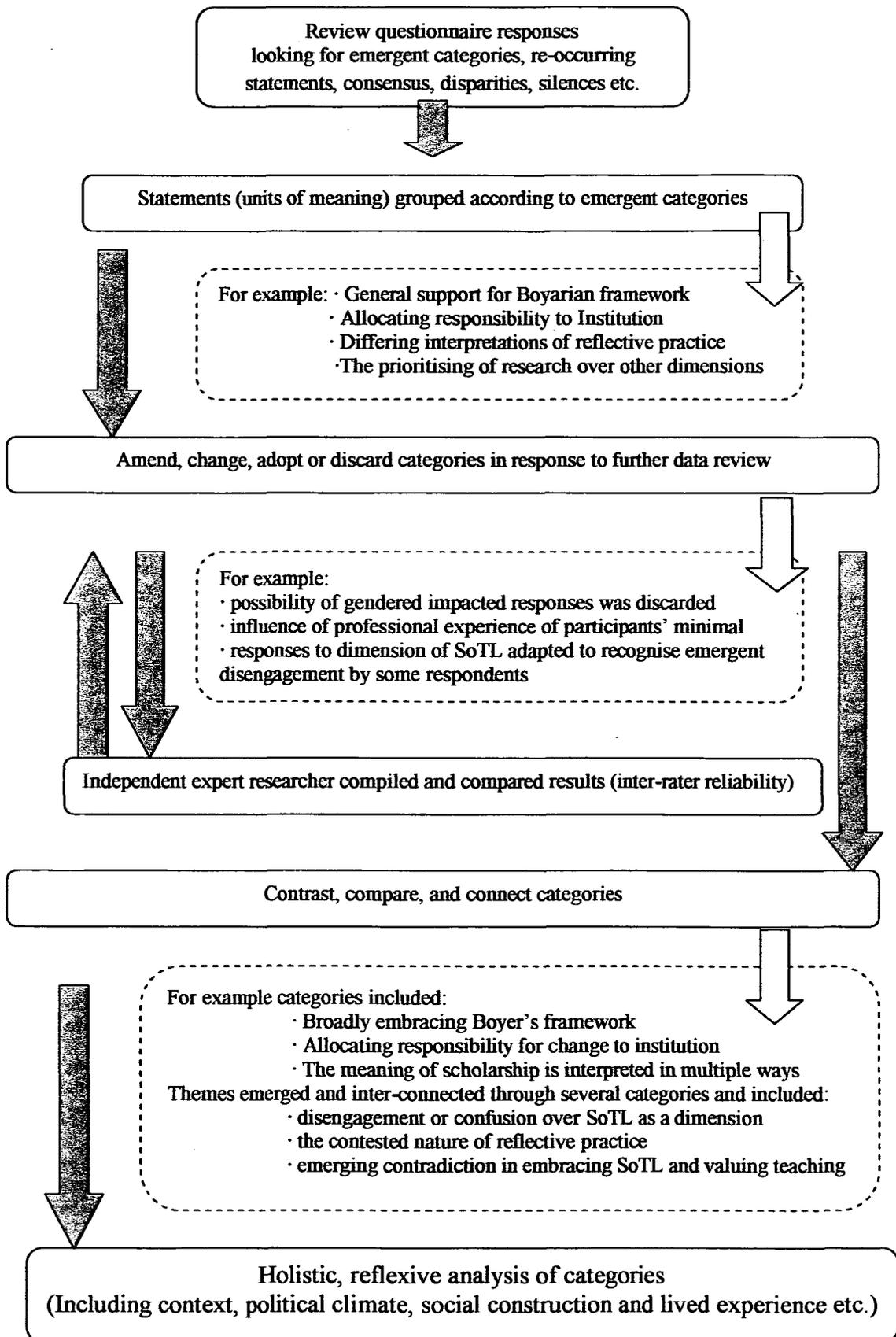
17. Are there any changes you would like to see made regarding the research and teaching and learning emphasis in your institution?

If you have made it this far, thank you! It would be very helpful to me and my study if you could use the space below to comment on any aspects of the debate concerning 'what counts as scholarship' and why the academy should be concerned.

Please indicate if you would be willing to participate in the next phase of my research project by including a contact number or email address at the end of this survey

## Appendix D

### Overview of the Coding Structure Leading to the Final Categories (Content analysis and constant comparison)



**Appendix E**  
**Question Pool**  
**(Phase Two)**

Open with an introduction of myself as a researcher and how I hope to approach this research exercise, noting any different approaches I may be taking and the expectation that this interview will be more of a conversation and can therefore include questions from my participant to me.

Follow with a background discussion on the research project and Boyer's multiple dimensions of scholarship - adjust according to familiarity. Cover the four dimensions and a short description of what they are intended to encapsulate.

**Issue of high importance to cover**

- a. How do you feel about Boyer's multiple dimensions?
  - Do they make sense?
  - Could they work in practice?
  - Do you think all the dimensions are equally important?
  
- b. In your academic role, where do you place most importance?
  
- c. Focusing on the scholarship of teaching and learning - how could that work?
  - Is it as important as other dimensions?
  - Do you think of this as scholarship?
  
- d. The terms reflective practice, self-critique, reflexive practice - do any of these make sense in practice?
  - Do you use a similar framework, how, when, where?
  - What does it look like?
  - Have you had any formal training?
  - Do you think it would make a good standard by which to measure SoTL?
  
- e. How does your institution influence your scholarship?
  - Do you think the university should or is examining issues of what counts as scholarship?

## Secondary Issues

- a. Talk to me about your professional interests
- b. Are/should faculty be rewarded for being good teachers?
- c. Do you think a healthy balance exists between research and teaching?
- d. Do you think research and teaching are equally valued?
- e. Should/does the institution provide resources to support community-based activities based on teaching and research?
- f. Indicate to me the importance of being a good teacher
- g. How important is peer recognition to you in your field?

Appendix F  
Informed Consent Form For Participants  
(Phase Two)

Faculty of Arts and Education  
University of Plymouth  
Douglas Avenue  
Exmouth  
Devon  
United Kingdom



**Informed Consent Form for Participants**

**Researcher:** Julia Craig Laker

**Institution:** The University of Plymouth, UK.

**Faculty:** This will form part of a dissertation for consideration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts and Education, Plymouth, UK.

**Title of Research:** Examining higher education educators' perceptions of Boyer's (1990) multiple dimensions of Scholarship, and his standard of 'careful and thoughtful self-critique' in higher education practice?

**Purpose of the Research Project:** To investigate opinions and perceptions of Boyer's (1990) multiple dimensions of scholarship and how they relate to practices.

- I have been informed that the purpose of this research is to expand our understanding of HE educators experiences and perceptions of multiple dimensions of scholarship including 'the scholarship of teaching and learning', and that the focus of the study, and the techniques used to gather data will respond to the initial findings.
- I understand that my participation will involve responding to a number of questions concerned with the topic. This will include participation in discussions concerning aspects of 'scholarship' and teaching and learning.
- The researcher will collect, compile and analyse the data, and will not identify individual respondents throughout the reporting and analysis of the data.
- I understand that there are no foreseeable risks or discomforts anticipated.
- I am aware that the results of this research study may be published, but that the identities of the participants will be kept anonymous by the use of pseudonyms. Access to transcripts and other data will be limited to the researcher, and a coding system will be used to identify responses and ensure confidentiality. The institution will only be identified by reference to its demographic and geographic characteristics.
- I have been informed that the research in which I will be participating does not involve more than minimal risk, none physical, and that I will not be compensated for my participation.
- Upon request, the results of this study will be shared with those participating prior to any publication.

Any questions I have concerning this study or my participation in it, before or after my consent, will be answered by Julia Craig Laker at the given email address. I have read the above information and by participating in the research project give consent for the data gathered to be used in this research study.

Julia Craig Laker: email [thelakers@beachlink.com](mailto:thelakers@beachlink.com)

Signed-----

The content of this 'Informed Consent Form' conform to The University of Plymouth Ethical Principles for Research Involving Human Participants.

## Appendix G

### Reflexive Analysis of My Initial Conceptualisations

As this dissertation was written sequentially, there are a number of points that arose early in my account on which I now find I hold a different or expanded opinion. This appendices is provided to indicate, although not exhaustively, where my understandings have developed or altered. The clustering of early 'altered opinions' is indicative of the evolving nature of the research and researcher, and the time-bound context.

p. 1

I now strongly believe my background in three-dimensional design brings strength to my work in research in education by encouraging overlapping, creative and sensitive interpretations.

p. 2

My boundary conversations developed further and led to the phase three autoethnographic account. These sidelines or border skirmishes now play a vital role in making my research transparent and authentic, exposing a 'warts and all' researcher and research process.

p. 3

The growing acceptance of autobiography, autoethnography, fictionalised accounts, poetic representation etc. in academic research means that claiming these genres as authentic is less of an issue than it was five years ago.

p. 7

I now consider immersion in the relevant literature to be an apprenticeship.

p. 8

Although my intention was to be topographic, I think my journey was to eventually unfold in an unpredictable fashion and I was naive to think I could see the entire route at this stage. I would now talk about possible 'direction' or pathways.

p. 10

In discussing the paradigmatic debate I would more articulately sidestep being definitive, and more strongly indicate that this may well be falsely identifying apparently (but not necessarily) significant differences in methodologies which constrain movement (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Keesee, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Pinar et al, 1995).

p. 11

My opinions on good research being essentially 'understandable research' have developed and become more complex. I can see the danger of 'dumbing down' research and that the audience is always selective in some way. Complex philosophies and concepts often entail intricate language, and that 'understanding' is too personally and differently interpreted. So perhaps I would move now more towards making research 'accessible'.

p. 12

As my background knowledge in the relevant literature grows, I now think, more than I had appreciated, that the language used in research in education can be used to disguise meanings (see note p.11). Many terms have multiple meanings, contested meanings, and these sometimes act to cloud understandings and distinctions. I am very wary of language that performs a legitimating function (Marshall & Peters, 1999) unless that is exposed and explicit. As the confidence and knowledge of a researcher grows the 'mask' can sometimes be lifted to glimpse another face.

p. 13

I would not claim to hope to establish 'a commonality of understandings between myself and my reader', this is too grand. I would restructure this to hope to 'share territory'.

p. 15

I have changed my opinion on publication as a primary desired outcome of a PhD dissertation. I now strongly endorse the value of the educational journey for the individual, the self/knowledge, but it is still a common outcome.

p. 17

The forms that dissertations and research take are always evolving; this is therefore a time-bound commentary.

p. 18

I more strongly see 'failure' in research as acceptable, as part of trying something different and experimental or enquiring into areas that may be difficult to examine. It reinforces my commitment to including the writer's voice as visible in the research process (Charmaz & Mitchell, 1997; Ellis, 1997; Usher & Edwards, 1996).

p. 20

My diagram would now visually and explicitly show the three-dimensional, multi-layered nature of the framework and expand on the continuing evolving nature through the additional phases.

p. 22

I would now change this section. I am not so certain you can know everything! For example, the work of Waring (2001, 2003) on a 'helix model' had, and was, developing in a similar vein. I would also claim less originality in the notion of phased complementary methods.

p. 23

I now know that finding the place to stop is too difficult to envisage at the start of a personal educational journey. I think I would now consider this too differently interpreted, too contextual to be forwardly planned. Perhaps it is a saturation point or a place at which no new understandings are being gained? I would also include more of my boundary conversations on choosing and rejecting methods.

p. 24

I am now wary of the word 'grounded' as it holds connotations that are not necessarily intended.

p. 28

I would now be more reflective about my discussion of 'respectable research'. I also think that I am now better equipped to understand the complex issues of talking about paradigms. I would not now claim a pragmatic understanding. I would place this discussion in a frame of *it depends who's reading it*, and understand that it is even more of a mine-field than I first anticipated. My paradigmatic debate is unresolved.

p. 29

I would again include more of my boundary conversations and how I grappled with the philosophical debates, and how I felt that some of this was destructive. However, I later found works that further contributed to my understandings of the issues I discuss here, for example, Code (1991). As I re-read this section of my work I *feel* my fear. I felt I was in danger of entering a too large debate and losing the thread of *my* research, losing my direction, I didn't want to enter a 'paradigm', and like Rorty (1979) I felt it would not/could not answer all my questions. I have now developed a stronger sense of options and directions, and also a reinforced belief that research in education should be viewed as contextual, political, differently interpreted, socially constructed etc. and that this impacts on how research is conducted. I would more strongly express my growing understanding of interpretive research but, like Greene (1995), I have started to love the questions and place that at the heart of conducting research...let the imagination run a little free.

p. 35

I think I was brave to go anywhere near 'considering the use of theory'. It is a term that is often used lightly (Thomas, 2002) and not render problematic. I am still learning, and this may always/should always remain an area of flux and development. The word 'theory' evokes for me, at the moment, a feeling of 'Oh no, here we go'.

p. 38

My research experience has reinforced my belief that there are unnecessary disciplinary barriers. Boyer (1990) advocated the sharing of knowledge across these false structures, and my experience has led me to believe that inter-disciplinary communication is still a problem. 'Connectedness' is distinctly lacking (Boyer, 2005).

p. 40

I more strongly believe that we should place less importance on paradigmatic differences (Keeves, 1999) and this relates to the issues I discuss above (p. 38). A question I now find myself asking is 'who is the research for and whom does it serve'?

p. 43

I would now be more confident about including even more of *me* as researcher. I would possibly foreground my dissertation with some biographical information, although I think this has dangers (and I like to keep some secrets). However, at the time this dissertation

was begun the University of Plymouth was not necessarily ready to encourage 'alternative' representations of research in education.

p. 47

My discussion here on how knowledge is justified became a deeply embedded characteristic of my research. It relates through my research and threads into and around Boyer's (1990) own concepts of social and academic missions. Also, I would now include a little more discussion on the coherence model or theory (Sparkes, 1994; Young, 2001).

p. 54

I now see that I was moving more confidently towards including *self* as clearly visible.

p. 55

I see this section as insecure and defensive and would not now include further defence of my methodological choices.

p. 60

I would now be able to include discussions such as Bender (2005) (see others in prologue) that discuss the development of Boyerian philosophies to the present day. Although the historical timeline remains constant her paper acts as a comparison and touchstone for the development of the debate in this dissertation to the present day.

p. 64

I now know that I later develop this idea of finding ways to include the personal, private and emotional responses by utilising autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, Reed-Danahay, 1997).

p. 67

In the past five years the global conversation about diversifying scholarship in the modern university has increased, and the UK is gaining ground. My opinion has now changed and recognises that the debate is now more inclusive.

p. 68

I now have more concerns about how the *scholarship of teaching and learning* may become a new area to research and publish, rather than the challenge to re-examine institutional value structures that Boyer (1990, 1996) intended.

p. 69

I now hold the view that it was not possible to explore every avenue of interest, and that the issue of how research *into* and *on* scholarship for practitioners will develop remains open for further development beyond this dissertation.

p. 70

The issues on this page have changed. Funding has now been made available by the government to raise the profile of teaching and learning (Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning for example) and it continues to evolve.

p. 72

I now feel that 'comprehensive' is too value laden.

p.88

My discussion here on the 'communal acts' of knowing and learning would benefit in hindsight from a little more clarity. They are of course not necessarily communal!

p.111

My use of closed-ended questions at the beginning of phase one follows, Hannon's (2002) advice that it is best used for gathering unproblematic facts. My latter use of open-ended questions produced some richer discourse.

p.127 – 136

In the appendix G I now include an illustration of how the categories were established. I would more clearly state that this is not exclusively a 'grounded theory' method of analysis. In this section I mention a variety of research texts, all offering advice on how to analyse data, and they form a background of knowledge. It is almost impossible to prove that an individual researcher has not been biased in their selection of data unless full transcripts are included (and can you be sure even then?), however, this is presumably where the issue of researcher honesty is most acutely relevant.

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