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Does Collaboration Matter? A Paradigm for Practical Educational Research

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**Does Collaboration Matter?
A Paradigm for Practical Educational Research**

by

DAVID PHILIP WHITE

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Rolle

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Does Collaboration Matter?

A paradigm for practical educational research

What is the virtue in collaboration among practitioners in practical educational research? And if collaboration as elaborated here matters enough for us to care, how will our lives as practitioner-researchers be different? This thesis argues that collaborative research is more than a way of distributing the research burden; it forms a paradigm of practice which requires new modes of conduct and thinking. I illustrate the transformation of my practice from a collaborative methodology to a collaborative ethics, in which changes in status and relationships between participants implied new forms and sources of knowledge.

The context of the thesis is a police training college where I held responsibility for staff training and development. The police trainers' thinking was characterised by a means-end rationality and a coyness about public debate of their values. Their practices of both teaching and policing had taken-for-granted aims, underpinned by a faith in certain knowledge and a piecemeal, technical understanding of competence. My research became a critical praxis at the point of interaction with the training staff. I had to learn new skills, and to replace my methodological certainties with a practical and ethical complexity.

My collaborative ethics sought to change trainers' relationships with their work. It engendered puzzlement about teaching and learning, and permitted new constructions of practice. An eclectic mix of critical and emancipatory action research, with an autoethnographic approach, points towards a research practice determined by a situated ethics rather than a technical methodology. I contribute to our understanding of 'collaboration' and 'positive freedom' by conceptualising them as qualities of human relationships, judged by their diversity rather than conformity to shared aims. I show how police training culture reproduces conformity, how it may be confronted, and how collaborative relationships can expand understanding of teaching and learning.

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Acknowledgement

This study was undertaken with the aim of developing a collaborative approach to staff development. As it progressed, it became intimately bound-up with the improvement of practice in a way that is characteristic of research *with* others, rather than *on* them - a process which for participants is alternately joyful and painful. For this reason I would like to acknowledge the contribution and commitment to learning made by those many colleagues who participated with me in the examination, questioning and reformulation of our practices. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of my research supervisors, Professor Michael Golby and Dr. Jan Savage, who offered both intellectual direction, emotional support and a quiet permission-giving that enabled me to take risks and to think differently. I wish to thank my friends Kane Clements and Gordon Reed for the many hours they have spent talking-through the project with me, or reading and commenting on my writing; and also Sarah Oliver with whom I have shared the trials and tribulations of being a research student. Finally I would like to thank my wife Denise for her patience, love and support, which ensured I emerged from the project as a sane, whole person.

Author's Declaration

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

A programme of advanced study was undertaken which included an ESRC advanced Doctoral training workshop "Writing in Qualitative Enquiry", regular attendance at faculty research seminars, use of the faculty research training web site 'Research in Education', and attendance at other staff and research student training events (e.g. Workshop Introduction to SPSS).

Relevant seminars, workshops and conferences were attended at which work was presented and discussed, papers were prepared and presented, and a paper was accepted for publication. The details of these are as follows:

The following presentations were made to peers at research seminars and conferences:

"Some thoughts on not being a rational researcher" (seminar University of Plymouth, Feb. 2002).

Jointly with Prof. M. Golby, "What's Past is Prologue: Inquiry and traditions in professional practice" (Exeter University Ed.D Conference, Jan. 2003).

"Police Trainers' Thinking: an oxymoron or a pun?" (seminar University of Plymouth, May 2003).

The following papers were presented at conferences:

"Opposing a Rationalist Discourse with Collaborative Action Research: four practitioner stories" ('Discourse Power Resistance' Conference 2002).

"Researching Living and Living Research: an ethics for research that is educational" (British Educational Research Conference 2002).

"Expert Knowledge, Personal Knowing: using a 'writing story' to understand resistance" ('Discourse Power Resistance' Conference 2003).

The following paper was published:

Opposing a Rationalist Discourse: four practitioner stories, in Satterthwaite, J., Atkinson, E. and Gale, K. (eds.) **Discourse, Power, Resistance: challenging the rhetoric of contemporary education** (2003) Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.

The following conferences were attended:

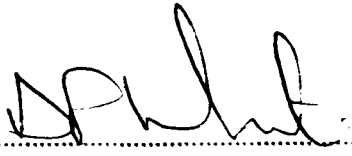
British Educational Research Conference Sept. 2001, University of Leeds

'Discourse Power Resistance' Conference, April 2002, University of Plymouth

'Professionalism in Practice' Conference, June 2002, Canterbury Christ Church University College

British Educational Research Conference Sept. 2002, University of Exeter

'Discourse Power Resistance' Conference, April 2003, University of Plymouth

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1 Introduction

The Police Service: a quest for certainty

What would a sociological project look like that was not a technology of regulation and surveillance?

Lather(1991:15)

HABEASCORPUS

My subtitle for this opening section is both a pun on the police context of my thesis and a metaphor for some important police processes. Habeas corpus - *produce the body* - was a High Court writ issued to the custodians of a prisoner demanding that the person be brought before a judge. It is archaic now because police detention is governed by modern legislation; the production of bodies has been institutionalised!

The police use the word 'body' to describe a detained person. However, in colloquial use it means a lot more. There is a sense of the 'body' being a trophy, a reward, a notch cut in a truncheon. There is a sense of the 'body' as an object that has lost its human identity and become "police property" (Reiner 2000); a body to be processed, signed-for on custody forms and whose fingertips are inked in order to be taken. The police 'find' the 'hard evidence' to 'make' the case. Which in its turn becomes the 'body of an argument' in a court room, judged by the 'weight of the law' whose 'long arm' had 'felt the collar'. The language and metaphors of our criminal justice system are corporeal, they are the 'warrants' of certainty, they are 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

Police officers produce bodies of certainty. There is no room for doubt or provisionality. The modern idea in crime investigation is that detectives should seek to prove a person's innocence by looking for the disconfirming evidence, but old habits die hard and the proof of guilt is the 'real' prize. Officers memorise offence definitions and 'points to prove', and they practice their accuracy in tests of recall that turn on the precision of single words. The world is modelled as a socio-legal dualism in which everything is either lawful or unlawful, and the criteria for deciding are always written down and certain. In important ways the police set out to make the world simpler by having it resemble the model. Stereotypes ensure that the 'decent people' get a service, and the 'scrotes' get arrested. Gays are 'pinkos', protesters are 'reds', Maggie Thatcher is a hero, and if you get a speeding ticket then you deserved it. The police have a way of not seeing a middle ground; of not seeing a face that doesn't fit; of not seeing a history and of not seeing a consequence.

This way of seeing, or of not seeing, keeps making the news headlines. Lord Scarman told us what was not seen in Brixton in 1981, and in 1999 Lord Macpherson told us it was still not being seen when Steven Lawrence was murdered. "Noble cause corruption" (HMIC 1999b) is a special way of seeing innocent people as guilty ones.

Domestic violence is not seen. Racially motivated crime is seen reluctantly. Victims are seen just as witnesses, and offenders just as detected-crime statistics. And nearly everyone is seen as suspicious. The police model of social reality has an impoverished set of categories with which to understand both self and others.

Habeas corpus? These are the bodies that are produced, and reproduced by the police. It is a triumph of the enlightenment project.

Malcolm Bradbury in his novel *To the Hermitage* (2001) tells a story of two bodies, the physical remains of the philosopher Descartes, and the corpus of knowledge contained in the Hermitage library at St. Petersburg. Descartes died and was buried in Stockholm. He was later moved to Paris where his tomb drifted from churchyard to churchyard on the ebb and flow of a tide of political respectability. At each move bones disappeared until there was nothing left of Descartes; except the irony that he is still with us, being cogitated upon by undergraduate philosophers.

And in the same way, the 'bones' in the Hermitage library have disappeared over the centuries; more so in a post-communist world of underfunding. I felt a sense of outrage as I read Bradbury's account of the decay and the thefts of irreplaceable books. But is that all there is? What will there be, when the library no longer exists? Is that the end of knowledge?

Bradbury traces the contribution made to the library by Diderot and his competitor, Voltaire.

Voltaire's books have the finer bindings, Diderot's show evidence of the more impassioned use. In the fashion of the times, the books have been used by both to make more books. Voltaire has filled his own with underlinings, great emphases, judgements, annotations, some of these written in the end-papers in a miniature version of his round hand. Denis has used the rag pages even more freely, and filled up every spare page with instant reactions, fresh speculations and stories, and written not just round the text and down the margins but across the printed type itself. His reactions are clear. The sentimentally feminized stories of Samuel Richardson - tales of the hunted maidens Pamela and Clarissa - have driven him to passion, and possibly something more: maybe here are the first glimpses of his own literary jewels of indiscretion. The writings of Helvetius have annoyed him. Those of Sterne seem to have provoked him to something resembling mania.

So books breed books, writing breeds writing. The writer starts out as reader in order to become the new writer. In this fashion one book can actually become the author of a new one.

Bradbury, *To the Hermitage* (2001: 387)

The encyclopaedias of Diderot and Voltaire "in the end made learning some of the biggest business in the world" writes Bradbury (388). The idea of an encyclopaedia is the Enlightenment project, and its fate will be that of Descartes' bones - to be scattered and lost. But I imagine the bones to be like batons handed on to all those who wanted a piece of the great man. Descartes touched other *philosophes*, whose own bones are transformed in that relationship and in their turn passed on. The bones are transient, but the touch multiples like life itself.

In Bradbury's other metaphor, knowledge exists in the margins of books and gives us clues as to how each reader transformed what was found and passed it on in a new book. Those annoying scribbles in the margins of our universities' library books are 'the biggest business in the world', and the antithesis of the idea of a body of knowledge. The knowledge decays and is dispersed, because it has become disembodied and mummified in paper

and binding. Learning, however, is within us, as political, social and gendered bodies; we are transformed in the margins of books in that moment of communication when the writer touches us. The books and the bones are the artefacts we leave behind, markers that say 'learning passed this way'.

The police library is a well run museum. The books are preserved and the writers are revered. The notices on the walls say:

No talking.
No writing in the margins.
Wait here for the librarian to seat you - one person only per carrel.

The police library is added-to only slowly; rote learning reproduces it, as in a master-apprentice relationship. Vision is Dewey-decimal and research is taxonomical. The police technologies of the moment - new public management, the performance culture, competences and measurement - reinforce the idea that those qualities which identify us human can be preserved, catalogued and arranged on the shelves of the archive.

What reserves of energy are expended keeping the library together? What lies are told to justify the sense of it? What are the costs to living people? What could we achieve if all that effort were used towards something productive? Sometimes I want to stop being tired and angry, and make the tired people angry instead. Let them turn in their graves when we find the skeletons in their cupboards! Habeas corpus? What would it be like for the police service to produce something different? My thesis is about the awakening of people to the idea that civilisation does not end when our certainties are troubled; we do not have to live under the gaze of the archivist, there are alternative ways of acting-in-the-world.

SETTING THE SCENE

I am a police officer in a medium-sized, provincial police force. I have worked within police training for most of the last 16 years and during the period of this research I have been the leader of a small team involved in the training and development of the teaching staff at our Training College. I have two colleagues who are my good friends: Graham, a teacher, who has worked in adult education for most of his career; and Luke, a police officer, with an MBA and a Certificate in Education, who has been a committed training practitioner for most of the last 8 years.

The College is organised into departments according to subject boundaries. The three main ones are probationer training, detective training and management training. Each of these is located in separate offices with its own manager and administrator, an arrangement that does not encourage the movement of staff or ideas across boundaries. It is best imagined in the form of an organisational chart with each department in a separate box, connected by lines of responsibility that narrow upwards to a single person at the top of the pyramid. Communication follows the lines of responsibility, and those lines are guarded by jealous people whose status depends on their assiduousness.

The majority of the training at the College is for probationer police officers, although significant resources are also directed at inducting new detectives and newly promoted sergeants and inspectors. Other specialist courses are run, and there is a growing awareness of the need to provide training for the 40% of our staff who are not police officers. The subjects taught to learners include 'soft' skills like interpersonal communication, team building, problem solving, race and community relations etc., but the main focus is on 'hard' issues like legislation, or social, psychological and management models that can be 'taught' (in the sense of there being a correct way of understanding them).

There are about 30 teaching staff at the College, more than two-thirds of whom are police officers. The latter join the College on two-year secondments as part of their wider career as police officers. A few extend their stay - those who develop a commitment to learning - but the majority leave after 15 to 20 months and will never be involved in training again. After appointment, the police staff attend the 6-week, national police Trainer Development Programme (TDP). Once back in the College they do three, observed 1½ hour teaching sessions in which they are assessed against the EMPNTO training and development standards. After completing a portfolio of evidence they receive the equivalent of about half an NVQ Level 3. It is rare for a new trainer to have a recognised teaching qualification, though many participate in a Certificate in Education by distance learning. It takes them only three terms - one academic year rather than the usual two for an HE level 1 qualification - because the institution responsible allows a three term credit for completion of the TDP portfolio.

The remaining staff are called support-staff trainers. A few of them joined the organisation with existing teaching qualifications, but most gravitated towards the College thanks to subject specialisms and a desire to teach. Whilst the transient population of police staff are rigorously selected and benefit from the national trainer course, the more permanent support-staff, historically, arrived by luck and have been offered little opportunity for self-development or qualification.

This approach to staff recruitment and training has some idiosyncratic consequences. Although the general level of understanding of teaching and learning at the College is not high, it is a feature of the police can-do culture that, once you can do it, you acquire the status of 'expert'. The measure of training expertise is thus possession of the police trainer certificate. However, the certificate does not merely entitle one to the mantle of 'expert', it is imposed on trainers. It follows that the support-staff will necessarily have lower status than the police-trained 'experts', and that any knowledge, experience or qualifications that are outside the police-expert paradigm will lack authority (White 2000). The fast turnover of training staff ensures the persistence of this situation; indeed, the tensions caused by having little understanding but needing to play the role of expert may contribute to it.

Historically, the approach to staff development was for higher ranking staff to sit at the back of classrooms watching trainers work, and then to give feedback on how they could improve. In practice, staff development had such a low priority that this rarely happened. There was a tacit assumption that if a trainer had been selected to work at the College, then he or she must be very good. Behind this facade, training practice at the College was more influenced by the tensions generated in classrooms than by any theories of teaching and learning (White 2000).

Chapter 2 discusses the national context of police training and locates my approach within historical, social and political themes. My argument is that concepts like 'policing', 'training' and 'learning' have been taken as unproblematic end-points, and this has allowed policy makers, managers and practitioners to focus only on the means of achieving them. The failure to examine assumptions on which action is based has reinforced a view of police training as a simplistic delivery mechanism and allowed the tensions in classrooms to persist. The chapter highlights the 'sticking-points' in police culture - the technical rationality (Schon 1991), the fear of losing control and the descent into chaos (Adlam 2002). I argue that the service needs to think of itself as a culture and to see policing as a set of normative practices. The thesis concerns my action to change peoples' relationships from mechanical and technical modes to an ethically engaged one.

Approach to the Research

The ideas for this project developed out of my previous research (White 2000) into the quality of learning in police classrooms. My methodology had been based on non-participant observation, and the results revealed police classrooms to be sites of conflict in which teaching and learning were often secondary processes to self-protection and survival. As a piece of *educational* research it was unsuccessful because I was unable to put it to practical use. I found it was unsafe to share the results with managers because they were motivated to pathologise trainers; and I was unable to share them with practitioners because they experienced the feedback as criticism and blame. My research had identified the classroom tensions but in application, it was capable of only exacerbating them.

My prime intention for this new project was to work collaboratively with the teaching staff in order that they could identify the problems in their classrooms for themselves and so retain ownership of the outcomes. It was to be work with the trainers rather than work on them (Reason and Rowan 1981; Heron and Reason 2001). In my research proposal I argued that the objective was to use collaboration as a methodology to establish a better staff development process. However, I discovered that 'collaboration' was not a straightforward methodology: as Winter (2002) notes, the praxis in action research is as much about the doing of the research as it is about the outcome. In fact, my argument in this thesis is that the outcome for participants was praxis.

The first phase of the project was to create a 'core group' with my two colleagues and then to replace the traditional master-apprentice approach to trainer development with a participative, group action research one. It became evident from this work that I had already made too many assumptions about police trainers. My approach assumed they would know how to collaborate with each other, would appreciate the benefits of collaborative work, and finally that I would be a positive force in enabling collaboration. None of these assumptions was justified. One of the most significant points of learning for me was the discovery that being a participant in the research entailed being constitutive of what happened (Hall 1996). It was not possible to be a neutral participant. The research took on a biographical character as I came to understand how I contributed to outcomes, and how a critical praxis entailed learning how to collaborate. This is reported in my published paper (White 2003b).

My work had three main contact points with the training staff. Firstly, I worked with each of the various training units and their managers in an effort to generate interest in a group approach to developing practice. It was already clear that there would be little hope of introducing action research as a medium for this because the groups did not see it as a legitimate or worthwhile objective. I focused instead on a process of talking and thinking about teaching and learning. Much of the difficulty I experienced was with group social processes which tended to inhibit progress towards learning.

The second main point of contact was my work as a teacher-educator on a Part 1, City and Guilds Further and Adult Education Teachers Certificate. The students on the week-long courses were new or prospective trainers. With my colleagues I developed a problem based learning approach to the course (Atherton 2002), the aim being to introduce trainers to the experience of controlling their own learning. The groups found this disorienting in the initial stages because it conflicted with their expectations, and I encountered similar resistances to those put-up by the work groups. However, the different context permitted time to address the group social processes. I came to understand what was happening for participants and learned how to ease their transition to new understanding of teaching and learning.

The third point of contact was on Part 2 of the City and Guilds Certificate. This course ran for the first time during the latter phases of my project, the approach having been informed by and developed from the problem-solving approach in Part 1. The course ran over the equivalent of one academic year, the longer time span adding a different dimension to the insight and learning of participants. The emancipatory idealism behind the 'ownership of learning' met the practical reality of the new public management of training. It highlighted a new set of problems for trainers as they attempted to make sense of their practice in a complex social situation.

There is an evolution of my practice over time, illustrated by my work at these three points. The research challenges the certainties of a hierarchical police culture - both my certainties and those of other participants - and

shows how people acting together can have the strength to take risks and live with the uncertainty. Chapter 3 is a methodological justification for my research, locating my approach within an eclectic mix of critical theory, emancipatory action research and autoethnography. I develop a paradigm for practical educational research based on three elements. The first is a concept of personhood based on the social construction of knowledge and arguments against the ethical neutrality of educational concepts. It also presents arguments which link teacher and researcher stories about practice with the construction of biography and identity.

The second element argues for an interpretation of 'reflexivity' as action which changes social conditions. I argue that research needs to take responsibility for the way knowledge is produced and suggest a number of validity principles through which this can be achieved. These principles demand new skills of the researcher and I elaborate a number of these. The final element of my paradigm is the definition of methodology as an ethic (Usher 2000a). I discuss four ethical principles which focus on the responsibility of research to expand meaning rather than to accumulate knowledge.

The Research Material

Chapters 4 to 8 present my research material in the form of stories, vignettes and observations. I have aimed to represent the complexity of social situations by using multiple perspectives and various techniques of re-storying and interpretation (Lather 1991). Theory is developed collaboratively within the context as a means of understanding rather than as explanation.

I begin with a reflexive chapter examining how I participated with others in the creation of meaning. I do not use the metaphors of 'data', 'collection' and 'tools'; I am instead an actor who both changes and is changed by the situations I enter. I develop the idea that the stories we tell about our practice as teachers and researchers construct both our biography and our practices. I introduce a number of themes connected with collaboration and learning which are developed in later chapters.

The remaining four chapters are broadly chronological. They trace my efforts at generating collaboration within the College, and show how I came to the contextualised understanding I now have. In Chapter 5 I investigate my work with the departmental groups of trainers. It was unsuccessful and I analyse the part I played in this outcome. I explore the notions of 'authority' and 'legitimacy' to understand the relationship between myself and the trainers, and I use Berlin's (1969) analysis of positive and negative freedoms to understand the effects of power and influence. Berlin's ideas on liberty are important to the remaining chapters; they helped me to arrive at a contextual understanding of the emancipatory motive in action research.

I look more closely at underlying organisation relationships in Chapter 6. I focus on two critical incidents which show the operation of a blaming ritual in which the parties play symbiotic and reciprocal roles. The stories which

police training practitioners tell about their practice construct the world as a simplistic good/evil dualism. It enables them to deflect criticism by blaming others and leads to impoverished relationships requiring practitioners to be constantly constructing others as threats to their own safety. Stories cannot be used to understand practice because their central function is self-justification and blaming.

My experiences in these early phases of the research helped me understand the powerful influence I had on situations. I learned how the concepts of critical and emancipatory praxis I brought to the research were inhibiting progress because they were not relevant to other participants. Rather than imposing an external theory on people I began to look for a contextualised understanding. What would 'collaboration' look like, for example, if I found a situated meaning for it? In Chapter 7 I use my work with the City and Guilds Part 1 groups to develop these contextualised theories of practice. I recognise a form of 'collaboration' that is distinguished by difference and diversity rather than sameness and conformity. I argue that it is not necessary to define collaboration in terms of a shared aim, although a shared aim is likely to be an outcome; I suggest instead that collaboration is understood as a quality of peoples' relationships.

The 'action' in this phase of the research focuses on how I worked to create better quality relationships with people. I discuss the way in which current organisation relationships institutionalise values and how the lack of an ethical dimension absolves people from a duty of care for each other. Neither policing nor police training were seen as normative practices, so introducing an ethic of care became both collaborative and transformative. I introduce two models for understanding relationships: a learning triangle that links relationships with knowledge and ways of knowing; and a learner-teacher-researcher model for understanding the changing roles in collaborative learning.

In Chapter 8 I show how I applied the learner-teacher-researcher model to the context of Part 2 of the City and Guilds course. The chapter has a more evaluative feel because it is partly an assessment of how far other participants' views on teaching and learning had changed. I show two examples of practitioner research being used as a pedagogic approach that both teaches about research and enables participants to understand more about their own learning processes. I detect three main changes amongst the group: firstly, their relationships with each other and with the work place had changed with the recognition of an ethical responsibility; secondly, they had begun to ask questions about their practice where before it was taken-for-granted; finally, they expressed an increased positive freedom, in that, whilst they still saw the work place as restrictive, they felt they had the ability to choose whether or not to conform.

Troubling the Librarian - Situated Theory

I started this project as a practitioner seeking a collaborative system of trainer development, and in the process hoped to contribute to the emancipation of trainers from their symbiotic dependency. It was a naive aim, even though it had a critical edge. I made assumptions about the coherence of concepts like 'trainer' and 'development' that reflected the emancipatory ideology rather than the complexity of the police teaching and learning situations.

The rationality behind police training is not a liberal conception of 'the educated person'; but neither is it rationalised by the current Home Office conceptions of performance improvement. Such rationalities are swamped by the police command and control culture that supports hierarchical structures more sensitive to status protection and the accumulation of influence and power. Police teaching and learning situations are shaped by these relationships and attempting to change them is to challenge a whole culture.

In order for police training to be valued differently, it was necessary for people to relate to each other in more cooperative ways. My research was action to find a form of teaching and learning relationship that was both fulfilling to participants and capable of serving the other police rationalities. My focus on relationships and my conclusions about collaboration are thus situated in this social and temporal context.

We upset the police librarian, but we didn't demolish the library. We challenged the lending rules but still wanted to borrow the books. We were outraged at the idea of abandoning the library, but thought the costs of maintaining it a travesty. We ignored the 'No Talking' signs, but spoke quietly. We squeezed into the same carrel where we wrote in the margins and consulted books that were not on the reading list; but we were anxious and felt guilty about questioning our pasts. We began to find some of the in-between spaces that helped us make sense of the complexity of our professional lives.

The police library is the same, but now the wind blows through.

2 History and Context

Police training between 1980 and the present day

What experience and history teach is this, that peoples and governments have never learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduced from it.

Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of World History (Hegel 1975: Introduction)

Scarce resources are currently wasted by the police service because extensive research evidence, highly relevant to police practice and strategic development, is rarely used either because the organisation is not aware of it or because there is indifference to it.

Foster (1999) Submission to the Home Affairs Committee on police training

INTRODUCTION

Woodcock (1991) argued that the police service of England and Wales falls out-of-step with the rest of society every thirty to forty years, and it then takes a revolution in thinking and organisation to rejuvenate it. He cites as evidence the Royal Commission inquiries into policing of 1855, 1906, 1928 and 1960. His argument is supported by the fact that in 2002, although there was no Royal Commission, there was a major piece of enabling legislation - the Police Reform Act. However, this cyclical explanation does not bear closer examination since, much as in other areas of public service, policing has been subject to frequent legislation over the last 40 years, and at a gathering pace over the last 20.

The 1960 Royal Commission resulted in the Police Act 1964, that enshrined service conditions in legislation. In 1970 a Home Office Working Party into police training recommended the establishment of the Police Training Council, and the introduction in 1973 of a national probationer training system. The significant political problem of the 1970s however, was not training but police pay; forces were unable to recruit and retain staff, and increasing militancy amongst officers threatened unlawful strike action. The Edmund Davies inquiry in 1978 recommended new procedures for police pay, but whilst solving the recruitment problem the cost of the service rose markedly.

The Scarman Report (1981) into the Brixton riots was a landmark inquiry that put the question of police effectiveness into the public domain. It questioned the role of the police in a multi-cultural society and the effectiveness of police training as a preparation for it. Police training was subjected to two Home Office inquiries - the Stage One Review (Police Training Council 1983), and the Stage Two Review (Macdonald et al. 1987). These led to the introduction of a new training system in 1989, based on adult education principles.

Meanwhile, public confidence in the police was further eroded by a spate of criminal justice scandals resulting from dishonest and corrupt investigations in the 1970s (e.g. the Birmingham six and the Guildford four). A major

reform of police investigation practice was enshrined in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, and the associated Codes of Practice. The Codes are now in their fifth iteration having almost doubled in size.

Police reform remained on the political agenda, now spurred by the rising cost of the service and its signal failure to reduce reported crime in the 1980s. In 1993 the Sheehy Report heralded the arrival of New Public Management, and was followed by regular Home Office circulars on subjects like performance management and Best Value. Policing practices remained under the legislative microscope, with the Crime and Disorder Act 1997 dictating terms for partnership working with other public agencies, and the Criminal Procedures Investigation Act 2000 and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 further regulating investigative activity.

Police integrity was scrutinised in an HMIC review into dishonesty and corruption (HMIC 1999b), but racial prejudice and discrimination, first highlighted by Scarman, remained the main focus. The Macpherson Report (1999) criticised police culture, and labelled the Metropolitan Police as 'institutionally racist'. The Home Secretary responded with an action plan for tackling racism in the police; and the original Home Office report *Winning the Race* (1997) was followed-up with *Winning the Race Revisited* (1999c) and *Winning the Race - Embracing Diversity* (2001). The latest inquiry into race relations training (HMIC 2003) berates the service for still not having adopted the Scarman recommendations.

Since the Sheehy report, police training has followed the course of new public management. Probationer training was reformed in 1995 with the introduction of competence standards, and in 1997 the competence approach was applied to trainers. Following a Home Affairs Committee inquiry in 1999, and three HMIC evaluations (in 1999, 2002 and 2003) a competence framework for all police roles is currently being adopted by the service. The Police Reform Act 2002 supports these separate themes by revisiting conditions of service and enabling continued reform in police management and training.

Woodcock's model of growing anachronism and then revolutionary change does not bear scrutiny. This short history shows both a record of continued Government and Home Office intervention, and an enduring resistance to change. One might suggest the 40 year cycle is the time required for each generation of politicians to recognise the police service has *remained* out-of-step. The picture is further complicated because both policy-makers and police managers have a confused understanding of whether change is of a revolutionary kind, or an evolutionary one. The following are examples of the 'evolutionary' perspective:

Probationer Training Review (Bray et al. 1996)

"An opportunity exists to take the best from the current system and develop and address the areas that justify change." (1.9)

TDP Evaluation (Flood & Sutton 2002)

"A review of the course commenced in April 1993. This was intended to develop the existing course so that it reflected current needs and practices of police training within a national forum." (7)

Home Affairs Committee (1999c), Government Reply	"There are at present many examples of good practice ... The service has already made progress in a number of areas." (3)
Police Training the Way Forward (Home Office 1999)	"There are numerous examples of excellence in police training at present, and the Government is committed to building on this good practice ..." (23)
Training Matters (HMIC 2002)	"The recommendations set out what is required to make the current system more efficient and effective, and to achieve sustainable improvement." (10)

The 'evolution' rhetoric seeks to prove a continuity with the past. However, one can also find calls for revolutionary change, often in the same documents:

Probationer Training Review (Bray et al. 1996)	"A number of fundamental issues have been raised for consideration." (1.9)
TDP (Flood & Sutton 2002)	"We recommend a structured review ... that will get to the fundamental causes of many of the problems." (60)
Diversity Matters (HMIC 2003)	"This inspection concludes that after 20 years, none of the above has been adequately encompassed in training programmes."
White Paper on Police Reform (Home Office 2001)	"Radical change"
Training Matters (Home Office 2002)	"So much now cries out to be done as a result of a lack of effective oversight ..."

This confusion between evolution and revolution is consistent in the policy and management material on police training. Deep seated problems are identified but the response is to make adjustments to the systems that already exist. Process changes are hawked as 'radical change', but little meaningful progress occurs. The police service is different from the one of 20 years ago, but it has retained an ambivalence to progress which permits the holding of two contradictory beliefs - change and no-change. It is in these terms that I intend to write a history of police training; by understanding how change is avoided the context for my own research will be understood.

The police service is seduced by the "technological fallacy" (Macdonald et al. 1987) that uses the machine metaphor as an analogy for human systems. It shows "the tendency for the search for control leading to a kind of tunnel vision, actually controlling less and less of an expanding spectrum of aims." (Macdonald et al. 1987: 174). Problems are taken as self evident and the 'right' solutions as deducible from them. Jones and Joss (1985) observe that "Evaluations of both training and operations are more normally based on 'are we doing things right?' rather than 'are we doing the right things?'" (212). Command and control systems ensure that the police service *gets it right*, and prevents social contexts from interfering with the machine.

The police service has failed to examine the basic assumptions about what it is doing (Adlam 2002; Metcalfe 2001; Reiner 2000). The act of *policing* is taken for granted and meeting public and political criticism is seen as a call for *doing it* in better ways. Hence the rush of new policing technologies: community policing; policing by objectives; zero-tolerance policing; problem-solving policing; community-oriented policing; and the latest

initiative, intelligence-led policing. Kushner (1994) argues that "We need to *treat the police as a culture* to be made more adaptive and flexible in its thinking, not a machine to be tinkered with or replaced" (239 - my emphasis). My history is thus one of tinkering, and of failures to think about how social systems reproduce their culture over time (See also Rowe and Garland 2003; Chan 1996).

1. SCARMAN TO MACPHERSON¹: TWO DECADES OF CHANGE

From one point of view there are two defining moments in the history of policing in England and Wales over the last two decades: The Scarman Report (1981) into the Brixton riots of the same year; and the Macpherson Report (1999) into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence. Both were public inquiries that criticised the Metropolitan Police, however both had repercussions for policing in the rest of the country. The Scarman Report recommended fundamental changes in police training pedagogy, consistent with a multiracial society; and the Macpherson Report has re-emphasised racial and social diversity in police training, and made racism a key issue for all public sector employees (Race Relations Amendment Act 2000). Scarman and Macpherson were deeply concerned with the ethics of policing a multiracial society and are both natural contributors to a curriculum for police learning. However, I shall argue that in the two decades between the reports, there has been no change in the way that the police conceive their role, nor in the way the service is experienced by society.

The Scarman Report 1981

From a technical-rational perspective (Schon 1991), the Scarman Report can be interpreted as an indictment of policing and police training methods, but this would be to focus on policing as a set of abstract skills. What is overlooked is that Scarman inquired into the social conditions for ethnic minority communities, and evaluated policing in that context.

Their lives are led largely in the poorer and more deprived areas of our great cities. Unemployment and poor housing bear on them very heavily; and the educational system has not adjusted itself to their needs. Their difficulties are intensified by the sense they have of a concealed discrimination against them, particularly in relation to job opportunities and housing.

Scarman (1981:2.35).

This was not offered as a cause for the disturbances, but rather, taken together with other factors it provided social conditions which "created a predisposition" towards disorder (2.38). The 'other factors' included three main criticisms by the community:

- Concerns about the "integrity and impartiality" of senior police management (4.47); and "racial prejudice and discrimination for the way in which individual police officers carry out their duty" (4.48).
- Abusing and exceeding statutory powers; one witness reported "we do not object to what they do so much as the way they do it" (4.49).
- Accusations of inflexible officers who are "insensitive to local opinion, unimaginative and uncomprehending

in their dealings with ethnic minorities, and have their priorities wrong" (4.50).

The police were culpable for the breakdown of their relationship with communities because their methods were de-contextualised. Scarman suggests that "The training of police officers must prepare them for policing a multiracial society" (5.16), and he continues:

The recruit must learn that obtaining community support is not mere community relations window dressing to be handled by a few specialists, but an essential element of the operational efficiency of the police in fighting crime and keeping the peace.

Scarman(1981: 5.23)

He later concludes:

Above all, the central theme in training must be the need for the police to secure the consent and support of the public if they are successfully to perform their duties.

Scarman(1981: 5.31)

Police training not only had to combat the ignorance that leads to racial prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping, it had to change the service's perception of what policing involved. It had to resist the idea that the skills of policing could be abstracted and taught out of the context of the community.

The theme of these courses should be the role of the police as part of the community, the operational importance of good community relations, the techniques of consultation, and the moral as well as the legal accountability of the police to the public.

Scarman(1981: 5.28)

Scarman makes some suggestions for training content but the principle message is a holistic, community focused one, sensitive to the social conditions of society. It is not sufficient just to teach "the techniques of consultation" for example; the technical skills have to be understood in their moral context. Scarman does not express any awareness of educational theory, but it is clear that his prescriptions relate to both a syllabus of policing skills and a wider curriculum (the "central theme") of social awareness and personal responsibility. In short, Scarman exhorts the police to reconsider their role in society.

The Macpherson Report 1999

The bulk of the Macpherson report concerns the police investigation of the murder of Stephen Lawrence, and police policies and procedures for the investigation of serious crime. A secondary part of the inquiry's terms of reference permitted a wider consideration of racially motivated crime and it is this part of the report with which I am concerned.

Unlike Scarman, Macpherson concluded that there was "no evidence to support the allegation of racist conduct by any MPS officer" (44.9 and 44.11). However, he expressed his view of the problem as follows:

Wherever we went we were met with inescapable evidence which highlighted the lack of trust which exists between the police and the minority ethnic communities. At every location there was a striking difference between the positive descriptions of policy initiatives by senior police officers, and the negative expressions of the minority communities, who clearly felt themselves to be discriminated against by the police and others.

Macpherson(1999: 45.6)

This paragraph highlights what Macpherson termed "institutional racism", a notion which is central to his criticism of the police. Police officers, as individuals, act fairly and impartially according to their traditional precepts, but as an institution, the service treats people differently because of their race. It is those 'traditional precepts' that are not questioned.

Scarman had rejected the charge of "institutional racism", but he used the term differently, to indicate *overt* racism within organisations. The sections quoted above show he was equally aware of failures at the institutional level. Macpherson did not see as much individual racism as reported by Scarman but he similarly recorded the breakdown of trust in the police against a context of social dysfunction. He enumerated the contributing factors, for example: stop and search; the handling of racist incidents; and biased complaints systems - a list which is reminiscent of the Scarman Report. Training in technical skills is recommended but again, as with Scarman, the emphasis is on their social contextualisation, "First and foremost and fundamentally we believe that there must be a change so that there is a genuine partnership between the police and all sections of the community" (46.40). It should be a priority for the police to "Increase trust and confidence in policing amongst minority ethnic communities" (p. 327) and that all police staff "... should be trained in racism awareness and valuing cultural diversity" (p. 332). Policing must be done in a way that "values" "genuine partnership" and "cultural diversity" and increases "trust and confidence".

Macpherson believed the service saw policing of the whole community as an add-on extra to its core responsibility, not as central to it (HAC 1999a). The relationship between the police and the public has remained remarkably constant; policing technologies may have changed, but there has been little progress in the way the service is experienced by society. Scarman's concerns have not been heeded; police training has not enabled officers to see their role in society differently.

The Role of the Police

I have suggested that the police service is ambivalent about change. Himelfarb (2002) uses the metaphor of "organisational schizophrenia" to describe this ambivalence, characterising the contrasting identities as "values-based", "community-oriented policing", and "compliance-based", "policies, procedures and rules". Based on his research, he argues the organisational illness consists of attempting to be community focused, but utilising the technologies of compliance. The organisation espouses a community oriented approach, but behaves according to traditional precepts.

This account raises three points:

1. The debate over the police role is setup as a dualism between a community focused approach and a traditional, self-serving, crime-fighting one (Birzer & Nolan 2002; Feltes 2002; Johnston & Cheurprakobkit 2002; Birzer &

Tannehill 2002; Caldero & Larose 2001; Reiner 2000; Palmiotto et al. 2000).

2. The tension between the two roles inhibits change (Rowe and Garland 2003; Drodge & Murphy 2002; Adlam 2002; Fielding 2001; Metcalfe 2001; Westmarland & Yearley 2001; Brown 1992; Plumridge 1988; Jones & Joss 1985).

3. The police service does not debate this tension between roles, either at a policy level (White 2003; Fielding 2001; Metcalfe 2001; Westmarland & Yearley 2001; Reiner 2000; Woodcock 1991), or at an individual level (Gregory 2000 - policing ethics; Adlam 1999, and Brown 1992 - reflective practice; Adlam 1997 & 1998 - leadership). Much research points to a disregard for learning, theory and research (Reiner 2000; Foster 1999; Fielding 1988; Plumridge 1988; Macdonald et al. 1987; Jones and Joss 1985), and a tendency for police officers to be "conservative both politically and morally" (Reiner 2000: 95). Jackson (2002), speaking on behalf of the Police Skills and Standards Organisation (PSSO) demonstrated this traditional conservatism when he reassured officers "You do not need to know any more or any less than what is specified in a national occupational standard."

Reiner (2000) calls the traditional approach "fighting crime" and the community policing approach "keeping the peace", or alternatively - "force versus service". However, his thesis is that police culture is not "monolithic" in the sense that neither side of the dualism represents what the police do in practice. Whilst he accepts an element of macho-chauvinism, he argues that when dealing with crime officers are engaged in a sophisticated peace keeping operation. He also argues it is wrong to characterise crime fighting as necessarily action-motivated; for many officers policing is a 'calling' rather than a job, and demands to stop crime fighting are met with moral indignation. Fielding (2001) takes a similar view, arguing that even the peace keeping role is problematic. He criticises a naive perception of community policing as 'making-a-community', arguing that it can be all too easily identified as a homogenous, middle class perception quite alien to the experience of most people. He suggests that communities want "an anti-crime *service*" - again that melange of crime-fighting and peacekeeping roles.

It is homogeneity that is attractive about the idea of a monolithic police culture, because as Reiner argues, the target is susceptible to "magic bullets" (e.g. the new public management strategies) and hence easier to change. Such illusions of control "are rooted more in symbolic representations of service and quality improvement, than in the practicalities of day to day police organisation and management" (Metcalfe 2001: 220). The dualistic division of roles obscures social complexity and, by acting as a rallying point for ideological interest-groups, denies the experiences of public and practitioners.

The conflict has been illustrated by researchers in many aspects of policing and I include a number of examples within the human resources field.

- Jones and Joss (1985), Macdonald et al. (1987) and Rowe and Garland (2003): there is a mismatch between the content, methods and context of training, and those of police operations.

- Plumridge (1988), and Drodge and Murphy (2002): command and control leadership obstructs adaptation by creating dependency.
- Metcalfe (2001): a force's performance development system was shown to be incompatible with its problem-oriented policing strategy.
- Westmarland and Yearley (2001): a force's interview and selection procedures were antagonistic to its equal opportunities policy.
- Fielding (2001), and Himelfarb (2002): community policing policies are marginalised by resourcing priorities.
- Adlam (1998) and White (2000): learning situations are sites of teacher/student conflict.

Police officers have never engaged in debate about their role in society and hence the dualistic pairing of force/service has come to represent a 'real' situation. Reform is resisted because change is constructed as a denial of traditional values. This is the postmodern condition of the police service. The old certainties of the 'golden age' of policing (the Blue Lamp) have been substituted with a new reality, a simulacrum, the symbolic fight between good and evil.

Managing Reality

Adlam (2002) developed a theoretical model of police culture from his experiences teaching ethics to police leaders (Adlam 1997, 1998, 1999). Using Foucault's concept of governmentality (Discipline and Punish 1975) he identified a police leadership rationality. He defines a governmental rationality as a practical entity "forged in the business of problem-solving and attempting to make things work", and in which "distinct and distinguishable technologies are employed and deployed to control the conduct of human actors" (21-22). The governmentality analytic:

... attends to the nature of the conceptual categories that are used to manage 'reality', the concrete forms that conduct takes in differing social contexts, the problem-solving devices and social structures that are created, and, the criteria used to guide decision-making, that, together, emerge as techniques to order, manage and control police organisations.

Adlam (2002: 32)

Adlam suggests five rationalities of varying importance:

(i) Sociopolitical professional rationality: the traditional conception of policing as unproblematic activities like upholding the law; keeping the Queen's peace; and prosecuting offenders. It is "non-critical and functionalist" (23).

(ii) Moral panic rationality: relating to the "emotional energy and moral feeling" (23) shaping policy, action, and our conceptions of crime and criminality. It is "the invocation of the timeless struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil" (24), and the fear of descent into chaos and disorder. Its technologies are the "anthropological paraphernalia - symbols, myths, and arationalities - protecting the appearance of those social conditions securing

control, progress and the ultimate triumph of the right and the good" (24).

(iii) Critical-emancipatory rationality: the contemporary concern for equal opportunities, diversity, human rights, and local community focus. Its technologies include the 'reflective practitioner' and the 'learning organisation', as well as human resource management systems like grievance procedures, equal opportunities monitoring, and awareness-raising training on gender, race, disability and so forth.

(iv) Postmodern image-management rationality: a concern with the marketing of organisations as competent, effective and good-value-for-money. A "triumph of surface over depth" epitomising "the bewitching tactics of power" (31).

(v) Socio-biological elitist rationality. Adlam describes this as "more diffuse and pervasive" than the other rationalities, containing the core cultural idea that "we, the police, know best" (25). "Small numbers of people are simply 'wired-up' as a result of biological heritage, breeding, cleverness and mental adroitness, to be rulers and leaders" (27). It is hierarchical, and its technologies support "status and esteem, an economy of power symbols, power structures, control structures, the cultivation of fear, rhetoric, the privileges of command, exclusion and a strategy of change management where change is a design to stay the same" (28).

Adlam's model is a "mosaic of practices, sensibilities and 'moods' expressed across the organisation", and is suggestive that "police leaders have developed multiple and competing axioms in relation to rationales underpinning 'why things are done the way they are' in police organisations" (32). It should be no surprise that police managers are ambivalent about change, since they can accept the rationales for contradictory positions and therefore 'believe' whatever is necessary at the time.

Adlam's main concern is the way police managers consciously extend their power for selfish purposes, but his analysis equally suggests a reason for the unwitting frustration of change initiatives. The predominant socio-biological elitist rationality denies the possibility of debate about the police role because such debate would undermine it; to question the traditional aims of policing appears irrational because it risks the descent into chaos and disorder. There is a familiar educational paradox here; the police want to change and so need to think through a critical doctrine of policing, but they cannot do the latter without changing first. They are caught in a bind in which 'learning' requires a degree of faith - and a degree less rationality. It will be seen in later chapters that faith and a willingness to take risks became important steps for the learners with whom I worked.

I suggested in my introduction that police officers have understood their organisations as machines rather than as cultures, and perhaps the temptation to see culture as monolithic precludes the idea that cultural reproduction is even necessary. The foregoing discussion should give some idea of how the production of police culture can be conceived, and it is with this theoretical insight that I will return now to the historical events.

2. POLICE TRAINING PRE-SCARMAN: THE ILLUSION OF PRECISION

In their Home Office sponsored evaluation of police training Macdonald et al. (1987) perceived a system attempting to control the quality of outputs through precise specification of the training inputs, "a bit like trying to control the jelly by using a smaller vice ... a reflection of the inadequacy of our specialised approach to social organisation." (174). This observation reflects the command and control rationality discussed above: the motive is control and the method precision.

Macdonald et al. argue that control through precision is illusory; managers are part of a control mechanism, but are in control of very little. It creates "a subterranean infrastructure of such complexity that more management is needed to service the Service itself" (174). They observe two responses - "advance and recoil" - the latter equating to a retreat from "the scale and complexity" of modern policing into securer historical conceptions (fighting crime) and the former an advance into conceptions of role based on either personal (moral) responsibility, or social responsibility (peace keeping). It is the predicted dualism once more.

Instructional Systems Design

The Police Training Council set up a working party into probationer (recruit) training in 1970 and reported in 1973. They were influenced by behaviourist approaches to social engineering popular in the USA during the 1950s and early 1960s where the metaphor of the production line was adopted for learning systems (Macdonald et al. 1987). The approach - Instructional Systems Design (ISD) - was based on the division of a job profile into individual behaviours that could be formulated into learning objectives. In theory, teaching the required set of objectives would lead to acquisition of the necessary behaviours. Multiple-choice examinations checked the quality of the process, and if outputs did not match the job profile then precise adjustment could be made to the objectives.

Design of the ISD programme was undertaken by the Central Planning Unit (CPU) and consistency was assured by the parallel development of an instructor training course. Prospective instructors were drilled in a standardised didactic pedagogy which maintained classroom control through timed sequences of overhead transparencies, aggressive questioning techniques, and strict discipline. The system reflected the police rationality:

ISD had much to recommend it to police managers. It appeared to overcome, or at least to make the most of, a number of problems inherent in the command and career structures of policing. In place of continuity of personnel it offered the continuity of a model, in place of a command hierarchy unreliably related to relevant expertise it offered the authority of a technical science, in place of uncontrolled variation it offered fidelity and compliance.

Macdonald et al. (1987: 17)

The disadvantages of ISD in terms of learning became evident during the 1980s when the Scarman report motivated a flurry of research activity. I propose to look at three areas that have a relevance for my own research. Firstly, ISD valorised propositional knowledge (Macdonald et al. 1987; Fielding 1988); secondly, it de-contextualised knowledge (Jones and Joss 1985; Fielding 1988); and thirdly, it taught a hidden curriculum of compliance (Plumridge

1988).

1. Valorisation of propositional knowledge

ISD was inherently biased in favour of propositional knowledge of criminal law and police procedures, and had severe limitations when it came to representing any form of contextualised knowledge (Macdonald et al. 1987).

At a time of low educational attainment amongst police officers (Brown 1992) both instructors and recruits lacked role models for teachers and teaching situations. It was inevitable, as Fielding (1988) points out, that training "represented an educational setting associated with school" (57). He continues "Training is like school study, imparted by rote and assessed by tests. The danger is that the same hostility and anxiety many recruits apparently felt towards school is felt towards the police classroom" (66). Recruits regarded training as a form of gate-keeping - a trial-by-memorisation of material that had little connection with the job they would perform. Fielding notes "Interpersonal skills are learnt on the beat. Training keeps getting in the way of the natural laboratory of the streets" (65), and he quotes one of his respondents "I'm willing to learn it because I know I can do the job". 'Doing the job' was not associated with the learning.

Fielding argues the instructional staff were themselves affected by the association of learning with school. The syllabus was divided into subjects and subject content was allocated to lessons; they spoke of 'covering subjects' and of what students need to know. The pedagogy was "point-blank lecturing", "you tell them and they learn" (74). The classroom relationship confused the hierarchy of police ranks with that of teacher and pupil. Quoting another respondent, Fielding writes "for a learning situation at the very basic level it has got to be *I am the teacher, you are the student, I am going to give you the benefit of my vast knowledge*" (75).

This highlights one of the fundamental tensions in police training; officers develop "a near-fatalist notion that the job is unteachable without contact with the public" (Fielding 1988: 64), and yet their conditioned deference to authority tells them learning only takes place in a classroom (White 2000). Propositional knowledge is revered even though it is known to be insufficient and even irrelevant. Other forms of knowledge and other methods of acquiring it are ignored or underdeveloped, and even subtly discouraged (Macdonald et al. 1987).

Perhaps the most insidious effect of this bias towards propositional knowledge is the way it encourages officers to perceive real world situations in terms of legal categories.

A high informational, technical, law-based training which emphasises the rightness of policing and is conducted in a controlled, disciplined environment leads to a belief that both the police and their clients are expected to conform to police-defined rules.

Jones and Joss (1985:220)

This assimilation of experience into rigid mental schema was a central concern for Scarman, since it caused officers to omit the social and ethical dimensions of decision making. This was a severe drawback for an occupation where so much of an officer's work was based on discretion.

2. De-contextualisation of knowledge

The high value and high status that ISD accorded to propositional knowledge reinforced the "technical-expert" view of the police officer (Jones and Joss 1985; Macdonald et al. 1987). Jones and Joss suggest that in operational situations this position is amplified to one of omniscience: "denial of uncertainty is in part a function of the belief that the police officer is the only one who can control the outcome of a situation because he or she is the expert" (218). It implies a paternalistic relationship between police and public and the maintenance of distance for the sake of objectivity. Officers use their interpersonal skills to manipulate other parties through the imposition of their socio-legal categories, rather than attempting to resolve problems by understanding them.

Jones and Joss argue that for policing to be regarded as a profession, it must develop a client-centred practice theory (see also Macdonald et al. 1987; Butler 1988; Plumridge 1988; Woodcock 1991; Metcalfe & Dick 2001; Westmarland & Yearley 2001). When policing is taught in a decontextualised way it reinforces officers' accountability to the bureaucracy rather than an identification with the community. The distance between police and the community is mirrored by a distancing of officers from the ethical dimensions of policing, because individual moral responsibility is not part of the technical-expert model. Policing is defined as a set of objective techniques and procedures that are assumed to stand above ethical issues.

Here is a fundamental and enduring problem; police officers do not ask questions about their role, and so they cannot see it as a normative practice. Police training should give officers the ethical apparatus to navigate themselves around the complex social, political and moral landscape of a modern, multi-cultural society (Macdonald et al. 1987; Norris and Kushner 1999; Gregory 2000).

3. The hidden curriculum of compliance

The hierarchical nature of the police classroom was part of the socialisation into a culture of compliance and consistency. Macdonald et al. (1987) have this to say about the "military model":

As an all-embracing organisational form it is inconsistent with the trusting climate necessary to support the high levels of skill and judgement required for policing uncertain and complex situations.

Macdonald et al. (1987: 112)

Based on experiences teaching senior officers at Bramshill, Plumridge (1988) argues the command and control culture obstructs adaptation to changing social conditions. He suggests that the traditional training approach must give way to a developmental one where the trainer acts as facilitator and addresses issues of power and status:

A learning climate conducive to the development process cannot be built when staff are placed in a position of authority and power over the learner because such a learning climate is built by sharing responsibility, developing individual autonomy and learning together in a genuine learning community. So long as staff take decisions on behalf of the learner the latter cannot experiment, reflect and learn.

Plumridge (1988: 131)

Plumridge called for officers to be developed as "self-directed learners". The concern should not be with lesson

content (a persistent concern in police training) but with how to enhance the learning processes for individuals. The ISD focus on technical issues of pedagogy and syllabus inhibited cultural adaptation and produced compliance and conformity. He favoured a humanistic approach that cared for learners and engendered "a sense of identity, purpose, autonomy and self-worth" (114).

These three criticisms of ISD (knowledge, context and compliance) show the reification of the system by the police governmental rationality. The value of learning was institutionalised by the method of its provision. I have taken this idea from Illich (1971) and Goodman (1971) and I use it to indicate how values are disembodied from social actors and invested in organisations and their systems. Thus 'learning' is not seen as a human attribute but rather as the provision of a training event²; 'teaching' becomes a technology of surveillance; and ethical values become rules, laws and procedures.

The qualities that most mark us out as human are denied and appropriated by the organisation. In their disembodied form they are simulacra; structured, organised, and objective, but essentially inert as social processes. Police officers learn how to relate to the processes rather than to develop relationships with the people (including self) for whom they substitute. If culture can be said to emerge from social relationships (Stenhouse 1983; Bourdieu 1990), then police culture is re-produced through impoverished and institutionalised relationships such as these.

3. POLICE TRAINING POST-SCARMAN: THE STAGE TWO EXPERIMENT

The Scarman Report recommendations caused the Police Training Council (PTC) to begin an assessment of probationer training - the Stage One Review - which reported in 1983. The PTC concluded that the existing programme was effective and successful and needed only some modification to strengthen it. The initial recruit course was extended in length from 10 to 14 weeks, and most of the additional time used to bolster the teaching of law and procedure. In addition to the evolution of the programme the PTC hinted at the need for revolutionary change by setting up a Stage Two Review with a remit to run a full evaluation "fundamental in nature, with no options ruled out" (Police Training Council 1983).

Macdonald et al. (1987) considered it extraordinary that a committee charged with a review should conclude by recommending a second one, and suggest this was a reflection of their political powerlessness. There had been an academic representative on the working party (Macdonald himself), but the Review was heavily influenced by the police members which prevented educational arguments being considered. However, the PTC recommended the Stage Two Review should be conducted by an academic institution with both the research capability and educational background for the task.

The Stage Two Review commenced in early 1984 (alongside the introduction of the revised probationer training programme) and ran until late 1985. It reported in 1986 and implementation of some, though not all, of the

recommendations commenced from 1987. I will look more closely at the changes and their rationale below.

Redevelopment of police training was led once more by the Central Planning Unit. The old instructor training course was replaced in 1987 with a new Police Trainer Course in which students were trained as facilitators. Following piloting in 1988, a new probationer training programme was introduced in autumn 1989. The programme was modular, mixing periods of practical training in the work place with learning in the classroom. A case study approach (Elliott 1988) was adopted for the classroom elements, contextualising the propositional knowledge, and enabling trainers to use students' work place experience and learning.

There was growing discontent with the new approach over the next five years, the principal concern being for recruits' standard of law knowledge (Warner 1991; Davies et al. 1996; HMIC 2002). In 1993 the Police Trainer Course was reviewed and case studies were removed from the curriculum (Flood and Sutton 2002). A review of probationer training was conducted in 1995 (Bray et al. 1996) which resulted in the adoption of a competence-based approach in 1996. The Stage Two curriculum and the modular system were abandoned and the debate about *what subjects to teach* was rejuvenated.

The police service welcomed the demise of the Stage Two Training (Davies et al. 1996), though some policy level writing is more charitable. The HMIC (2003) describes it in terms of a brave but failed experiment, owing to "a lack of central direction and resourcing, together with the failure to integrate the work place training with [the] classroom-based instruction ... Generally, probationers did not gain the necessary operational experience to make the next stage of their training viable" (HMIC 2002: 1.22). It goes on to embrace the replacement, competence-based approach as a "reshaping" of the system. Whilst the passing of the experiment is lamented, the HMIC sees the issue as a question of pedagogical technique; it is a matter of fact that one technique failed and had to be replaced by another.

Norris and Kushner (1999) argue that the reform failed through a loss of political nerve; the talk was of it being out-of-date, but that was a euphemism for it being out-of-step. It is to this different reading that I now turn.

The Stage Two Reforms: Change as a Strategy

The police service adopted an anti-university posture in its criticism of the Stage Two Review, casting it, according to Kushner (1992) as "an academic exercise aimed at taking training theory out of the research literature and translating it into police training contexts" (140). Kushner argues that treating it as a pedagogic technology is to fail to understand the relationship between learning and change: the reforms "cannot be divorced from strategies to change the management and organisation of police training" (141). He makes the subtle but important point that the Stage Two training was not a delivery system providing a desired change, but rather a transformational process of learning how to change. Learning was to be directed by a curriculum of policing values, not a value-

free syllabus content.

Macdonald et al. (1987) proposed a set of professional values for the curriculum derived from the PTCs recommendations, and of course influenced by the Scarman report:

The role of the constable:

- calls for the exercise of a high degree of intelligence;
- is concerned with maintaining the peace as well as enforcing the law, and involves the exercise of a wide range of social and interpersonal skills;
- should be client-centred, orientated to the service of the community and answerable to it;
- requires a commitment to high ethical standards governing relations with the public;
- requires officers to develop their understanding of the social and cultural contexts of law enforcement.

Macdonald et al. (1987:108)

To this was added an understanding of professional practice as "a capacity for *reflective deliberation* about particular circumstances and problem-situations in dialogue with the clients being served" (115). The curriculum was to meet the needs of this new conception of the police professional. When considered against the extracts I have quoted from more recent sources like the Macpherson Report and the Police Reform Act White Paper (see below), these aspirations are not dated.

Central to the curriculum was the "exemplary case study" (Elliott 1988) which provided the medium for the integration of the curriculum elements and its contextualisation in social situations. Kushner (1992) saw them as crucial to developing the capacity to change by challenging the "one-and-only-one version of knowledge" (143), and permitting alternative conceptions of policing practice. However, case studies never became important to police trainers' practice, and were criticised for being too woolly, too difficult to use, and too imprecise to teach law (Warner 1991; Davies et al. 1996). For Kushner these criticisms raised the same issues about not understanding the relationship between learning and change:

The difficulty trainers encounter in grasping the totality of a case study is precisely the difficulty probationers need to face in order to learn from it. Trainers and probationers need to work together ... case study is a learning *process* not just a piece of curriculum content.

Kushner (1992: 143)

Kushner was arguing for Stenhouse's (1983) view of the teacher-as-learner; training was to be seen not just as an induction for newcomers but as an organisation change process in which everyone participated. It was important for people to become generators of their own professional knowledge rather than consumers of an expert knowledge, and the idea of the professional as action researcher was written into some police roles, including that of police trainer.

Macdonald et al. recognised that the new professional came at a price for the old "quasi-military" police organisation: "the existence of large numbers of standard operating procedures is poorly matched to the qualities constables need to display when working in complex, unstable and unpredictable policing environments" (112).

It was not a place fit to house the new spirit:

The development of a more open and participative organisational climate is a necessary condition for the growth of the kind of professionalism envisaged in current training philosophies. The implementation and effectiveness of an appropriate form of probationer training depends upon such development.

Macdonald et al. (1987: 113)

The criticism from those within police training circles (e.g. Warner 1991) demonstrated unwillingness to relinquish the power and status inherent to the technical-expert model of the professional.

The Demise of Stage Two

It was recognised from the outset that the problems for Stage Two would be political ones (Macdonald et al. 1987; Elliott 1988; Kushner 1992, 1994; Norris and Kushner 1999). Within the service the reforms became mixed-up in the force/service dualism. The emphasis on soft skills associated Stage Two with community policing, and the alleged lack of attention to law knowledge threatened officers' effectiveness as crime fighters (Davies et al. 1996). Ten years on, police trainers still have a deeply embedded view of pedagogy as having to be either 'didactic' or 'facilitative'. The former is associated with positive attributes like 'giving people what they need', law knowledge, and the 'disciplined service'; whilst facilitation is characterised as 'all beanbags and sandals', 'holding hands' and 'group hugs'.

Kushner (1994) highlights the lack of support from police managers who saw the Stage Two reforms as "essentially subversive" of their hierarchical control. Senior managers disliked the idea that police blunders could be uncovered and discussed by recruits, or that they themselves could be the objects of classroom critique. The newcomers had less law knowledge than their predecessors, but the critique was founded on prejudice rather than sober assessment of how much knowledge practitioners need.

Finally, Norris and Kushner (1999) argue there was a failure of political support because the reforms were ultimately vulnerable to changes in Government policy. "Short-termism is the enemy of real reform, much more the enemy than the inherent conservatism of police organisations" (420). The Home Office had begun to adopt the technologies of new public management - behavioural competences, assessment against standards and evaluation against performance indicators. The Stage Two philosophy offended this growing economic rationality.

The Stage Two Review team made many political compromises in their recommendations (Kushner 1992), knowing they could not push the police service too far too quickly. They hoped the service would itself learn how to learn. In the event, not all of the recommendations were accepted and those that were, were often not applied as envisaged (HMIC 2002). Writing in 1992, only three years after the introduction of the programme, Kushner was rueing the marginalisation of the academic team and their inability to provide crucial developmental support to trainers. By the time of the 1995 review all non-police involvement had been eliminated.

Norris and Kushner (1999) are adamant that "The power of Chief Officers and other senior ranks to block and undermine change must be offset by the greater involvement of lay people in the governance of policing and police

training" (5.3). They are optimistic however. Although there was never any reliable evaluation of the Stage Two experiment they claim some success for the method, and a potential to achieve more:

An Under Secretary of State at the Home Office told us in the course of an informal meeting that Stage Two training had produced the only example of cultural change they had seen in policing. ... It is possible to create a police training culture that is progressive, responsive and committed to social change in a way that operational cultures find hard to achieve.

Norris and Kushner (1999: 419-420)

These possibilities are largely untried and unresearched.

4. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN THE 1990s: *plus ça change...*

According to Norris and Kushner (1999) the Stage Two training was abandoned because it was out-of-step with the Government's economic rationality. The rationale of the reformed curriculum had, in effect, become irrational. Debate about the nature of police practice was avoided by ruling out-of-court the alternative conceptions. This section will follow the genesis of current Home Office policy and show how the debate was stifled. I will argue that this lack of leadership has permitted police governmental rationalities to continue to subvert Government intentions in the pursuit of their traditional aims. Police training now has alarming similarities to the pre-Scarman model.

The Police Reform Act was preceded by a 'consultation', and I contrast this familiar, political process with the term 'deliberation' used by Reid (1978). Reid argues that 'consultation' is marked by a means-end separation in which practical problems become associated with the means for addressing them, rather than with the desirability of a particular outcome.

Specifically it has resulted from a desire to achieve greater 'efficiency' by seeing ends as unproblematic and using 'science' to solve problems through the application of increasingly sophisticated means.

Reid(1978:60)

This is similar to the 'institutionalisation' argument (Illich 1971; Goodman 1971) I have used above in describing the disembodiment of concepts like 'learning' and 'ethics'. Reid argues that the identification of problems with the means for solution is characteristic of the machine metaphor in social thinking. Deliberation on practical problems is supplanted by pseudo-scientific methodologies "reducible to questions of appropriate objectives, content and method" (59). He lists the features of non-deliberative action:

- It assumes organisations are rational and can be changed by issuing instructions;
- It assumes the capacity to achieve a goal, and shifts the focus to assessment;
- It assumes that organisations are uniform;
- It assumes that organisations are closed systems free of external influences;
- Moral and ethical questions are ignored;
- There is a belief in "right answerism"; and

- It prefers 'common knowledge' and expert opinion over data.

These characteristics match the technical-expert model of the police professional. They also demonstrate a connection between 'deliberation' and the virtues of the 'change-as-strategy' argument presented above. Reid's approach assumes that the *process* of deliberation will be problematic, and hence educational. It is the difference between setting out to solve a problem and setting out to understand it; deliberation, learning and change are mutually dependent.

Government Policy: Consultation or Deliberation.

In this section I will look at the genesis of current Government policy to establish whether the consultation was deliberative. I analyse the development of the Police Reform Act 2002, and the other policy sources since the mid 1990s.

1. The Police Reform Act 2002

The Police Reform Act was the product of a three year consultation process drawing on developments in police training over an eight to ten year period. The aims and rationale for the Act were contained in the White Paper (Home Office 2001) which itself adopted the arguments and conclusions from earlier reports. It accepts calls for "clear and consistent standards of delivery" and "more innovative approaches to learning and development" (6.66). Such initiatives should be "a major step forward in professionalism" (6.67). "We are in a period of major change to police training and development, designed to provide a more highly skilled service, focused on improving service to the public, with career-long training to common national standards" (6.69). The aim is unproblematic, and the focus is on the means of achieving it.

The White Paper was preceded by a consultation paper (Home Office 1999) inviting interested parties to contribute. However, the paper set out the "overall framework which the Government *proposes* to adopt" (3: my emphasis), suggesting the Government had already decided what was needed by the service. It was seen as "an unprecedented opportunity to raise standards in police training and to equip all staff with the skills they need to do their jobs and deliver better policing" (3). "The key challenge is to translate the best possible training into the best possible police contribution to reducing crime" (3) and the "translation" is to be achieved through processes that assure "common high standards" (3). Clearly, the Government had decided that the Act should establish accountability systems.

Eighty responses to the consultation were received and these were summarised in a follow-up paper (Home Office 2000). The majority "broadly welcomed" (2) the proposals, and "Virtually all those that responded welcomed the fact that training, which was seen as key to what the police service does and can achieve, was being examined and debated" (3). However, the Home Secretary's conception of "a first class service" (Home Office 2001) is not

debated, and it is significant that there is little change in Government intentions between the consultation and the White Paper.

The consultation gives the impression that the subject for debate was *whether or not we want a 'first class service'* (who wouldn't?) rather than *what do we think that service should be?* The Government patronises contributors with the assurance that it "intends to ensure that discussion continues with interested groups *as the new arrangements* are put into place" (Home Office 2000: 2 - my emphasis). There is an unargued assumption that the relationship between accountability procedures and peoples' experience of policing is unproblematic, a connection which is certainly not self-evident (O'Neill 2002). It gives the appearance of a debate about 'ends' but the real focus is on means - and even these appear to have been predetermined!

However, the 'consultation' might be forgiven its misleading title since the Home Office (1999) notes that the views of a number of other reports had already been taken into account: "These reports have sought to address the fundamental issues of what policing training should achieve ... [and] a consensus has emerged on many of the key issues" (3). The deliberation on these fundamental issues had, by this account, already taken place.

2. The Home Affairs Committee 1999

The major source of this "consensus" was the Home Affairs Committee (HAC) which sat between October 1998 and April 1999. It questioned 22 witnesses in 11 sessions and considered 28 written submissions from 22 sources (HAC 1999a, 1999b). The HAC was responding to criticisms in the Macpherson report, although a secondary reason was cited as 'Project Forward' (Police Federation et al. 1998), which I consider below. It is not the role of select committees of the House of Commons to do the Government's deliberative thinking - their role is the robust questioning of Government policy. However, examination of the HAC report indicates the issues the Government was encouraged to consider.

The Government replied to the HAC report in November 1999 (HAC 1999c), shortly before publishing the consultation paper. They admit that "police training could be improved" (3) and that there was a consensus on its shortcomings. However, these admissions fell short of the expectations of some, who felt they were contributing to "a root and branch" reform (Savage & Wright 1999; also Foster 1999). It is clear from the Government's response they were looking no farther than remedying the shortcomings.

What is also clear from the reply is that the Government had a well established view of what the structure and delivery of police training should look like, and that it was confident in its proposals for handling it. The "key requirements and criteria" (7) for their policy were set out in paragraphs 4 to 6. The HAC's conclusions and recommendations did not contribute to these policies but were just tested against them, and a comparison of them with the White Paper proposals shows they are the same, to the extent that some are expressed in the same words.

It would be wrong to suggest the HAC's recommendations were ignored, because in fact they made very similar recommendations to the Government's policies. Had the HAC and the Government got it right, or were there other processes operating that produced the consensus? I want to highlight two such factors:

(i) The witnesses called by the HAC were biased in favour of Government policy.

The Government's central policy was to setup a body to create and maintain a competency framework, so that all police officers could be trained and assessed to common national standards. Evidence supporting this was taken from major establishment sources like the Home Office and Home Secretary; the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO); HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC); and National Police Training (NPT), all of whom gave a similar message. The analogy here is buying four copies of a newspaper to get confirmation of the story in the first. The Home Office had been pressing the Service to adopt performance management since 1996 based on a common set of performance criteria (HO Circular 43/96). NPT (a Home Office department) supported this by producing a generic competence-based, staff development portfolio. They were experienced in such areas, having pursued competence approaches to probationer training since 1996, and to trainer development since 1997. An NPT team had been working on the police competency framework since 1998, under the auspices of ACPO. And finally, the HMIC was only weeks away from publishing its thematic report on police training (HMIC 1999) which reinforced the performance management approach in HO Circular 43/96.

The Home Office gives a significant lead to ACPO, HMIC and NPT, so it should be no surprise that they all say the same thing. In their contributions to the HAC (all in HAC 1999b) we do not find the arguments in favour of a competency framework, only the familiar assertions that a competency framework is what we need, and recommendations on how it could be made to operate. By 2001 when the White Paper was published, it was true that everyone was saying *we need a competency framework*, but it would be wrong to assume that 'consensus' implied a deliberative process. Beyond the platitudes it looked like a case of the emperor's new clothes.

(ii) The HAC did not listen to views that fell outside the Home Office frame of reference.

It is not the case that all of the evidence heard by the HAC agreed with the consensus. There were dissenting voices, and I present here examples of how this evidence was marginalised.

A paper was submitted arguing for higher standards of education for recruits (Foster 1999). The committee reported just one aspect of the argument - graduate-only recruitment - and rejected it on the basis of an opinion expressed by the Home Secretary (Jack Straw) in answer to one isolated question (Q 966, HAC 1999b). None of the other proposals were considered.

Another paper (Savage and Wright 1999) argued for the provision of higher education for police officers. Again, the committee considered only one aspect of the argument, a "mixed-model" for recruit training whereby

professional knowledge, skills and attitudes would be taught in the traditional way, and HE would provide a "contextualisation of knowledge" through the sciences (criminology, psychology and sociology). The committee rejected the proposal saying "We do not think that such an approach would be practicable because we are not convinced that the necessary policing skills could be taught better by academics than police officers" (HAC 1999a: 109). This is a clear misinterpretation of Savage and Wright's argument, and in any case it ignored the other proposals in the paper (for example, HE provision for police managers).

In their response to the HAC, the Government followed the same line and rejected Savage and Wright's submission in just four lines (HAC 1999c: 82) and disposed of Foster's entire paper in 7 words! (HAC 1999c: 100).

Finally, Norris and Kushner (1999) submitted a paper arguing for a curriculum approach to cultural change rather than a rational-instrumental one based on "limited sets of competency requirements" (418). It suggested we should "concentrate on developing an officer's ability for ethically informed situational decision making" (418) and counselled "It must be recognised that there is no easy solution to this problem. There is no magic bullet and no quick fix" (420). This paper was not referred to at all.

3. Project Forward

In the mid 1990s The Police Federation (the staff association for the police service) commissioned research into its members' views on training (Davies et al. 1996). It highlighted significant dissatisfaction with the standard of provision and opportunities for self development. As a result the Federation developed proposals for a 'police university' under the title of *Project Forward* (Police Federation et al. 1998). Project Forward was the 'official opposition' to the Home Office, in the sense that it was the only alternative model considered by either the HAC or the Government.

Project Forward was a public-private partnership in which the bulk of police training would be taken-over by private consultants, and provided through information technology solutions. The aim was to "establish and deliver world class training and development programmes using leading edge information technology" (Police Federation et al. 1998: 1). The idea was novel although the language of Project Forward was similar to that in the White Paper - an emphasis on continuous improvement through training, and a rationale of cost saving and Best Value.

In neither Project Forward nor the Police Federation submission to the HAC is there any fundamental consideration of what a policing service should be, nor any attempt to translate training into public experience of policing. Furthermore, the proposals were rejected by all interested parties, including the Government and HAC, on the basis of practical difficulties rather than on a wider deliberation about the police role (HAC 1999c: Alexandrou and Davies 2000). It is hard to see how the Police Federation can be said to have contributed to the White Paper.

Management Systems: Assessment and Evaluation

The absence of debate about the police role at policy level has left the police governmental rationalities unchecked in their interpretation and application of Government policy. My argument is not that the new public management strategies are necessarily bad, there was a clear need to audit the millions spent annually on training (HMIC 1999). However, they have enabled the police to substitute deliberation about their role with more control structures. I will look at a number of documents produced at the national level of police service management showing how the performance theme has been distorted to serve the command and control mentality. The situation with police training is now mirroring the pre-Scarman position under ISD. It is the triumph of the 'socio-biological elitist rationality' (Adlam 2002).

1. *The Probationer Training Review 1995* (Bray et al. 1996)

The 1995 Review marks the transition from the Stage Two experiment to the competence approach, a switch that reflected Home Office thinking on vocational training and NVQs. The word 'review' in its title is a misnomer, because it focused on just three aspects of the programme which had been highlighted as problematic in a 1994 "scoping study" (3). These were:

- (a) the lack of attention to law knowledge;
- (b) the modular system of mixed work place and classroom learning.
- (c) the subjectivity of self and tutor assessment;

The first two points were at the core of the Service's discomfort with change; the third item, though less controversial (Warner 1991), conflicted with objective, competence assessment. The Review methodology repeated the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews of the scoping study, and unsurprisingly achieved the same result.

The Review is not theorised and data are taken at face value. There is no discussion of the state of police training prior to the Stage Two Review and no discussion of the curriculum theory underlying the reforms. Case studies - the core of the Stage Two curriculum (Elliott 1983) are not mentioned in the Review, and 40% of the report is devoted to reporting the results of a "syllabus survey" which was used to recommend the subject content of a new programme. The Review was biased and tendentious, the police-only team seeming to have acted to confirm police prejudices about Stage Two and to pave the way for a competence approach. It is an example of what Norris and Kushner (1999) described as "institutional conservatism"; the police service had proved to itself what it knew all along.

Following the Review a new programme was introduced in 1996 with the policing competences written into a Probationer Development Profile (PDP). The PDP went on to form a core for the National Competency Framework

(NCF) in 2002/3. Additionally in 1997, a revised trainer course was introduced (the Trainer Development Programme - TDP) which incorporated the Training and Development Lead Body (TDLB) standards and assessed trainers for about one third of a level 3 NVQ. These standards were adopted as the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for police trainers in 2002.

2. *Managing Learning* (HMIC 1999).

This report promoted a model for police training management that linked training provision directly with business performance. The preface argues that longer term success depends on "four fundamentals" (HMIC 1999: 3):

- "a cultural emphasis on lifelong learning";
- a move away from "the traditional classroom based provision that is the hallmark of current police training";
- national competency standards;
- "professionalisation" of staff.

The preface does not address the issue of the values that policing or training promotes except perhaps to note that it needs to deliver "community benefits". The justification for the approach used is that training improves "qualities, skills and abilities that form the bedrock upon which success in policing depends" and "long-term success in policing demands that the return on training investment be maximised." Training has to be "properly constructed and delivered" in order that it "will repay the investment made". Furthermore, "staff must possess the appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities in the proportions necessary to deliver sustainable community benefits in the longer term within a best value framework" (HMIC 1999: 3-4).

These statements are the dogma that supports the appeal for a national competency framework - *we need national standards because we need to deliver sustainable improvement*. It sounds desirable but there is no serious debate about exactly what they mean and they are difficult to question just because they sound so reasonable. It is argument by cliché, backed by the power to make it true.

The statement "A highly skilled and properly trained work force is a prerequisite for improved performance" (1.3) illustrates the trick that is being played. It is a trick of logic - a tautologous relationship between two terms which have received special definitions. 'Improved performance' is defined in such a way that what it measures is the 'highly skilled work force' the writers have in mind. So of course it is a prerequisite. But as they stand the two terms have a dubious relationship with the real world - one which is at best contingent and which is not debated.

Examination of the document confirms that values are expressed in accountability structures. Good training will have two qualities: firstly it will be related to a performance problem:

All strategies and policies must define the process that ensures the training needs of individuals contribute towards

the achievement of the force objectives and maximise the positive impact that training can have on work place performance.

HMIC(1999:2.40)

Secondly, it will be done to a common minimum standard which,

... sets or establishes for the service what is expected of an individual performing a particular role in a work environment. It will define the outcomes expected of a competent performance in the role and will define the circumstances under which the individual is expected to perform. It may include a statement of knowledge and understanding, which underpins the performance.

HMIC(1999:4.4).

The model envisages a precision process to ensure training delivers the expected performance improvement. The actual training is secondary to the checking mechanisms; if the processes are followed then the training will be necessarily of the correct quality. The report uses the machine metaphor: "The machinery must be robust and able to translate the interests of stakeholders into policy which produces effective, timely and efficient training provision" (2.8). It is not clear that the values behind the need for closer community involvement can be engendered by a mechanical process whose values are about checking and assuring the process itself. At the very least one would hope to see the relationship argued for; but the report at no point mentions anything to do with the ethical context of training and learning. The relationships between the elements of the model are logical and tautologous, and their relationship with peoples' experience of receiving training or a policing service are contingent.

3. The Centrex Quality Assurance Model (Centrex 2002a, 2002b)

The Centrex "Quality Assurance Framework" (Centrex 2002) was introduced on the heels of *Managing Learning* (HMIC 1999). It is described as a "... method of ensuring that training is subject to rigorous scrutiny thus securing continuous improvement" (1). It divides the training management process into four parts: organisation; design; delivery; and assessment; and for each of these areas it sets out principles, "values and concepts that underpin organisational practice/procedure", and management implications, "policies and systems that the organisation requires to fulfil these principles" (2). Finally it suggests suitable evidence to prove the policy implications are met.

The reference to 'values' sounds promising but first I want to examine what is meant by 'evidence'. Centrex operate an 'evidence portfolio' model, of the type used to prove competence against NVQ standards, although 'portfolio' is replaced by "QA submission template" together with an "evidence file".

The following are examples of the expected evidence file contents:

- "Meetings Structure. Provide evidence that meetings have clearly defined terms of reference ..."
- "Design Policy. A policy detailing systems for the design of training events."
- "Diversity. Evidence of a process whereby all products are checked for compliance with Equal Opportunities, Race Relations and Human Rights legislation."

- "Lesson Plans, Aims and Objectives. Procedures for monitoring achievement of course aims and objectives by trainers."
- "Procedure for providing an audit trail for changes to a course/lesson content."

The evidence file will consist of paper policies and audit trails. To take an example: there should be a "training design policy" stating the protocol for meeting new training demands. It will detail the procedures for checking the performance problem and name the person responsible. It may contain examples of where the policy has been applied, and perhaps a register of all instances of new demands that have been through the system. It might even be necessary to produce a complete example so that the external verifier can follow the audit trail. This is the claimed "rigorous scrutiny". What is less certain is how it secures "continuous improvement". The connection between a paper-based process and a quality learning event is at best contingent, but the question of this gap is not considered by the QA process.

The call for published protocols clarifies the context for the underlying "principles and values". For example, "Students, customers and staff are participants in the organisation and have entitlements and responsibilities *that need to be clearly and publicly defined*" (3: my emphasis). There is no discussion of the content of these ethical responsibilities, and the second clause confirms that what is valued about them is the verification of their existence. The principles design accountability³ rather than make room for the professional responsibility of practitioners. The practitioner is only responsible for proving accountability.

The QA framework is setup as an objective, value-free mechanism standing outside the systems it is used to evaluate. It does not enter the ethical debate because practitioners are assumed to derive their values from the rules and protocols. I am not arguing against a need for checking processes; my point is that the police service substitutes these for caring about learning.

4. The Training Design Model (Centrex 2002c)

Centrex runs a course on "scientific training design" which effectively models its approach. It is 2 ½ days long and has more than 50 learning objectives defined as behavioural outcomes. For example "at the end of this lesson the student should be able, on each occasion required, to explain fully and correctly the difference between training development and education". The course concludes with an "examination" in which the students "demonstrate the extent of their learning on the course". The package is augmented by a set of "training design competences" (Centrex 2002d) in the style of an NVQ (units, elements, performance criteria, range statements and underpinning knowledge).

The Centrex model has three steps. Firstly, the performance expected of the learner is specified. It requires a "profile" of the "key tasks" in the role and identification and analysis of the competences required to perform them.

This links to national occupational standards (NOS). Secondly, a "training needs analysis" assesses current performance against those standards. Thirdly, the "training gap" is measured as the difference between current performance and desired performance. The product of this calculation is expressed in precise learning objectives.

An audit trail is produced showing:

- (a) training is performance related;
- (b) training is based on NOS; and
- (c) training is based on students' needs.

The model separates training design from training delivery. "All products should be produced in accordance with the specification, course objectives, desired outcomes and the predetermined evaluation criteria" (29). The implication is that teaching and learning will be unproblematic products of the process. Provided training is designed according to the rules, there is no question about the adequacy of the learning. The Centrex vision is of value-free training designs, standing outside of the contexts to which they are applied. Learning is a direct consequence of a tangible product - "the course" - that can be operated by any competent training delivery technician.

The training design model is reminiscent of the pre-Scarman ISD programme. It has the same attention to detail and the same faith in precise controls over classroom outputs. The noticeable difference is that the systematised ISD pedagogy has been replaced by a silence - the classroom interaction between trainer and students is not a part of the model. The 'training gap' turns out to be a lacuna over the classroom; it is the one element that cannot be controlled and so it is factored-out. My argument is not against the utility of systematic design, which must have a place in publicly funded organisations; it is against the assumption that learning is something which can be "fully and correctly" defined.

5. Training Matters (HMIC 2002)

This report was a review of the provision of initial recruit training. It reflects the expected ambivalences by promoting national occupational standards (NOS), the Centrex quality assurance process and the other technologies of accountability; whilst on the other hand recognising the inadequacy of current training in delivering the socially responsive policing the Government envisages.

The HMIC concludes that "the learning requirement does not accord with the needs of a police officer in the twenty-first century, nor are the means of meeting it effective" (1.27). The Police Training Council uses the acronym KUSAB (knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and behaviour) and requires that all training should integrate these elements. The HMIC observed that police trainers tended to focus on knowledge and understanding, and suggested this was a direct consequence of the narrow, law based syllabus recommended by the 1995 Review.

He recommended expansion of the curriculum to cover "communication, problem solving, team working, [and] evidence-based practice" (4.10) as well as "understanding communities, cultures and society [and] the needs of others in the criminal justice system, including victims" (4.16).

It is a clear statement that the police service needs a curriculum accounting for the wider social context of policing, and makes room for an ethical element to the role.

"It is relatively easy to teach law enforcement officers the details of the laws they are obligated to uphold. The more difficult challenge to trainers is to develop curricula that produce law enforcement personnel who are trained in the diplomatic arts of reasoning and persuasion" (4.17).

HMIC (2002: 4.17, quoting Haberfield 2002)

The report goes on to blame this deficiency on the system failures highlighted in earlier inquiries (e.g. HMIC 1999): "The content of current training has not been identified through any formal training needs analysis process" (HMIC 2002: 7.17). The report continues, "The service is in urgent need of a single approach towards staff appraisal and skills based on a national standard" (2.11). "National occupational standards describe performance in terms of what needs to be achieved to reach recognised levels of performance." They are an "indispensable tool for managing any highly skilled work force" (2.7). The term 'curriculum' is not seen as conceptually different from 'syllabus', and they are used interchangeably. It leads to the assumption that, if the training design model is followed, then the missing elements of learning will be added to "the learning requirement"; "the advent of National Occupational Standards and a qualification framework will undoubtedly change the culture of police training" (4.41).

This conclusion is surprising. The evidence presented above shows that Centrex has been promoting such processes since 1995. The HMIC call for standards for the police service is based on the poor performance of the probationer training sector which has been training to such standards, using people trained to such standards, and quality assured to such standards for up to six years. The HMIC has taken a system already heavily controlling the training process, has found it wanting, and has prescribed more of the same. National Occupational Standards are innovative for the police, but at the level of police management they are translated into more of what the service is already doing. It is reminiscent of the criticisms made by Macdonald et al. (1987) that in order to maintain control, the service specifies in ever greater detail what staff must do and know.

Conclusion

The police service is ambivalent about the competing historical explanations of evolution and revolution. I explained in the introduction that my theoretical perspective for the history of police training was the inhibition of change. I have argued that the historical milestones can be better seen as symptoms of cultural processes of resistance. I have argued that police officers see their culture in machine-like terms, and this gives managers a sense of control. Machines can be tinkered with, but the kind of relationships it implies between staff, and between the

police and society, are impoverished. Certainty and precision are traded-off for qualities that identify us as human - the joys of learning for example, and the pains of moral responsibility. The police service needs instead to understand itself as a culture.

A culture cannot take its purpose for granted, where a machine can. The machine is constructed to do one thing; it can perform more or less effectively, and we can adjust the controls accordingly. When it no longer does what is wanted, it can be replaced with another. The police service can no longer have the luxury of certainty of purpose. To be a healthy, living culture its members have to begin asking questions about what they are doing and why. The old question *are we doing it the right way?* has to be replaced with the open ended *are we doing the right things?*

The difficulty is that insisting on the new question would amount to tinkering - replacing one thing with another. A culture has to *learn* to ask the new question, and in learning to ask it, the problem is changed and other questions have to be faced. The police culture has to learn how to learn, which means giving up a faith in right answers and developing relationships with the world based on learning rather than certain knowledge.

The Stage Two training tried this approach but it was abandoned. Claims have been made about its success, but much more has been claimed about its failure. There was never the opportunity to research or evaluate what happened. One weakness of the methodology was that the understanding of the academics who initiated it was not shared by the police trainers who had to operate it. One set of people were asking questions about 'ends', but the police officers were quickly back in the familiar rut of providing answers about 'means'.

A significant question I asked myself during the research project was, "How do you get police trainers to begin to question what they are doing?" The temptation is to answer the question - one I succumbed to in the early stages (White 2003c). It was a similar mistake to the Stage Two team. The process of asking questions has to be shared. There must be a collaboration over the question and that will be a learning process.

In this chapter I have described the current directions in police training. I have sought to show that the technologies of new public management - competences, assessment and evaluation - are reproducing the conditions of the 1970s and 1980s criticised by the Stage Two Review team. My intention is to show that such technologies are counterproductive because they reinforce the technical-rational culture through the dominant governmental rationality. This is not to say that the police service has not changed in twenty years, or that competences, assessment and evaluation are necessarily bad things. Rather it is to say that the culture has not changed in the way that it adopts such technologies and subverts them to its own purposes.

This interpretation of history highlighted the 'sticking points'; it provided guides for me in facilitating a collaboration with police trainers. Amongst those sticking points I would include:

- Creating precision through the design of others' learning;
- Lacking a client-centred practice theory;
- Institutionalisation of values in rules, processes and structures;
- Compliance and the operation of power;
- Seeking answers rather than deliberating over questions;

I have accepted the view that culture is reproduced in the interaction between people. I had to *learn* to collaborate with others, and part of my own learning was to come to an understanding of a cultural model of learning.

Notes

¹ The actual title of the Macpherson Report was "The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry", and it was an investigation into the failures of the Metropolitan Police following the racist murder of the black teenager, Stephen Lawrence. Racism in our society and institutional racism in the police can easily be forgotten in glib academic references to 'Macpherson'. I apologise for this shorthand reference.

² The institutionalisation of learning is reflected in the orthodox phraseology 'training delivery' (HMIC 1999a). It is significant that the Home Office has begun to think about 'learning' rather than 'training', but that, rather than relinquishing the control mechanism, the two words are merely transposed. Thus in a November 2003 press release the Probationer Training Modernisation Project referred to "learning delivery" - a truly frightening prospect for the trainers who will be made responsible for this (PTMP 2003).

³ Centrex and Home Office documents frequently use the verb 'to design', as in 'to design training'. However, it obscures a grammatical trick; the sense of the phrase is best understood when the verb points not at 'training' as a process, but rather as an outcome. It is not the curriculum product which is designed, but the outcome of its use, i.e. the learning (see note²). When Centrex adopted the slogan "Excellence by Design" as a "concept" (Home Office 2004), it was not an insincere advertising puff, the planners really intend to design the outcome.

3 A Paradigm of Practice

Theoretical context for the research

Unbounded by disciplinary boundaries, a post-disciplinary research programme is a form of enquiry where both the subject and object of the enquiry are the evolving experience of the enquiry itself and where research becomes a form of learning rather than a search for pre-bounded knowledge. ... The aim becomes that of exploring what reality could become rather than explaining what reality is.

Usher(2000b: 183-184)

Action research has to confront positivism not just as a theory of knowledge but as a theory embedded in social life and hence in the discourse, organisation and practice of education as well.

Carr(1995:105)

WHAT KIND OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHER DO I WANT TO BE?

I have adapted this question from one posed to her readers by Sally Glen (2000). It might seem a peculiar question to ask in a thesis chapter dealing with research methodology; in fact the very idea that one might choose seems faintly comical - like choosing which hat to wear.

A more conventional question would have been *Why did I research in this way?* This latter question infers firstly a stable subject - the 'I' who researches, and secondly an unproblematic object - the field that is researched. It is then the methodology which becomes a matter of choice, and the criterion for that decision is 'fitness for purpose'. Such a question contains both an implicit ontology (methodology points to those things which can be known) and an implicit epistemology (methodology is the criterion of validity for knowledge-making).

There is a potential circularity to this; methodology provides the assurance of objectivity because it first defines how 'objectivity' should be understood. This is helpful because it gives the researcher the confidence of a starting point from which to explore the unknown, but it becomes circular and self-justifying when the form of measurement is applied back to the methodology that contrived it. We use our methodology to say "It's a fact", but the word 'fact' is impregnated with additional meanings that predicate it with 'existence'. In everyday language 'fact' means true and objectively existing, but of course common parlance lacks the validity of science. By sleight of hand, we import the additional common meanings into our scientific language when we adopt the same words. But 'fact' and 'objective' are tautologous, and the latter cannot be made to mean something more by appeal to a methodology. Philosophers have expended much effort trying to bridge the gap between language and reality, but made little progress in 300 years.

My question *Is that the sort of educational researcher I want to be?* appears paradoxical because it does not

enter the debate about what is real and how we prove it. Many would wish to reject the question on the grounds that it implies an 'anything goes' relativity, but this is to fall once more into the tautology trap. Relativity is only a problem for an ontology that has already defined 'reality' as something 'out there' and seeks to predicate existence to it. In any case, though some might reject my question with "you've got no choice (or else anything goes)", the question itself is meaningful. Thus, even if the only alternative is to *not-do* research, it is still an alternative and considering it makes sense. Moreover, it is not a question that can be settled by an appeal to the methodology without again becoming circular. My question is asking something more, *I know you can do it that way, but is it right?* The question seems to be prior to any decision about choice of methodology.

RS Peters (1970) argued that education is not inert, in the sense that learning involves both active understanding and a concern about knowledge; learning is "both to understand *and to care*" (31 - my emphasis). The notion of 'caring' introduces instability and unpredictability into the business of knowledge generation, and foregrounds the importance of the relationship between knower and known - and indeed between knowers (Kuhn 1996). It is not enough just to *know*, knowing must also matter. To know that X is the case is to also believe it is important that this is so. On this reading, epistemology should study the way that knowledge is valued in human relationships. 'Collaboration', 'participation', 'action research' and so forth become ethics rather than methodologies (Usher 2000b). They are ways of generating knowledge that have a normative dimension; *I do it in this way because I believe it is right*. The methodological choices I make constitute my moral career (de Laine 2000; Clough 2002), or the kind of educational researcher I want to be.

Methodology, epistemology and ontology are intimately implicated with each other (Golby and Parrott 1999), and they are all permeated by, and gain their character from, the individual researcher's moral career (Usher 2000a). They constitute a paradigm of practice (Golby 2003), a set of normative educational and research practices directing the researcher, rather than a "neutral experience" offering "a dispensation from any obligation to engage in critical or reflective thought" (Carr 1995: 104).

I want to use this chapter to set out a paradigm of practice for an *educational* researcher. I have organised my ideas into three sections:

1. A theory of personhood;
2. Reflexivity in human action;
3. Methodology as an ethic.

I do not claim this offers a complete paradigm of practice. Neither did I begin the research with this paradigm in mind, rather it emerged and was clarified by engaging in the research. In my research proposal I used words like 'collaboration' and 'participation', but I knew them only as conceptual models. They were like boats tossed against

the rocks of context, reshaped by the experience and known differently. I have charted some of the rocks, that is an inevitable consequence of having been there, but a paradigm of practice encompasses the whole experience of putting to sea. This is not an argument for an applied science - a separation of educational theory from educational practice (e.g. Bassey 2003; Hammersley 2001). As Carr notes in the quotation at the head of this chapter, it is a recognition that educational theory is embedded in social life. A paradigm of practice is thus a mode of engagement in social activity.

The issues of epistemology, ontology, methodology and ethics are not dealt with individually, but are rather interconnected across the sections of the chapter. It is difficult to identify a starting place that does not already make some epistemological or other assumption, hence the reader is asked to consider the chapter as a whole and the sections as necessarily partial.

1. A THEORY OF PERSONHOOD

Some educational research traditions take-for-granted the notion of 'a person', either by ignoring it, or by assuming that a person is a stable and non-problematic entity (Maclure 2002; Usher 2000a; Lave and Wenger 1996). Others argue that it is not possible to conceive of education without having a theory of personhood, even if this theory is implicit and unexamined (Pring 1995; Wolf 2002). My fear is that, in the context of police training, unless we examine our implicit theories of personhood there is a potential for our action as educators and educational researchers to nurture the *wrong* kind of 'person'.

An Ethical Dimension

I hesitated over my use of the word 'wrong' in the last sentence, but ultimately felt it was justified. Smith and Hodkinson (2002) suggest "It is, in fact, impossible to imagine any serious concept of personhood in the absence of judgement and preference" (293). Pring (1995) argues the similar point that education must begin with a deliberation on the value of "an educated person". He rejects the debate that opposes liberal education with vocational education because it fails to address the issue as one of ethical judgement.

Differences run more deeply. They concern competing views about the quality of life both for the individual and for society. They concern the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which should characterise the 'educated person' in the economic and technological society we now inhabit.

Pring(1995: 108)

Education cannot be understood without an idea of what is "worthwhile" (Peters 1970) and hence is fundamentally about:

... the development and formation of people as *persons*. Only in the light of what we mean by being and maturing as *persons* within this society might we come to sensible conclusions about the quality of life both for the individual and society.

Pring(1995: 108)

The dominant discourses in education see the learner as an individual, whether this be the competence

vocational view (learner responsibility for evidence identification and collection - Wolf 2002); the cognitive view (learner as processor of symbols - Bredo 1999); the student-centred view (learner responsibility for identifying own needs - Edwards 2001); or the phenomenological deep/surface learning view (learner as rational decision-maker about means/ends - Haggis 2003). Each of these assumes the learner is a stable and non-problematic entity, and education and training are neutral facilities chosen by the learner on the way to fulfilling his or her concept of the educated person. The learner is regarded as a consumer of educational products.

Whilst there is evidence that learners make sophisticated choices (Wolf 2002) there is concern that a market in education distorts the nature of the products offered (e.g. Broadfoot (2000) the 'assessment society'; O'Neill (2002) the 'crisis of trust'; Wolf (2002); Spendlove (2002); Kushner (2000)). But there is an even more insidious effect; it is argued that the subjectivity of learners (i.e. 'personhood') is constructed through education and training rather than preexisting it (Bayne and Land 2002; Edwards 2001). In this model the learner is not making rational choices in the pursuit of the 'educated person', rather the educational 'product' constructs the rationality of the choices.

Thus for example Treleaven (1994) speaks of the "tyranny of training" (144) that explains women's performance in terms of deficits of male qualities; Edwards (2001) argues for a more general "pathological view" of the learner where 'the person' is defined by needs and deficiencies and requires treatment (education); and Bayne and Land (2002) pursue this along a Foucauldian line suggesting the learner-as-individual is a technology of self-surveillance. Lillis (2001) and Haggis (2003) relate it to the debate on inclusion, showing how the discourse of the deep/surface learner favours an academic/establishment perspective and disadvantages non-traditional students. Finally Stronach and Maclure (1997) and Stronach et al. (2002) show how simplistic dualisms shift the debate about teacher-professionalism from the messy contexts where dilemmas occur into the tidy, ideological polarisations of "professional autonomy" and "economies of practice". Each of these examples shows how apparently neutral educational technologies import their own ethics through 'the back door'. The corresponding theories of personhood they embody do not suggest an education of the whole person, or celebrate minority discourses, or show awareness of issues of power and influence.

Smith and Hodkinson (2002) are clear that this "intellectual turmoil" demonstrates "the settled and comfortable times for educational researchers, when empiricism dominated our thoughts, are no longer available to us. The current arguments ... are very important for how we understand educational inquiry and understand ourselves as educational inquirers" (295). Educational researchers cannot assume the ethical neutrality of education concepts.

Social Construction of Knowledge

It is widely held that there are no value-free, empirical data about the world (e.g. Griffiths 1998). A corollary of this is that our understanding of what constitutes 'knowledge' must be linked to our concept of personhood. I will

briefly explore the constructivist position underlying this.

In *The Philosophical Investigations* (1958), Wittgenstein sets out his argument against the possibility of a person developing a private language that exists outside of a social context but which is capable of application to it. He likens the use of a private language to a person who reads two copies of a newspaper to check the veracity of the first against the second; or a person who checks the memory of a train departure time by summoning-up the memory of checking it on the timetable. His point is not one about the fallibility of memory, but rather the absence of criteria for making a mistake.

Thus Wittgenstein argues, if I have toothache, then for other people to understand what it means for me 'to have toothache' it is not necessary I actually have it. All that is necessary is that I do certain things like holding my face, moaning, complaining I have toothache and making an appointment to see a dentist. By doing these things I demonstrate I can apply the rules required to give meaning to the statement *I have toothache*. Wittgenstein concludes that there is a necessary connection between meaning and behaviour, but only a contingent one with private 'reality'.

This seemingly esoteric point is important to "the idea of a social science" (Winch 1958), because it poses problems for the researcher who would purport to construct a methodology independent of a social context (e.g. Yin 1994). Winch asks the question "what difference will it make to the life of man if his mind can have contact with reality?" (21). He considers the example of a person woken by an alarm clock and then behaving on the basis of what is perceived to be the case - a contact with reality that enables the catching of the early morning train. The example is trivial but, for social life, it implies the importance of things like trains running on time, schedules for drivers to keep, and methods for checking the truth of statements about timekeeping. The facts of alarms going off and trains running by schedules are features of significance to peoples' lives. Understanding the associated behaviour requires an understanding of how people take them to be important. It is not the case that alarms merely go-off and people just happen to get up and leave for the station. Having knowledge of the time involves a web of relationships between people and plays a central role in the social organisation of lives. 'Understanding' and 'meaning' are thus related to the concept of human society; or put in a different way, a discussion of reality is a discussion about the difference that understanding makes to a person. "A man's social relations with his fellows are permeated with his ideas about reality. Indeed 'permeated' is hardly a strong enough word: social ideas are expressions of ideas about reality" (23).

Winch connects this idea with Wittgenstein's private language argument. Application of language to reality requires a set of rules which could be followed by another person, because 'understanding' and 'meaning' are derived from their social setting. "The very existence of concepts depends on group life" (42). Arguing from Weber,

he uses the notion of 'meaningful behaviour' to show how participants give a subjective meaning or sense to their action. Weber uses the word '*verstehen*' to describe the process by which a researcher might make sense of another's behaviour. Winch argues this is not a mere putting-oneself-in-the-shoes-of activity, i.e. requiring an empathic inner sense. "Concepts in terms of which we understand our own mental processes and behaviour have to be learned and must, therefore, be socially established" (119). He describes it rather as "grasping the point or meaning of what is said or done" (115). Understanding others' behaviour entails emersion in the same social process.

The connection between the person, the social context, and knowledge, meaning and understanding has been influential in the development of the social sciences. It has implied, for example: a 'sociology of knowledge' - to 'have knowledge' is to adopt a role (Berger 1966; Berger and Luckman 1971); or a sociological explanation for knowledge - to 'have knowledge' is to work within a paradigm (Kuhn 1996); or "cultural psychology" (Bruner 1990) and "legitimate peripheral participation" (Lave and Wenger 1996, 1999; Wenger 1998) - to 'have knowledge' is to participate in a culture.

In a sociological theory of knowledge, meaning is "inherently socially negotiated" (Lave and Wenger 1996: 145), or is "situated" and "distributed" (Bruner 1990) within the relationships between members of a culture.

To treat the world as an indifferent flow of information to be processed by individuals each on his or her own terms is to lose sight of how individuals are formed and how they function.

Bruner(1990: 12)

In an educational setting the concept of 'person' will be a tension between the assertion of individual identity, and a need for group identity; and the tension can only be explored through ethical understanding and through judgements of value about 'the life worth living'.

History and Biography

My argument so far has begun to destabilise the unitary view of person implied by the empiricist approach and its corollary that knowledge can be separated from the practitioner. One implication of this for educational research is that it interrupts the pseudo-scientific project that would define teaching in terms of a set of technical competences. Whilst there are undoubtedly elements of any practice which can be codified, such a set of rules could never be either the first or the last word in a practice, because it would always be liable to transformation in a social context.

Two potent factors in that transformation will be the historical context of practice and the personal biographical dimension. Goodson (1983) argues that failing to account for these factors leads to:

A prominent but largely implausible model of the teacher: largely interchangeable, subject to timeless problems and employing a variety of standard but apparently spontaneously developed strategies to deal with them.

Goodson(1983: 141)

This would be equivalent to the person in Winch's example just happening to get up when the alarm clock rang. The clock does more than synchronise people with other social activities like train schedules; it cannot be understood outside the context of personal motivation and choice, or indeed of compulsion and need. Moore (1999) argues this in relation to teachers:

When they come to teaching ... teachers already bring with them a history and a culture through which they have negotiated and - however impermanently - fixed meanings, orientations and understandings about such things as how learning works, what schools and education are for and how teachers should conduct themselves, which are immediately subject to revisitations once the practice of teaching begins.

Moore (1999: 144)

Moore's argument is that there is no generalisable, universal teacher on which to base a science of teaching. Teachers' motivations, understanding and aspirations cannot be treated as straightforward data, because they are socially contextualised and carry their own inherent, internal logic (also Jones 1983). Bruner (1990) argues that narrative accounts do not merely provide information but are a cultural apparatus "for dealing simultaneously with canonicity and exceptionality" (47). The call to a practitioner to describe a situation or to respond to questions evokes an implicit justification, positioning the action in the realm of the expected or normal. Weedon (2002) concurs, arguing that personal stories align identities with dominant national ones, and Denscombe (1983) argues that interviewer and interviewee implicitly understand that accounts function in this way.

Stronach and Maclure (1997) extend this argument by highlighting the logical structure of stories. A narrative moves logically to a closure, because the closure (the conclusion) is the story that is being told. This entails that the details of the story must 'fit', those which do not fit must be ignored or distorted, and biography must be searched for features which would tend to make it a good story. Stronach and Maclure are making a postmodernist point about closure, but it is essentially the same argument as Bruner's thesis that accounts have a social, narrative function.

Narrative ... deals with the stuff of human action and intentionality. It mediates between the canonical world of human culture and the more idiosyncratic world of beliefs, desires and hopes. It renders the exceptional comprehensible ... it reiterates the norms of society without being didactic. And ... it provides a basis for rhetoric without confrontation. It can even teach, conserve memory, or alter the past.

Bruner (1990: 53)

It is these features of narrative that link it so closely with biography. The practitioner in accounting for his/her action is implicitly locating those parts of a personal biography that contribute to the closure of the story. Hence the stories the practitioner tells about practice represent 'life' stories - or the ways in which current practice is explained and justified by the things that have happened in the past (White 2003a). Giddens (1991) calls this "the reflexive project of the self", and argues that personhood presumes the sustaining of a coherent and continually revised biography. Plummer (2001), Miller (2000) and Adlam (1998) make similar arguments but under less grand epithets; the important point of agreement is that people are involved in 'life-work', continually updating their

biographies to tell today's story.

The implications of this for a theory of personhood, as Moore (1999) notes, are that people have multiple and changing identities, and knowing, thinking and intelligence are impoverished concepts when confined to rational/ logical modes (Heron and Reason 2001; Claxton 2000). History and biography are understood as social phenomena, and yet at the same time they add a whole dimension to our understanding of the social; paradoxically, history and biography are located very much in the present (White 2003a).

Learning and Transformation

In terms of social adaptation, the paradox of learning is that it is autobiographical. "Learning, thinking and knowing are relations among people in activity" and can be thought of as "the production of persons over time" (Lave and Wenger 1996: 145). The cultural apparatus for the expression of this is narrative (Bruner 1990). Thus, the history (biography) of persons will "necessarily focus on the processes of learning" (Lave and Wenger 1996: 145-6). It is then of the essence of 'person' as I am conceiving it, that learning/knowledge, biography/identity, and social relationships are its facets (Lave and Wenger 1996).

Narrative approaches to research do not merely elicit accounts but inquire into peoples' identities and, through a biographical process, potentially transform them. Treleaven (1994, 2001) for example used this as a research process that she called 'story as inquiry'; she collaborated with others in the telling of stories which, through listening, revisiting and retelling saw participants changing their relationships with the world. Practices were changed by understanding stories differently (Carr and Kemmis 1986). Winter et al. (1999) coined the term "investigative imagination" for this sort of process, and others have argued along similar lines (Mulholland and Wallace 2003; Clough 2002; Chambers 2001; Bullough and Pinnegar 2001; Ellis and Bochner 2000; Richardson 2000).

This is important to my conception of 'person' because I see learning (and therefore research) as social transformation (Edwards 2001), or "world-making" as Usher (2000b) argues. Our metaphors for learning change from 'discovery' and 'finding' to for example, "constructing and making" (Smith and Hodkinson 2002); or "entry ways", "crossing borders" and "transitions" (Mulholland and Wallace 2003). It is a conception of 'person' which favours the social processes of learning over the product (knowledge). Questions about *how* we come to know are more important than what we know (Treleaven 1994; McNiff 2001), and the focus shifts to learning about learning (Hargreaves 2001; Askew and Lodge 2000; Watkins et al. 2000; Wood 2000).

Susman (1983) considers how people use knowledge not so much as a mirror of reality but rather as an artefact to aid their coming-to-terms-with reality. In this sense accumulated knowledge, scientific methodology and so forth are historical products arising out of our grappling with "problematic situations" (97). Bredo (1999) concurs with this view identifying the focus on processes as a major strand in education thinking:

The performance of everyday activities, in which the problem is not defined aside from the difficulties arising from the activity itself and social and physical interaction enter into both the definition of the problem and the construction of the solution.

Bredo (1999: 24)

By focusing on processes we avoid the familiar dualisms of fact/value, theory/practice, language/reality and individual/society with which I started this section. Bredo continues:

When the task is seen as a matter of interpretation, it becomes impossible to clearly separate individual task performance from the social process of defining and negotiating 'what is going on here'. ... The whole task includes the figuring out of what the task is.

Bredo (1999: 32)

As with Lave and Wenger, Bredo sees the resolution of these problematic situations as "a history of relating" (33) in which both the problem and participants are transformed. Our educational practices should then be seeking "to find better ways of organising activity together. ... Any meaningful social action ... becomes oriented to the action of others" (38). This "history of relating" will be integral with our moral careers as practitioners because as Glen (2000) notes, a problematic situation "compels one to consider, yet again, the kind of ... researcher one is going to be" (17).

Facing problems entails social action and hence biographical work. Learning that is transformative points at one more feature of personhood; learning is likely to be a "painful" and "frustrating" struggle between hopes and achievements (Glen 2000: 21). "My feeling of angst is what learning is about" (Rowland 2002).

2. REFLEXIVITY IN HUMAN ACTION

The theory of personhood I have presented has implications for my role as a researcher, and I have chosen to explore these under the rubric of 'reflexivity'. I will argue for an understanding of 'reflexivity' as human action that can change social conditions. Research methodology has to find ways of coping with human reflexivity that take responsibility for this potential.

What is Reflexivity?

'Reflexivity' is much used in research accounts with an ethnographic bias, but there is little discussion as to how the term should be applied. It does not appear as a separate item in the indices of popular research methods text books (Bell 1993; Cohen and Manion 1994; Denscombe 1998; Yin 1994) and where it does appear it is often used synonymously with 'reflection' (e.g. Hitchcock and Hughes 1995). This debate is not only semantic because in some qualitative research reflexivity is a measure of credibility, asking how the researcher has addressed the conditions of quality in research.

Moore (1999) suggests 'reflexivity' is associated with a postmodern approach that seeks to identify hidden ideological assumptions in order to 'destabilise' or 'deconstruct' them. Thus in discussing the dominant discourses in initial teacher education he notes how teachers are "pathologised" by diagnoses of what is wrong in their

classrooms. The debate is shifted from social and cultural issues to teacher blame and stigmatisation. Moore uses 'reflexivity' to describe the undermining of such discourses by locating them in socio-historical and intra-personal contexts. Reflexivity does not reach-behind to a deeper reality, but attends to the "perceptual biases", and ways in which "language structures our consciousness and at the same time our relationships with others" (Winter 1996: 19). Reflexivity is a capacity to construct reality differently by thinking about it differently.

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) seek to structure the processes of 'thinking differently' in order to create a research methodology for seeing reflexively. They argue that the construction of meaning has three elements: an object to construct (a reality which is 'out there'); a subject to make the constructions (the researcher); and a social context in which the researcher is located (society, language, scientific paradigms). Given these constituents they suggest:

Reflexivity, in the research context, means paying attention to these aspects without letting any one of them dominate. In other words, it is a question of avoiding empiricism, narcissism and different varieties of social and linguistic reductionism

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000: 246).

They call their methodology 'reflexive interpretation'. It is an eclectic treatment at four levels of interpretation:

1. Empirical - interaction with collected data;
2. Interpretation - hermeneutic study of underlying meanings;
3. Critical interpretation - attention to ideology, power, reproduction of social conditions;
4. Representation - text production and language use.

Each of these levels is associated with major research approaches, but no particular one is "totalized" or employed to the exclusion of the others. The levels are "played off against each other"; reflexivity arises in the "relations and interfaces" between the levels (249).

The first two levels operate on the empirical data and demand that researchers maintain a wide "repertoire of interpretations". Reflection here involves a "reciprocity" between the data and the interpretive options, based on the researcher's theoretical sophistication and creative abilities. Levels three and four are described as meta-theoretical and relate specifically to Critical Theory and Postmodernism. Meta-insight derives from ambiguities, problematisation of dominant theory, and alternative views and theories. They intend that confrontation and reflection should take place between all levels so the meta-theoretical field is explicitly reconnected to the empirical material. "The whole idea is to avoid getting stuck in a certain type of logic ... without making sure that space and energy remain for other positions" (257). They emphasise creativity and reflective ability rather than listing procedures. The researcher is advised to develop hermeneutic, political and linguistic awareness using established techniques from those fields, but the development of such sensitivities relies on the individual researcher's creativity. It is not a researching-by-numbers methodology.

Despite appearances, Alvesson and Skoldberg argue from what Smith and Hodkinson (2002) call a neo-realist position. They highlight the importance of imagination and creativity, but their objective still seems to be a more complete description of reality. The refusal to privilege any one point of view is in itself to adopt a definite epistemological position, because even a neutral stance makes a claim that the resulting perspective is in some sense better. For Alvesson and Skoldberg 'better' means more complete. They decline to engage with a perspective on an ethical basis on the grounds that methodology can deliver a superior perspective.

But other than serving a methodological rigour, *Why does reflexive interpretation matter?* The academic rationale for reflexivity is to re-present reality in order to understand it better, but the practical effect of new understanding is that relationships between people change and lives are lived in different ways. Our methodology both describes reality and produces it. The ethical perspective contained in the question *Why does it matter?* goes to the heart of educational research. If it is to be more than an academic exercise, for whom and in what ways should it make a difference to the practice of education? Who needs to be convinced that research matters? (Kushner 2002b; Desforges 2001; Bassegy 1995).

The concerns of researchers are often mismatched with what matters to participants. Weiskopf and Laske (1996) describe how their research was designed to give staff a voice in management but their intervention worked on a political level to create "new elites and new hierarchies". Their intellectual notion of 'consensus' did not matter to participants. Johnston (2000) reports how his team were motivated by social justice in adult education but the participants just wanted jobs. Straker and Hall (1999) were concerned with inequality and adult literacy, but their participants were driven by perceptions of social status. And finally, in my own project I found my critique of expert power mattered less to colleagues than their self-preservation (White 2003b).

Hammersley (2001, 2002) argues there are good reasons for an applied educational research which separates researchers from practitioners, and values from descriptions of reality.

Problems about what is wrong and what is to be done cannot be resolved entirely on the basis of empirical research; and researchers do not have any distinctive authority to select value assumptions from which such conclusions could be derived.

Hammersley (2001: 17)

For Hammersley the fact/value dualism is necessary because the researcher lacks any authority on ethical matters. But this is a research decision which needs some reflexive examination itself; what is it about being a "distinctive authority" that is important to academic researchers? Is research constructed so as to maintain their status and authority? Lincoln (2001) certainly believes so:

The particular structure of academies and academic elites makes it extremely difficult for academics to put aside power, status and prestige, and work with individuals and groups on an equal footing. It takes a particular form of humility to comprehend that all human beings share a common destiny, and that social change can only be effected through a faith that equality and democracy are in the interest of all human beings, not simply those with

the status of educational and social attainment.

Lincoln(2001:130)

Of course, academic researchers work in an imposed context of "evidence-informed policy-making" (Gorard 2003: 13; also Bassey 2003) in which political naivety could be equally as disempowering as lacking voice (Goodson 1999). Stronach (2003) argues, rather enigmatically, that what we need in order to do research which is important to people is "civil courage".

Reflexivity and Transformation

Could 'reflexivity' be understood as 'civil courage' - a form of praxis (Freire 1996) in which a person works both to 'see' differently and simultaneously to change the social relationships?

Carr and Kemmis (1986) argue it is social life itself that is reflexive because "it has the capacity to change as our knowledge and thinking changes, thus creating new forms of social life which can, in their turn, be reconstructed" (43). Human beings are not a set of Hume's billiard balls crashing about under the constraints of the laws of mechanics. Social life has to be researched with the understanding that actors can change a situation by understanding it differently, and this potential implies rights and responsibilities. 'Reflexivity' does not add anything to the meaning of a phrase like 'research methodology', because by virtue of being human action it is already reflexive. Carr and Kemmis argue that "Social and educational theories must *cope with* this reflexivity" (43: my emphasis); it is not the case that research has to be something extra, but that it has to account for its potential to change things. 'Coping' or 'accounting-for' are concerned with taking responsibility for contributing to the production of social conditions.

Applied educational research is no less reflexive action-in-the-world constructing social situations - albeit the status quo. But it does not *cope with* the status quo because it denies its reflexive contribution to the construction of it. Educational research that *cope with* reflexivity does more than just describe the complexity of social life; by sharing in the construction of that description, actors become capable of constructing it anew. Coping with reflexivity is essentially an ethical problem, about what is 'the life worth living', who has the right to decide and how we take responsibility for realising it.

In their analysis of forms of "cooperative inquiry" Heron and Reason (2001) use the word "transformational" to describe research that accounts for reflexivity. It is a phrase which is redolent with ethical, social and political implications and I want briefly to consider some of these.

Firstly, research which is transformational cannot be passive intellectualism; it must involve action and its metaphors are likely to employ verbs. Carr and Kemmis (1986) write "The study of praxis ... is always through praxis: ... it embodies praxis in the form of an interest in improving praxis" (192), and they add that the problems of education are not ends-related but "problems of *acting* educationally in social situations" (180: my emphasis). Winter (2002)

and Usher (2000a) make similar arguments in relation to action research; theory, reflexivity and methodology are all bound up with the process of actually doing research.

Secondly, the focus on action demands the personal engagement of the researcher. Biott (2002) remarks that everything a researcher does is part of his/her methodology because everything is potentially transformative. Winter (2002) argues research will be in part an "autobiographical exploration" because it "raises key questions about the actual experience of taking responsibility for attempting to initiate change" (38-9).

Thirdly, transformation cannot be by individual action; it demands participation and personal engagement by all of those who are touched by a particular set of social relationships. Hall (1996) expresses this as the sharing of the meaning-making process. Posch (2002) writes:

Traditionally, schools are the recipients of demands from power structures in society. In the future it will be necessary for students and teachers also to express and realise their views of the society they want to live in. Action research is in a sense only another word for this.

Posch(2002: 186-7)

Lastly, transformation is political. Carr and Kemmis (1986) write "Such action is always political action; new practices always challenge established institutional interests. They express a realignment of tendencies towards empowerment and emancipation, on the one hand, as against tendencies towards the entrenchment of sectional self-interests, on the other" (197). Noffke (2002) also emphasises this political imperative; action research raises questions about who has the right to produce knowledge, who owns it and who it is for, and these force us to look outside the traditional epistemological paradigm.

Coping With Reflexivity: Validity Principles

In this final section I want to consider some criteria for quality in research that is transformational, and the implications this has for the role of the researcher. The research literature is not short of advice on the subject of validity, for example: Reason and Rowan (1981); Carr and Kemmis (1986); Treleaven (1994); Hall (1996); Winter (1996); Golby and Parrott (1999); Christians (2000); Kemmis and McTaggart (2000); Heron and Reason (2001); McNiff (2001;2003). I set out below six principles, based on Winter (1996).

1. Personal dialectic.

This concerns action the researcher takes to uncover personal ideologies which structure and limit thinking, and hence our relationships with others and the world. Reason and Rowan (1981) suggest this requires "high quality awareness" and "systematic personal and interpersonal development". For me it was a personal dialectic between my positivist training and my developing theory of personhood (White 2003b).

I approached it by continually writing myself into the story of the research, to the extent that the research took on an autobiographical character (Hall 1996; Winter 2002). I maintained a daily journal in which I examined my experience of doing the research - my emotional relationship with practical experience and intellectual ideas. Field

and observation notes were written explicitly from my perspective, and during the early phases of the work, related to all aspects of my practice.

Reason and Rowan (1981) note that such work on personal awareness cannot be done alone. My journal and field notes were shared with other participants, prompting joint cycles of both convergent and divergent thinking (Heron and Reason 2001) in both oral, prose and sometimes poetic form.

2. Social dialectic.

This refers to the relationships between the "phenomena" of the case (Winter 1996) i.e. between participants and the context. In my later thinking I linked this very closely with the first principle, since my understanding was shaped by practical relationships (McNiff 2001). 'Cycling' around problems, feedback between participants, and identifying convergent/divergent thinking were important processes (Reason and Rowan 1981; Heron and Reason 2001; Treleaven 1994). My writing was shared with participants (White 2000, 2002, 2003a, 2003b) at draft stages, and this was often reciprocated. Ideas were shared in a wider forum of peers through research seminars and conferences.

3. Collaborative resources.

Here Winter (1996) reminds us that participation with others entails everyone's contribution is seen as a resource. In the early stages of my project I understood 'collaboration' in the egocentric sense of working together on my agenda. In later thinking I linked it with the first two principles - the personal and social dialectics - to give a sense of a social and participatory process (Kemmis and McTaggart 2000). 'Collaboration' is a combination of personal and social imperatives that may be antagonistic (McNiff 2003); an approach that accounts for reflexivity enables participants to find 'collaboration', rather than setting it up as an 'end'.

4. Risk.

Action research is a threat to taken-for-granted assumptions and activities (Winter 1996). Anything which can be transformed is therefore at risk, and will be experienced as threatening by participants. I found that risk and threat were the fuel for the personal and social dialectics. The researcher's task is to recognise and face his/her own demons and to bring to the surface the threats that other participants experience but do not acknowledge.

This form of social dialectic produces moral dilemmas about the right to surface others' fears. It cannot be sidestepped by claiming to address only issues of educational practice, because practitioners will have an affective investment in their beliefs. In the early stages of the research I used the indirect strategy of 'making myself vulnerable' (Ellis and Bochner 2000) the surfacing of my issues in the hope this would invite others to consider theirs. I regard this now as instrumental rather than participative action. In the later stages of the research the ethical problems became issues for participants to decide. 'Participation' is reflexive action and so *to participate* is to accept

social responsibility.

5. Plural Structure.

A plural structure implies the replacement of a unitary account with a plurality of accounts, and the opening-up of questions and possibilities for participants rather than a closing-down with propositions and conclusions (Winter 1996). The social dialectic has to do justice to others' voices, and the personal dialectic has to show an acknowledgement of this (Clough 2002; Mulholland and Wallace 2003; Bullough and Pinnegar 2001; Chambers 2001; Conle 2000; Richardson 2000; Ellis and Bochner 2000; Winter et al. 1999; Lather 1991).

At an early stage in my writing I adopted methodologies for representing the multi-strandedness of identity, including writing at different levels of awareness (White 2003b), using others' material and voices (White 2002) and re-framing situations by retelling stories (White 2003a).

6. Transformation.

Winter's (1996, 2002) focus is on the critical transformation of theory and practice - two elements which he sees as different but interdependent. In the initial phase of my research I had separated these two elements, albeit unwittingly, by aiming to transform others' practice with my theory (White 2003b). My later thinking was clarified by Carr and Kemmis's (1986) principles that research should aim at improving one's own practice, and that it should focus on participants' own categories and understanding.

As the focus of my project became more sensitive to the "emic" issues of the case (Stake 1995) I developed a concern for the transformation of relationships between participants (Heron and Reason 2001; Kemmis and McTaggart 2000). Thus much of my action during the research was concerned with the social dynamics of the groups I worked with. The difficulty facing researchers is once more that of coping with reflexivity; action is taken to change relationships but in a way that enables participants to make the choices. When the change is experienced as imposed it tends to be resisted and reinforces the status quo (White 2003b).

Inquiry Skills

I have borrowed this title from Heron and Reason (2001) who argue that when research switches from a focus on others, to working with others, the skill-set of the researcher must change. The validity principles discussed above give strong pointers towards this modified skill set. The researcher must handle his/her self-consciousness; recognise the threats that others are experiencing and then confront them; and operate in ways that enable others to do these things for themselves. I have put these inquiry skills into three main categories: self-consciousness; facilitation skills; and handling relationships, and I consider each below.

1. Self-consciousness.

Self-consciousness is essentially a process of learning about oneself. It is not a straightforward skill to

intellectualise; it is one of those things which, as Louis Armstrong is reputed to have said about jazz, if you have to ask then you won't understand. Reason and Rowan (1981) repeat the biblical injunction "know thyself" and then continue:

We cannot study human processes except as aware human beings, and for this we require a 'way' to self knowledge, a process of self inquiry, which is systematic and which is powerful enough to reach into unconscious processes, since that is where the disturbances are likely to lie.

Reason and Rowan (1981: 246)

Expressed in this form 'self-awareness' sets up an introspective, psychological subject, that can potentially de-contextualise the self. McNiff (2003) has a method of treating self-awareness within its context of relationships with others, a study she calls "agonistics", the "contradictory, problematic and often tragic nature of human social living" (1). As an educator, she sets out to understand how she influences others by paying attention to what is happening in social interactions. Her guiding principle is "personal accountability", or the acceptance of responsibility for the outcome of interacting with other people. "The process of accountability involves offering descriptions of, and explanations for my practice as I address the question *How do I improve my practice?*" (2)

In this way self-development is taken out of the realm of the psychotherapeutic and made relevant to day-to-day practitioner functioning. The practitioner seeks feedback by asking difficult questions about his/her effect on others (e.g. How am I doing? What did you think of that?); undertakes to listen to what is said; and reflects on it. As discussed above, the points of personal transformation will be those which arouse feelings of threat and fear, and accomplishing the transition often entails speaking that-which-cannot-be-admitted.

2. Facilitation Skills.

The personal dialectic has to be mirrored in a social dialectic and the skills required are the counselling-type associated with facilitation, adult education and student centred-learning.

Whilst commonly talked about, these skills are not commonly practised. Grimmett and Dockendorf (1999) describe their excitement as they changed from a traditional university role to that of action research-facilitators. The transformation created unexpected possibilities; "as facilitators we were releasing a process whereby practitioners constructed knowledge for themselves" (85). Grimmett and Dockendorf could not have adopted the facilitative skills if they had not first been prepared to acknowledge the practitioners' right to produce knowledge, because of its attendant threat to their status (see also Somekh 2002).

Thus technical skills such as listening without being judgemental; confronting peoples' fears without being manipulative; valuing others' ideas without being disingenuous; and accepting others' leadership without being resentful, demand first and foremost acceptance of a theory of personhood that undermines the status and knowledge of the traditional researcher.

3. Handling Relationships.

The difficulties in handling participant relationships have been documented by others, e.g. Treleaven (1994), Stake (1995), Losito et al. (1998), Johnston (2000), Somekh (2002), McNiff (2003). It was an important aspect for my project, given my aim to transform them. Action research relationships imply an ethic of care (McNiff 2001) and such caring is not commonly present in police hierarchies. I had to role-model the relationships I wanted others to learn, and to ensure my actions were always consonant with my words. Achieving this entailed dealing with my own issues of power, influence and status through the personal dialectic and through the development of my new theory of personhood.

The researcher cannot take-for-granted his/her power and influence within a relationship and perhaps the best technique is to make this an issue for all participants. It is not straightforward since personal action changes only one side of the dynamic; others act as before and become frustrated when the practitioner does not reciprocate, or else feel manipulated into adapting their behaviour. There is tremendous social pressure on participants to conform to each others' expectations. It can result in a hybridisation of roles; for example, the researcher eases tension by pretending to be a participant, or else plays the role with-an-expert-edge by blaming the other participants. Others experience a lack of congruence or authenticity in the researcher's behaviour because the new situation is imposed dogmatically.

3. METHODOLOGY AS AN ETHIC

Some time ago I read a conference paper by Eleanore Hargreaves (2001) about her research into her practice of teaching assessment to Master's students. I do not have a direct interest in assessment theory, but oddly, I found her writing so gripping it became a turning point in my own project. I have read the paper, in part or in whole, several more times since then. I kept finding new ideas, or I made sense of something which had been opaque or which had puzzled me, or paradoxically, something that had seemed meaningful on a previous reading now seemed less important. I remember one rereading that took more than two hours - I found, again and again, I had stopped reading and was staring into space thinking intensely about my own work.

The very idea one could read an academic text and not find *the meaning* seems paradoxical, and it was one of the enigmas that taxed my thought. I realised, for example, I had a built-in expectation that an academic text would deliver a single meaning, and in the past I must have distorted my experience of reading to make it fit that paradigm. Why should I do that? Perhaps because, being seen by others to have found the meaning is what we mean by 'being clever'. And yet, now, the issue of cleverness seemed irrelevant; whatever meaning I happened to take from my reading, there was always a question about why I understood it that way and how my future action might be affected. This was promising material for research and learning. It was tempting to say there were two fields of investigation,

the first into what the text actually meant, and the second into how and why I learned from it. As a philosopher I felt an attachment to the first of these, but once I recognised the text had a *learning* function it undermined the search for a stable, philosophical knowledge. I began to see the search for a unitary meaning as constructed out of a desire for status and a fear of ridicule.

One particular section in Hargreaves' paper mystified me. She had encountered a problem when her students seemed to resist the ideas she was teaching; a friend observed "But surely your research is about your own learning, not about how to make things work with your students" (9). I couldn't make sense of it and yet it was clearly significant to Hargreaves. The sentence stayed with me for months, held in suspension, unconnected to my understanding but flagged as something that *seemed important*. I remember the mental contortions I went through in repeated attempts to make it 'fit' somewhere. I asked myself *What would it be like to think that was important?* Occasionally when I took a step forward in my learning I revisited the problem, with the hope that *now* I would understand.

When I look at the statement now, it expresses for me a relationship between teacher and student learning. I understand it in the context of police training and in the light of the theory of personhood I have attempted to live in my practice as a teacher and researcher. But the meaning does not stop there; Hargreaves' paper expanded the ways in which I could think about research, and perhaps more importantly, there is a sense in which it gave me *permission* to do so. Her paper is a "historical artefact" (Susman 1983; see above) but its meaning for me has a historical and social context, a relationship to my biography, and even a relationship between myself and the writer. The complex relationship between theory and practice is the subject of the next section.

Instability and Contradiction

Hammersley (2001, 2002) has asked two closely related questions: "Can and should educational research be educative?"; and "Is action research a contradiction in terms?" His argument is that it is necessary to distinguish between on the one hand an inquiry "which is pursued in its own right" - which he calls 'research'; and on the other, inquiry "which is subordinated to some other activity" of a practical nature like teaching (acting educatively) or improving ones practice (action research). He argues there are "contradictory pressures between inquiry and other activities" because of the "imposed relevances arising from practical problems". He seeks to maintain the purity of inquiry with its "intrinsic relevances deriving from intellectual puzzlement", and so sets-up fact/value and theory/practice dualisms as "barriers ... to protect it from, or to mediate the demands of, other activities" (2002: 9-10). His answers to the two questions are:

Educative action is aimed at changing people in some respect and is specifically designed to do this; informative action is aimed solely at providing people with information that is believed to be relevant to their concerns.

Hammersley (2001: 18)

Action research cannot refer to a fusion of, or a transcendence of the distinction between, research and some other activity; while there may be an overlap there cannot be isomorphism; and as a result there is the likelihood of contradictory tensions. ... Action research is inherently unstable because of its internally contradictory character.

Hammersley (2002: 13)

Hammersley does not provide any examples showing the difference between imposed and intrinsic relevances, nor how a practical problem differs from an intellectual puzzlement. Ironically, in Gomm et al. (2000), he criticises Stake (1995) for expressing "puzzlement" about cases investigated for their "intrinsic" interest. Assuming that Hammersley is not being inconsistent, there must be a more fundamental issue at stake, and I suggest it is his conceptualisation of 'knowledge'.

It is significant that Hammersley's whole argument is theoretical; he examines the logical relationships between a number of concepts, but not the relationships between the concepts and social activity. Furthermore, whilst Hammersley accepts that research is a social activity, he does not write as if he believes his intellectual puzzlement is one. Indeed, he cannot, because if it were, then it would be in danger of being "subordinated" to the "imposed relevances" of that social activity. So, whilst inquiry is a social activity, when it is intellectual puzzlement "pursued in its own right" then it is a super-ordinate one. It is super-ordinate because the aim is "informative activity" that contributes to "a cumulating body of knowledge" (Hammersley 2001) or put differently, it produces generalisations (Gomm, Hammersley and Foster 2000).

This is a species of the tautology I illustrated at the start of the chapter. Super-ordinate activity constitutes a validity procedure for knowledge generation and 'knowledge' is defined as the product. Thus the statement "super-ordinate activity produces valid knowledge" is a truism - an uninteresting, a priori truth that tells us nothing that is not already contained in the concept of a super-ordinate activity. It does not tell us whether there are such things as imposed/intrinsic relevances or practical problems/intellectual puzzlements; which is perhaps why Hammersley does not give us any examples.

Winter (2002), who occupies a similar position to Hammersley in the academy, set out to find some examples and concluded that neither the activities of university researchers nor of practitioners fall into such neat categories. Universities may hark back to a tradition of knowledge for its own sake and may aspire to be safe havens for critical reason, but nowadays they are also engaged in the competitive business of marketing, and delivering products (degree courses) and services (teaching and funded research) in a struggle with rival universities. So the conflict between spectator theory and work-based inquiry is a dilemma-ridden relationship within the university, as well as a relationship between the university and the organisations it claims to serve.

Winter (2002: 33)

These are the contradictions that Hammersley's barriers keep out. Winter copes with complexity by living with it; the instabilities and contradictions which Hammersley avoids are the phenomena that Winter seeks to understand. Hammersley does not treat research as a social activity and thus does not account for its reflexivity.

Generalisation

I am not arguing that the encyclopaedist view of knowledge is wrong, only that (to borrow an encyclopaedist's term) there is a risk of over-claiming. 'Validity' cannot be the gold-standard in knowledge production without becoming self-justifying. As many others have observed, this makes claims to knowledge as embarrassing as the 'anything goes' alternative.

Even if we are more circumspect about the ontological position of 'validity', there is another drawback from pursuing it. It is clear that small-scale practitioner research produces new knowledge and understanding for the people involved, and yet the procedures for generating it do not measure up to the traditional standards (Gomm et al. 2000). One way of resolving the problem is to relate generalisability to the scale of research. Thus Lincoln and Guba (2000) develop the notion of 'transferability', a tentative form of generalisation which states the context-specific conditions in which it holds true. It is a position adopted by Campbell et al. (2003) for example, in the BERA-endorsed advice to teacher-researchers.

Classical generalisation and transferability both have in common the assumption that knowledge can be expressed in propositional form, and when taught to others will be learned in that form. This assumption is challenged, for example, by the "naturalistic generalisation" proposed by Stake (1995) and Donmoyer (2000). Gomm et al. (2000) misinterpret it as a methodology for producing *generalisations that are naturalistic*, but it should be understood rather as a process of learning (Stake), or more precisely, as experiential learning (Donmoyer).

Donmoyer argues that naturalistic generalization is derived from personal knowledge, in the sense that performance of complex tasks becomes easier, consequences of actions can be anticipated and events can be controlled. The knowing is tacit in the sense that it is linked with action. He does not suggest such knowledge is private and nonverbal (a "non-negotiable currency" Lincoln and Guba 2000), only that it is too complex to be entirely represented in words. Donmoyer's naturalistic generalisation can be likened to Bruner's (1990) narrative discourse (see above), "There is a structural equivalence between narrative and real-world experience. Both unfold in time. Both can have multiple things happening simultaneously. Both integrate thought and feeling" (Donmoyer 2000: 61). Narrative is not didactic, it is communication which facilitates the discovery of complexity, jointly constructed by participants, affect laden, and meaning-making.

Donmoyer uses the Piagetian concepts of integration/differentiation to describe the learning process. Past experience and current action are mediated by these cognitive processes rather than acting like data banks of knowledge, thus much understanding remains tacit in the sense that it is aimed at meaning-making. None of this prevents tacit knowledge from being examined in propositional form, and indeed we do this when we examine the assumptions behind action. The mistake is to reify such propositions as containers of our knowledge rather than

as mediators of our sense-making. Experience affords the opportunity for a person to test assumptions and thereby accommodate new understanding; the learning is an expansion of meaning rather than an accumulation of knowledge.

This view offers a different understanding of how propositional knowledge works. Desforges (2001), also arguing from a cognitive psychology perspective on learning (cognitive dissonance), argues it demands attention to how practitioners transform research knowledge. "Dissemination and even communication are relatively trivial steps between research findings and practice", because new ideas "are mediated through teachers' and trainers' conceptions of teaching and learning"; our research should ask "how does evidence have its impact on intelligent action?" (6). Bassey (1995) suggests that generalisations do not impact on action because they are not in a form that can be transformed. A new field of *practical* educational research is opened up where, as Kushner (2002a, 2002b) notes, knowledge is context-specific and needs to be "re-invented" by each new practitioner (see for example Leat and Lin 2003).

Ethical Research

I have argued that all research is social action entailing relationships with others and therefore having an ethical dimension. Even research which is distanced from practitioners implicitly expresses a moral position. Once unburdened from the need to strive for an ethically neutral knowledge production, we can begin to act in ways that account for our values. My argument has been that ethically-aware research acknowledges the reflexivity of human action by questioning how our practices are constructed and thereby creating the possibility of new forms of social action. Carr and Kemmis (1986) argue that our research practice should be "informed and committed action" (190), and the word 'committed' is understood as "the disposition to act truly and rightly" (34). Research which is directed by the moral imperative to act in principled ways forms the 'paradigm of practice' (Golby 2003) I introduced at the start of the chapter.

In this section I will look at some of the ways in which my principles were expressed in action, and locate these approaches in the work of other action researchers. There are four main strategies:

1. A collaborative approach;
2. Dialogue about practice;
3. Ownership of knowledge production.
4. Changing relationships;

These distinctions are artificial, representing different perspectives of the same phenomenon, but it aids discussion to separate them in this way. It will be noted that the strategies are consonant with the validity principles discussed earlier.

1. A Collaborative Approach

As discussed in Chapter 2, the police service has traditionally seen only the individual side of learning and work-teams are not regarded as potential sites of social transformation. Whilst 'reflective practice' has been promoted since 1988, it is regarded as a solitary activity. Trainers continue to be assessed as individuals against objective standards, which prevents teaching being investigated as a cultural construction.

There is much research conducted into professional training as a collaborative process, for example, in teacher training (Hanley 2003; Paris and Gespass 2001), teaching and education (Harris and Anthony 2001; Gallagher 2000; Watkins 2000; Smyth 1999), nursing (Platzer 1997), adult learning (Kilpatrick et al. 1999; Saunders and Gowing 1999), and professional training (Gregory 2000; Grimmett and Dockendorf 1999; Adlam 1997, 1998, 1999; Treleaven 1994, 2001). Whilst most work is done with volunteers, for example, in university/school collaborations (e.g. Somekh 2002; Losito et al. 1998) or professional development (e.g. Treleaven 1994; Kilpatrick et al. 1999), practitioner research sometimes meets resistance from others, for example, in attempting to change from a traditional, hierarchical practice to a more democratic one (e.g. Paris and Gespass 2001; Adlam 1999). As discussed above, the points of transformation represent personal risk and threat to participants, and can be subversive of institutional structures.

I have used the idea of 'social capital' (Kilpatrick et al. 1999, 2003) to conceptualise group learning in a way that complements the knowledge transformation argument presented above. Social capital is not a body of shared knowledge but rather "a resource based on relationships among people" (2003: 419) which expands the potential for understanding. This potential is a function of the quality of social relationships, where a 'better' relationship copes with reflexivity by examining the conditions of its own construction.

Whilst some offer lists of things-to-do in forming collaborative groups (e.g. Heron and Reason 2001) a large body of practical experience indicates that *what* the practitioner does is less important than *how* it is done. Thus Campbell (2002) argues that professional development is synonymous with personal development; practitioners must learn to work as part of a 'learning community', rather than following a recipe or a set of behavioural competences. The practitioner must be open to learning and prepared to enter the personal and social dialectics described above.

The metaphor of 'creating spaces' is useful in visualising ways of engendering a collaborative social dialectic (Paris and Gespass 2001; Gallagher 2000; Smyth 1999; Treleaven 1994). 'Space' takes several meanings: a physical sense of time and place that differentiates it from the work place; a social dimension that differentiates members; and a psychodynamic context providing purpose and practice that differentiates it from work routines. A room booking and a diary date for a group meeting are insufficient for the growth of social capital: the 'creation of a space'

is a reflexive function of the group's social relationships.

Group action is not virtuous *per se* because it may just reproduce existing social relationships (Penso et al. 2001). It is only a precondition for collaborative work (Webb 1996; Weiskopf and Laske 1996) and it follows that reflective practice will be an important element in group functioning (Ellis 2001).

2. Dialogue about Practice

Torrance and Pryor (2001) argue that teachers have difficulty understanding how to research their practice because their training does not teach them to recognise what their practice is. Their research found that teachers held narrow views of educational concepts that were not articulated and were not always connected to the task of teaching. Their "key finding" was that "teachers need to monitor and reflect on their own classroom practices - to investigate them in detail - before being ready to then think about how best to develop more principled intervention strategies" (621). Educational theory should be introduced to teacher-researchers after they have discovered their practice, so it can be "mediated and transformed through practical arguments" (626). Dialogue about practice expands teachers' understanding of pedagogy and enables them to change their practice in ways that change the social conditions for learners.

Others have emphasised the importance of talking about practice, for example: Smyth (1999) - the dialogic school; Saunders and Gowing (1999) - the learning conversation; Askew and Lodge (2000) - feedback and learning; Harris and Anthony (2001) - collegiality; and Gallagher (2000) - classroom communities. Carr and Kemmis (1986) argue that critical educational research is about practice, about our understanding of practice and about the context of practice. If dialogue ignores the practice context, it will risk reproducing existing social conditions.

Murphy (1999) and Adlam (1997) advocate action research groups agreeing and sharing their philosophies and theories of education, but Webb (1996) and Weiskopf and Laske (1996) argue it is naive to assume such agreement is more than superficial. Gaventa and Cornwall (2001) relate the latter point to criticism of Habermas' notion of the ideal conversation - "Informed debate among competing interests" (70-71) - which assumes an open system with equal opportunities for each person to contribute. They argue this ignores the way that debate is constructed through the operation of power and knowledge, ensuring powerless groups continue to articulate dominant constructions.

I found in the initial phases of my project that the way dialogue was conducted was more important than the achievement of consensus because the very call for participants to talk assumed that some aims were already shared (White 2003b). Later in the project, the dialogue with groups began with questions like *Why are we talking?* and *What should we be talking about?* It allowed attention to be paid to the context of practice in a similar manner to that discussed by Torrance and Pryor, and was more likely to develop social capital.

3. Ownership of Knowledge Production

As discussed above, methodology-as-ethics implies the emancipatory aim that participants come to recognise themselves as legitimate producers of knowledge. The research process should enable participants to identify their own issues, to use their categories and meanings, and to transform theory/knowledge for their own ends (Carr and Kemmis 1986).

Institutions like the police service resist empowerment because they are wedded to the idea of expert knowledge. Edwards and Protheroe (2003) and McNess et al. (2003) give two recent examples of the subtle ways in which the performance discourse in schools blocks empowerment. It suggests movement towards the unhealthy learning environments seen in the police service and described in Chapter 2. The palliatives include reflective practice (e.g. Clarke et al. 2000; McMahon 2000; Hunt 1997; Platzer 1997), and processes like learning about learning (e.g. Askew 2000; Watkins et al. 2000).

I discussed in Chapter 2 the contradiction in police conceptions of learning between the expectation that knowledge will be handed down by experts, and the experience that expert knowledge was largely irrelevant to the work-place. My action focused on highlighting this contradiction and encouraging discovery of the other foundations of practice knowledge. I found that whilst trainers saw the importance of practical experience, their reification of experts prevented them from giving validity to locally produced knowledge. I had to find ways of authorising their perspectives (Cook-Sather 2002).

4. Changing Relationships

McNiff (2001) argues "What we know is shaped by how we know it". Paris and Gesspass (2001) and Gallagher (2000) also see the connection between the quality of learning and the nature of classroom relationships. Gallagher argues that "*Who* is learning precedes *what* is learned" (75), where the 'who' is interpreted in a social sense, "The group, and not the individual, becomes the most important source of social analysis" (74). Developing this point she says, "In other words knowledge has to be made problematic and has to be situated in classroom social relationships that allow for debate and communication" (106).

She describes this view of curriculum as "a work-in-progress" (74) because it is subject to negotiation and capable of transformation by social action. Paris and Gesspass (2001) argue it is naive to expect the researcher teacher to give up her status, but it is equally naive to assume power is located only with her. Acting democratically involves taking risks, trusting oneself, and being self-consciousness of the different results. This is similar to McNiff's (2003) accountability principle described earlier.

Researchers should understand the subtle and unconscious ways in which other participants can be manipulated into the junior side of a relationship. For example, Paris and Gesspass (2001) were disappointed about

how students responded to a greater democracy, "Overall we were struck by how few students saw themselves as active participants in their own learning" (404). They recognised the risks for students and sympathised with them, but still labelled them as 'surface learners'. Evidently their teacher-owned conceptions of "active participation" and "learning" did not square with their democratic aspirations. If the classroom is to be negotiated then the teacher will have to give-up cherished understandings.

Mulholland and Wallace (2003) observed this in their practice as teacher-educators, expecting learners to enter immediately a teacher-owned conception of the world of science. They changed their pedagogical approach by learning to teach students how to overcome the barriers to transition; they still taught science, but it was now located in the socio-historical context of novice teachers learning to be scientists.

CRITICAL RESEARCH IN POLICE CONTEXTS

There are few examples of collaborative research in the context of police training, thus there is no tradition within which my project could be located. However, I summarise here three relevant examples.

(i) Clarke et al. (2000) describe a collaboration between university researchers and police firearms instructors to introduce reflective practice into firearms instruction. A major issue for the researchers was establishing and sustaining the partnership with the instructors. They describe a tension between:

... what the students perceive they need (a police training model), for example '10 steps to follow to be a teacher', and what higher education tutors perceive they need (an education model), to develop the skills and knowledge required for practice now as a firearms instructor but also with the capacity for continuing development.

Clarke et al. (2000: 75)

The aim to introduce reflective practice was absorbed in the problems of relationship building, a mixing of aims and method characteristic of action research (Winter 2002). However, the researchers took an empirical approach to the collection of data, gave a unitary account of what happened, and made prescriptions in the form of generalisations. This conflicts with the validity principles described above and so obscures the authenticity of their report.

(ii) Adlam (1997, 1998, 1999) describes a project to introduce a police management programme, working within a similar practice paradigm to my own. His approach was participative in that he led a team action research project; however, there is some doubt about whether his colleagues saw themselves as participants. He describes how the initial meetings agreed a shared philosophy of education, but there is no sense of negotiation, resistance or disagreement in his report. Indeed, in a later paper (1999) it becomes clear that whilst his own action was "informed and committed", his colleagues had slipped-back into an expert, training delivery mode. I drew parallels between this and the early stages of my own project (White 2003b).

The lack of team collaboration is then reflected in an incomplete negotiation with course delegates. Adlam rationalises his right to continue organising others' learning by replacing references to 'training' with the aim to

'educate'. His power is subtly retained and learners are kept in subordinate positions. Some of his ideas were original and creative and with a different group of people might have been empowering. but it was an invitation to dependency that appealed to police officers' weaknesses as learners. His third paper "We need a night shift" (1999) reports the failure of the programme with the implication that his team needed to work around the clock to make police managers learn. It is a blaming attitude, and indeed Adlam is very critical of cultural attitudes to learning. He plays the role of participant with-an-expert-edge, described above. The language is that of democratic engagement, but personal risk is minimised by blaming the group when things go badly.

Adlam's writing was important to my research, not as a model to follow, but because it helped to expand the understanding of my own problems. It also offered a validation for my perspective on police training and gave reasons for persisting with my approach.

(iii) Finally, Gregory (2000) reports an innovative approach to police cultural change that shares much in common with the paradigm of practice I have described. She acted as university consultant to a force's change strategy aimed at engaging all staff in dialogue about ethical practice. She did not teach ethics, nor facilitate any groups that discussed ethics; rather she fostered the capability of the organisation to run the process.

It is an empowering approach, but there are drawbacks to such peripheral participation. Firstly, there was the danger that without her guidance the relationships between people would reproduce the existing hierarchical ones. Secondly, because she was not a party to the development of the ethical principles, she provides a unitary account of the research. She does not introduce details of the relationships that developed between her and the research sponsors, and others' experiences of the process have the feel of empirical data. I am sceptical that a police organisation could so easily give-up its hierarchical approach, thus, in the absence of a personal involvement in the account, it does not have an authentic feel.

Concluding Comment

Each of these three examples fails one or more of the validity principles I set-out above for a practical educational research paradigm. In particular, none of them deals with the first principle - the personal dialectic - and in so doing they fail to observe the researcher's constitutiveness in the account.

I began this chapter with the question *what kind of educational researcher do I want to be?* I believe the starting point for collaborative research should be the recognition that one has this choice. Understanding how to answer the question requires not only a conceptual understanding of the issues, but an experiential understanding of their lived consequences. The first step is to begin the personal dialectic.

In the next chapter I present myself as a practitioner-researcher working through the practical implications of daring to pose that question.

4 Stories, Biography and Practice

My part in creating meaning

I am a part of all that I have met

Tennyson *from* Ulysees (1965)

We have to use research, fed by that potentially rich mix of data, insights from literature, researcher standpoint and prior knowledge to tell better stories: some stories that can help improve policy and practice, some stories that provide better understanding of aspects of education, and some stories that disrupt the assumptions and thinking of the powerful.

Hodkinson (2004: 24)

INTRODUCTION

It is customary in qualitative research to devote a section at the end of a report to the person of the researcher - a reflexive chapter. It enables the reader to make decisions about the reliability of the evidence brought forward. What is the bias? Where does the researcher influence the material produced? Are the results accounted for by the researcher's unwitting hand, or do they speak for themselves? These are the questions considered by researchers who aim to represent a social reality; but what of the practitioner-researcher who attempts to construct it, in participation with others? Here, reflexivity becomes central to the account. Bias is not something to be factored-out; it is what makes human action reflexive in the first place.

I am a tool for my data-collection; but I am also more than that. I am a part of all that I have met.

I do not present the reader with a biography and a character sketch with which to identify me. That would assume I can be abstracted from the context, and what remains is a generalisable essence presenting more enduring truths. I would be like a brick in a wall, or a girder in a building; take me away and the edifice, though more or less stable, is still identifiable and functional as a wall or a building.

This chapter presents me as a construction of the social context in which I work - but not in a passive, conforming-to-role sort of way. I present the social context as, in its turn, partly constructed by me working from within it. I both create change and am created by it. My analogy for this is the alchemist's understanding of natural philosophy; anything is capable of being transformed into any other thing. Asking which brick, or which girder represents me, is a form of anthropomorphism which emphasises the importance of individual beings rather than human social agency.

My question for the reader concerns the magic of my alchemy. Do you find just a blackened, foul-smelling lump stuck to the bottom of the cauldron? Or are there shadows of movement in the swirls of the mixture and sounds

of people in the hissing and bubbling? Are you expecting me to produce a piece of gold? Or are you bewitched by the magic of just doing alchemy?

I seek to engage you in my meaning-making process. The stories I tell about the course of the research rewrite my biography in a way that justifies my practice to you. I came as a researcher, teacher and learner, and the story I tell about my changing identity is the history of my learning. I became a different person, but now looking back on my reconstructed biography, I was in Derrida's well known phrase, *always already* that person.

I present this chapter as a number of stories about the research which introduce the themes developed in subsequent chapters. I have adapted a form of 'layered text' from Lather (1991), which I first used in an account describing the difficulties accompanying the formation of the core group (White 2003b). The stories investigate my agency from four positions which, following Lather, I have called Realist, Critical, Destabilising and Reflexive. These positions are characterised as follows:

- A realist perspective; this is a factual account that purports to identify the enduring features of a social situation, as if they could be isolated, examined and described out of the context of their occurrence. It does not recognise how participants reflexively create the situation and in particular does not recognise how, in favouring my voice it blames or criticises others.

- A critical perspective; this is an account of relationships highlighting how power and influence interact. It brings in other voices that contradict the conclusions of a realist account. However, in doing so it sets up a dualistic opposition (power/resistance) that purports to structure our understanding of reality.

- A destabilising perspective; this is an account which denies the structuring of reality through straightforward categories. It investigates the contradictions and complexities of simple dualisms. The actor is located on the boundary between these, and new meaning issues from the resulting uncertainties.

- A reflexive perspective; this account investigates how participants transform social situations by reflexively constructing and negotiating meaning. It seeks out the ethical dimension of action and different forms of knowledge and ways of knowing. Meaning is situated and uncertain.

In rereading and rewriting these four layers I discovered they contained their own theory of coherence. They tell my biography as one of increasing insight and awareness of my reflexivity. They say I began as a realist and by degrees learned to understand social situations in more sophisticated ways. They tell how I became a better researcher, teacher and learner. It is difficult to see how a story could be recognised as a story without an inbuilt teleological principle. The *telos* preexists the story. Perhaps the best we can achieve is the recognition that our lives could be told in different ways: and by telling other biographies we can, in participation with others, construct other practices. It demands a constant, vigilant reflexivity.

1. A REALIST PERSPECTIVE

During my research I spent a lot of time meeting with training college managers to discuss quality assurance. My aim was to introduce a curriculum development process to meet such demands. Staff development was understood according to a traditional model of independent assessors sat at the back of classrooms evaluating teaching performance. Alternative conceptions met constant and consistent resistance. Managers wanted "MOTs" for their staff, and trainers expected feedback on their technique. If 'development' implied change it was only as the refinement of teaching style. 'Curriculum' was an unfamiliar word; 'syllabus' was synonymous with 'content', and meant the physical package to be delivered.

I begin this story with a poem I wrote after reviewing my field notes of one such meeting, with Greg, a training manager.

Do I Jangle the Coins in my Pocket?

We need a robust evaluation
In a framework on which to assess us
To polish our skills and teaching technique
And maintain our accredited status

We need to know ...
Do we jangle the coins in our pockets.
Do we use the right coloured pens.
You want some c'rriculum development?
Will you run that by me again?

I want you to validate our content
And check on our *modus* deliv'ry
And do some class observations
And feedback directly to me

So tell me ...
Do they jangle the coins in their pockets.
Do they use the right coloured pens.
You want some c'rriculum development?
Will you run that by me again?

So if I understand you correctly - (*in a fashion*)
[looking back over his notes]
"loose change bla bla red herring, right ...
and the pens are, yeah ...
[face brightens]
"a distraction!"
I can go along with all that.

Just let me know ...
Do I jangle the coins in my pocket.
Do I use the right coloured pen.
You want some c'rriculum development?
Will you run that by me again?

Oh! and let me know for the record ...
(sorry to press this point old chap)
just ... your schedule of staff observations
and that quality assurance crap.

"Is he winding me up?
Sod the coins in your pocket!
Bugger the right coloured pen!
It's *cur*-riculum development.
And it's gone right by you again."

The Stereotype

As I looked through my field notes on this meeting I wanted to laugh; the situation was comical. It had become a joke within the core group that police trainers could only see staff development in terms of classroom observation and feedback aimed at highlighting their annoying habits. From this grew the idea of a stereotypical police trainer who wanted to know "do I jangle the coins in my pocket?", "do I use the right coloured pens on the white-board?", "how is my OHP technique?", and "is my voice monotone?". Their teaching was constructed as a performance (Edwards and Protheroe 2003). If they allowed us a role outside of the classroom then it was no more than researching and disseminating new teaching techniques. Greg fitted the stereotype.

The situation was made funnier because Greg pretended to understand what I was talking about, but his comments and questions back to me indicated he was distorting what I said to fit what he wanted to hear. I could tell him the jangling of coins in his pocket was probably irrelevant, because if students were capable of being distracted there was some deeper problem. He would nod and agree, but it was clear he thought I was still offering to listen-out for the telltale noise. The chorus of the poem became a refrain for the core group.

I wrote the poem whilst in this state of mind. When I reread it, I recall Greg as a "nice but dim" sort of person, and the poem pokes fun at him and others like him. I used phrases and ideas that Greg expressed, particularly those he kept repeating. "Run that by me again" was a euphemism for "I don't understand", and following my re-explanation he would say "I can go along with all that", but still without any understanding. The phrases seemed comical because they represented his unwillingness to say he did not understand.

Greg did not accept my invitation to embark on staff development - in fact he never came back to my office at all! My guess is that he didn't want to repeat the discomfort. It is significant that he was able to avoid coming back because he needed the quality assurance processes to maintain his department's accreditation with Centrex. The terms of the accreditation required staff assessment and the evaluation of the achievement of teaching objectives. My department was meant to support accreditation and indeed we had staff with NVQ assessor qualifications. Greg could satisfy the awarding body that the college had an independent evaluation department and evidently that was enough. He could maintain his accredited status without actually having assessors in the classrooms looking at his staff.

Staff development was not a big issue for him. He knew the question "do I jangle the coins in my pocket" was not really important, but on the other hand he could not conceive of trainer development in any other way. He would

have agreed to a "schedule of staff observations", but it would not have been valued because ultimately it was unnecessary. 'Learning' seems to be as elusive as 'quality assurance'; it is no more real than a tick-in-the-box. It is sufficient to say that we do it.

Behind the Stereotype

The poem portrays a side of me that is clever, powerful and intent on introducing my agenda for change. Greg represents a stereotypical resistance to change. I make him the butt of my joke by selecting those features from a complex social situation that will support that interpretation. So he has to be someone who is more interested in systems than in people; he has to lack vision, to think superficially and to be "not very bright". I reinforce this stereotype by representing it as typical of our organisation; we have paper procedures, like quality assurance, to which lip-service is paid; the organisation is irrational. The poem establishes an us-and-them dualism to provide an easy target for me to criticise. I chose to see the organisation as irrational and its managers as incompetent because it fits the reality I want to write.

How can I change my understanding? How can I make sense of the training manager's position? What is it like for someone who sees staff development in these terms? Would such an approach lead to a better collaboration?

The realist story assumes that Greg and I were participating in a fair and equal discussion, and it failed because he was unable to understand my message. My role is assumed to be the communicator of ideas and Greg's is assumed to be the recipient of them. The fact that Greg never returned suggests he did not see himself in such a passive role; he was excluded from participating by my leadership. The clever and powerful me, does not seem to be a good listener.

This poem led me to think more carefully about how I help to constitute a situation. It was not a reflective piece of writing, but it became part of a reflexive approach. It alerted me to a theme in my research that much of what I have done has been based on a fundamental dualism which constructs the 'other' to occupy the position I will criticise. It also suggested the idea that collaboration focused on peoples' participation in a situation is more likely to lead to mutual understanding.

I had assumed that Greg was "going to have to change" and it was my task to see he did (Mulholland and Wallace 2003). I needed to be more relaxed about starting from others' understanding rather than feeling I had to impose my own. I think it is a police cultural trait. We all need to take it a lot less seriously because we are all realists at heart.

I offer this new chorus:

Singing, [jazz-blues style]...
Dem coins, dem coins in ma pocket, yeahh
I don't got me no right colour pen, man-oh-man,
Let's do that cric'lum d'elopment, whoa
We' gonna run all over it then.
[fades out]
Hey you got some coins?
Zat my pen?
Man, I love that cric'lum d'elopment.

2. A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

My critical perspective begins where the realist one finished - with the criticism and blaming of others who are "going to have to change". I call it a critical perspective because it considers the power relationships that are setup by the kind of dualistic representation of reality I have illustrated. Here I examine the consequences in terms of the personal relationships that are created. I conclude the section by representing it in metaphorical form - the Hole in the Wall Gang - in which form it serves as an updated *critical* theory.

Cold Comfort Trainers

I was asked to speak to a group of police tutors about the accreditation of their work through an NVQ award. I was not keen on accepting the offer because I had little enthusiasm for the idea, but it was a request I had no reasonable grounds for refusing. The focus of this next story is the conflicting feelings I had about how to approach the task, and the way this impinged on the lives of the two trainers involved (Martin and Lauren).

I did not want to spend time with the group unless it was worthwhile. One way of giving value to the subject was to share an understanding of the difficulties of assessment and enable the group to evaluate the NVQ idea themselves. I was aware that I had been invited just to give information, but I saw my planned intervention as educational.

There is something judgemental about the last sentence. I knew that Martin and Lauren would have setup their classroom in a hierarchical way, and that their pedagogical approach would be expert information giving. I was planning to exceed my remit in a way that was implicitly critical of them. I was going to show them how to do it properly.

At the time I was barely aware of the hidden motive. I am experienced at this kind of facilitative work but still have to think it through. The desire to do it well was barely distinguishable from the desire to show Martin and Lauren how to do it well. There are two distinct motivations, one being positive and educational, the other negative and critical and they are both important in understanding my agency.

What I saw upon entering the classroom was far worse than I had expected. Martin and Lauren were at the front, isolated from the group and framed by the technical tools of their trade (the white board, OHP etc.). Try to visualise

one of those TV news pictures of a government minister sitting in a group of teenagers (or drug addicts, or school-aged mothers etc.) and you are getting close to the picture. The minister is *in* the circle of listeners, but out of it; on a level with the listeners but superior. There is a pretence at equality, but the dependent relationship is subtly maintained. But that doesn't quite catch it - imagine the minister's fright when the curtain on this passive photo shoot is drawn back to reveal an impassive wall of unyielding lobbyists.

Martin and Lauren were sat so closely together I thought of them as holding hands like the babes-in-the-wood, shaking at the howling of wolves. Martin was speaking and Lauren sitting silently - close to him, supporting him. It seemed just so inappropriate! What dangers in the group had forced them to feel the need to huddle together like that?

Cold Comfort Trainers

Like rabbits in headlights before the majority
Or babes-in-the-wood lost in minority
Confidence is bogus
Survival the focus
The last resort to stand on authority.

I wrote 'Cold Comfort Trainers' in my head during the session; it is reminiscent of some themes in my Realist Story. On my return from the classroom I shared it with my core group colleagues Luke and Graham, and this narrative continues in the context of them as participants in the sense-making. I have indented the classroom narrative to distinguish it from the core group's discussion.

Lauren welcomed me and indicated to a spare chair adjacent to the door - evidently I was to wheel it over and join their outpost at the front of the class. I recoiled from the thought. I spotted a vacant chair on one end of the 'horseshoe' of students and said to Lauren that, if she didn't mind, I'd sit there.

Luke was amused. He is always keen to point out how, in pursuing my democratic agenda, I act in very powerful ways. He suggested I was already breaking Martin and Lauren's classroom norms and threatening the truce they had established with the students. He asked me how I felt and I replied "comfortable, happy, confident"; "I had the confidence to take control of the group". Luke suggested I "felt warm and fluffy" about "re-engineering" their classroom.

I felt embarrassed and inclined to hide the truth. I could have laughed it off (cold comfort trainers ha ha!) and rationalised my actions (educational intervention bravo!). However, I tried instead to surface my thoughts and feelings at the time - the sorts of things of which one is only half aware. One of my intentions was to take control of the group and another was to show Martin and Lauren how to get a group to participate. I also felt a self confidence connected to an awareness of my status; I was more senior to them, far more experienced and more knowledgeable

- and I was showing how effortlessly I could undermine their norms and establish my own.

I might have felt ashamed but I was aware, as I revealed it to Luke and Graham, that no one of these things defines me or my practice. I am all of them and others besides. Complex and straightforward. Caring and selfish. Enabling and manipulative. Educational and self-aggrandizing.

While Martin finished talking I planned my next moves. The group were spread out in a horseshoe shape, with their chairs against the walls of the room. I decided to begin by drawing them into a circle. It would bring Martin, Lauren and I into a line and to break-up this *bloc* I would swap places with a student opposite. When Martin handed over to me I made the first change. There was then a pause for a comfort break.

Martin and Lauren immediately wanted to talk about the changes I had made. There was no unfriendliness or animosity and no questions. They wanted to explain themselves. Lauren said "I thought you would do that when you sat over there". She said it knowingly, identifying herself with my changes because she had forecast them. Martin told me that they start the week in a circle, but the students always break it up by retreating backwards.

Luke suggested my changes were a direct challenge to the two trainers - a criticism even. He described it as "walking in and burning down their house of cards".

My actions forced them to feel they had to justify their practice. Were they feeling blamed? Was there an implicit demand that they - the accused - explain themselves?

Perhaps. However, there are other perspectives on the situation. I felt a strong sense of risk-taking in changing the shape of the classroom. I was challenging the norms established by the rest of the group - the majority of the people in the room. They had cooperated with the trainers over the establishment of roles and the demarcation of classroom space. I felt nervous about this. I knew I was making things difficult for myself; it would have been far easier and safer to adopt their norms and stand at the front and talk for 20 minutes. But I felt an inner confidence in making this challenge; it was a feeling that it would be difficult, but worthwhile - I would get a better result for the group and would be likely to learn something myself.

The group reconvened and I swapped places (my second planned change). The group dynamics already felt very different, but there was still an expectation that I would establish my authority. I felt nervous. I introduced myself - the person rather than the organisational figure - and then shared with them how I was feeling and why (nervous - strange group - not sure how this would go etc.). Showing vulnerability was a risky strategy that would have contrasted with the omniscience of Martin and Lauren. By this time I was working hard in

my facilitator role and I suspect that making my plan work was now the only motivation - I had no time to show-off.

Other aspects of my strategy probably sat uneasily with Martin and Lauren. I worked from the experience and understanding of the group, and enabled the sharing of that amongst them. Where I did give information I sought feedback on how they were making sense of it, not to check understanding but to gauge what work they were doing with it. I wrote in my field notes that "it was full of a sense of my own fallibility".

I make these points to illustrate how I continued to break the norms of this group. I was always aware this was not how Martin and Lauren would behave, but it would be wrong to say I was motivated only by a need to make a point to them. On the other hand, whilst I adopted good practice for working with adults, it would be wrong to say I was not *showing them how to do it*.

Luke continued to tease me about my concern with power. I had indeed acted very powerfully toward the trainers, but how was I experienced by the students? It was a 45 minute session in which they were given an opportunity to express their ideas without being evaluated by a group leader. I presented myself as human and fallible, and I showed a respect for them by listening carefully to what they said. When I asked a question it was because I wanted to know the answer, rather than because I wanted to know if they knew the answer. To the students I must have seemed a very different kind of figure to Martin and Lauren.

Should I have done it or not? And if I should, then does it matter that some of my intentions were dishonourable?

The Hole-in-the-Wall Gang

Am I experienced as some kind of educational bandit who wreaks havoc in the ordered lives of unsuspecting trainers and students?

Kushner (1994) used the metaphor of the 'hole-in-the-wall gang' to describe the situation of change agents in the police service. He had been involved in the Stage 2 Review of probationer training (MacDonald et al. 1987) that had introduced adult education methods into police training. By 1994 police managers had seen enough cultural reform, and the first signs of a backlash were evident - a return to traditional, hierarchical pedagogies. Kushner was optimistic; he aimed to stiffen resolve to maintain the reforms.

His paper is full of combative metaphors; the title "In defence of module four" heralds what he sees as the "epic struggles" for peoples' visions of the future of policing. One section, titled "Indians and Outlaws" makes two points. The first is that innovation can be likened to the dust cloud in the distance that might indicate the cavalry coming to the rescue, but could equally be the hostile Indians. The customer-focused reforms of new public management might present the "less friendly aspects of innovation" that would "undermine the independent professional judgement of practitioners".

Kushner's second point is that, in an unfavourable or hostile environment, the innovators "go underground", working at their "new and creative practices" from behind a facade of compliance. He continues "Innovation - the real practice-based innovation - happens for hole-in-the-wall gangs. The system does not see them and fails to learn from them" (237). He concludes his paper "We may be left with little learning from the ... experiments other than that which remains hidden away in those hole-in-the-wall gangs who still dare to preach independence of the police mind" (241).

I produced an alternative sign for our office which, as a joke, hung for a few days on our door. It was the office of the Hole-in-the-Wall Gang - "staffed only by outlaws: murderers of convention, wreckers of safe thinking, robbers of fig leaves and strippers-away of wall paper, in short, charlatans, fraudsters and psychologists who will 'mess with your head'." Luke commented on the sign that perhaps I "like it that way", i.e. I like to think of myself as an outlaw. It was said as a joke, but perhaps it contains a germ of truth. Knowing Luke better now, I think it is also something that he likes; and having just reread Kushner's paper, I wonder whether he is also an outlaw at heart.

Does the metaphor help me understand how I story my practice? If I see myself as an outlaw, is that how my practice becomes constructed? Do others come to see me as an outlaw because of how I portray myself? If the answers to any of these questions is even a tentative "yes" it highlights the potential barriers between my vision of staff development and how the other trainers see their practices. Did I ride into Martin and Lauren's town, rob the bank, shoot the sheriff, and then disappear back into the canyon?

Kushner argues it is difficult to tell the difference between the real innovators and those proposing mere process changes. The cavalry are mistaken for the Indians as we react to the appearance of the dust cloud. I suspect the situation is more complex than this because it assumes a simple relationship between cavalry and Indians, and good and bad. For many people the real innovators may be far scarier, just because they are proposing genuine change. If we let the cavalry build their fort, what will be the consequences? What will we lose? What freedoms will we have to trade-off? The 'good old days' were reassuring because the enemy (the Indians) were always identifiable - you knew who you had to fight. The threat of change reinforces those practices that are constructed as combative dualisms; we appear to change but just maintain an uncritical status quo.

The Hole in the Wall Gang

The hole in the wall gang rode
into town and demanded
their tribute. The debt was owed
and payment duly rendered.
This was the deal; insurance
from threat of hostile invasion;
and in return, grateful thanks
and monetary compensation.

But the gang was feared
and hated by the people,
whose tribute was offered
with counterfeit smile
and received sadly
by the gang who valued
gratitude given freely,
more than gifts unwanted.

In town the penny dropped;
"Give the booty - keep the loot!"
"Silence makes the tribute tainted;
the money is no substitute."
Outlaws rued their weakness -
others' regard is not a given;
"But friends, take solace ...
at least we fleeced them rotten!"

In truth the people needed
help from hardships met;
but the outcasts were cursed -
misfortune had a ready target.
Bad luck sustained them - "Blame
it on the gang and feel better
because *we* won the game -
they took only tainted succour".

And when a dust cloud
swarmed the far horizon,
doors slammed and canyon closed.
People feared the hostile Indian
with licence to change their state.
But it's cavalry the gang reckon,
bailiffs come to terminate
their lease on the canyon.

Later,
when the threat
retreated, the relieved deceivers
emerged to prosecute their racket.

In this poem I have represented the idea of the hole-in-the-wall gang as a form of protection racket (Berne 1975; English 1971, 1975; White 2000); the defenceless townspeople pay "insurance money" to the marauding outlaws, who in return ensure the town is not attacked. Whilst it is called "insurance", all the parties know it is a method of extortion, couched in the language of legitimacy.

But there is a hidden, double deception going on. The outlaws are outsiders who want to be on the inside -

to be accepted by the townspeople. That is their real need. They take the cash as a substitute for their real needs; they are not accepted, so they ensure they can hurt the townspeople before they go. It is a natural defence mechanism. The gang needs the townspeople to reinforce their belief that they will always be outcasts.

The other side of the deception is that the townspeople are not the meek defenceless types they seem. They need the gang as much as the gang needs them. Life is hard and they do not prosper; the gang provides the object for their community hatred. As long as the gang continues to extort money they can continue to be blamed for the town's misfortune. Their real need is for help to get out of their unproductive lives; their defence mechanism is to pretend to accept the help of the gang. They withhold their regard and their pleasure at seeing the anger of the gang is the substitute for that real need.

The racket is thus a symbiotic relationship in which both sides are afraid of being rejected if they express their real needs, and so instead they take the substitute payments from each other.

And what of the dust cloud? This is Kushner's change on the horizon; is it the cavalry (helpful change), or is it the Indians (unhelpful change)? The fact is that it doesn't matter who is under the dust cloud; either way, change could disrupt the comfortable racket the two sides have setup. They both have a psychological investment in not changing; if they give up the racket they risk losing a secure source of psychological support. Life may be unpleasant, but 'better the devil you know'.

Applying the metaphor to my situation, the racket is about "help". The trainers find their work unfulfilling because they have to cope with classes of reluctant students. They ask for help and pretend they are going to accept it. The hole-in-the-wall gang offer help and pretend they are going to give it. Each side extracts a substitute payment however, the trainers blame the gang for not helping and the gang blame the trainers for not wanting to change. The blaming relationship is unproductive, but it is a safer source of support than risking trust in each other. I can play the role of bandit - as I did with Greg, and with Martin and Lauren, or I can try to act more collaboratively. However, the social dynamics of the situation ensure the tendency to act collaboratively is subdued.

3. A DESTABILISING PERSPECTIVE

This story is destabilising in the sense that it upsets the simple dualisms contained in the metaphors of the Realist and Critical stories. They are based on a contrast between what we have now and what we could have, *if only it weren't for the other people*. And *the other people* are what we must fight in order to establish something new. The metaphor of the hole-in-the-wall gang shows how the dualistic thinking results in a particular type of action in the world. In this story I want to show how undermining such divisive thinking can suggest different forms of action.

This perspective shows another side of me. Here I treat action-in-the-world as concerned with relationships,

and I illustrate it through the relationships between the core group members. On the surface we appeared to collaborate well, but the harmony is a manifestation or symptom of much more complex aspects of our relationship. To call it 'collaboration' is to apply an external, even theoretical, concept to our context; I prefer to examine the subtleties of our relationship and to call that, for want of a different word, 'collaboration'.

The material for the story is taken from a period when we actively examined the core group relationships.

The history of our group

I was influenced by a passage from Lave and Wenger (1996) suggesting that learning can be thought of as the production of people; or put differently, the history of persons will inevitably "focus on processes of learning" (146). I felt the connection between people, learning and history was an idea worth using to analyse what had happened for the core group. I used a writing methodology inspired by the notion of an "investigative imagination" (Winter et al. 1999) in the form of plain-verse. Standard prose writing is restricted by rational processes of sentence formation employing established rituals of thought. My methodology accesses creative modes of thought that provide different perspectives and ideas with intuitive or affective links rather than rational ones.

The method begins with a seed idea and then proceeds like brainstorming. Ideas tumble-out, or are chained together, or spark-off in new directions. There is a rapid transfer to paper because of the freedom from constructing rational sentences. The writing develops a rhythm of its own; line length depends on the emerging ideas and verse breaks are like a mental pause for breath. Thought can be quickly refocused by mentally repeating the seed idea, and when the ideas seem to be exhausted the process is stopped. Important themes in the writing can be used as seed ideas for new investigations or they can be subjected to more rational modes of analysis.

The following excerpts were seeded by the idea that our core group's learning is recorded in its history.

The history of our group is the story of what we have learned
We don't always agree - we argue a lot
We found that we argued as an excuse -
An excuse for not thinking about each other
The story of our group is about learning to care for each other
We learned to say words like *care*
To know that those were the feelings we had
But we still argue - and after a bit
We remind ourselves we've stopped thinking of each other

It is interesting to note that the first idea to be produced is not about our successful collaboration, but about the arguments and disagreement. The disputes are mitigated by our learning that they are "an excuse for not thinking about each other", and that the real learning was not the rational resolution of disagreement but recognising that, *as an alternative*, we could care for each other.

This next extract explores "the arguments":

There are things I cannot say, but then
the time comes and I find a way
If I don't say it now it's because it's
not important. But when we work
on the same thing it's easy to
say and to share my thoughts
And when I'm stressed, or you,
it's harder to share. I argue
but it's about me not about you

Here I write that the arguments occur in stressful situations when communication between us has become difficult. The verse recalls the many times we have disagreed over a course of action precipitating long, rational discussions that were inevitably unproductive and unsatisfying to each of us. It suggests the disagreement was substituting for concerns buried at an emotional level and which we felt unable to express. They are personal coping strategies that are "about me not about you", rather than disagreements about substance. When the real issues are addressed, the original subject of disagreement seems irrelevant.

For example, in a conversation with Luke and a new training manager I talked about staff development as a group process. Luke interrupted and said "that's been tried before". I interpreted this as pointing out how difficult it would be, but in discussing it later Luke admitted he had intended it as "a warning shot across my bows". As soon as I mentioned the word 'groups' he "had a strong negative reaction" to me, and began to "buildup to squashing the idea ... you really pushed my buttons". He reflected on this emotional reaction and realised the intellectual issue had become an outlet for his resistance to my personal power (see White 2003b). Once he had freed the idea from its association with me he could see the virtues of a group process.

This extract sums up the nature of what the group learned:

Things go well and they go badly
But I get strength from you
Our history is learning these
things. Living together is not
easy, but it works because
we will share this and
know that it is the story
of how we have learned

This shows a contrast between the outcomes of our work (the results that may be good or bad) and our learning (the sharing and living together). Our group history is about the development of relationships rather than the performance of tasks. It is not a collaboration over the achievement of an objective, but rather learning to live with a relationship that oscillated between argument and sharing. 'Collaboration' was a *quality* of the group's relationship, rather than an outcome of it.

Perhaps the important element of the collaboration was that we took responsibility for group functioning - if the relationship went awry, then we talked about it. Luke and I often shared our personal development with each other. I learned a lot about his past and found in some respects we are very alike. We both joined the organisation looking for structure to our lives, but neither of us is motivated by the control over others that promotion brings. But neither are we passive observers; to use Luke's favourite metaphor, we both want to "enter the cave and shake a stick at the bear". Had we both joined the organisation so that ultimately we could fight it and feel like outsiders?

I understand Luke through my understanding of myself. I posed the rhetorical question in one verse "Are you and I like an old married couple?". I understand Graham less well, and he makes only a small appearance in the verses of "the history of our group":

And Graham looks on quietly
as the senior partners do
what senior partners do.

There are things Graham does not share with Luke and myself, for example he does not feel the need to resist the organisation, and he stands back from the disagreements that develop between Luke and myself. On the other hand he often says he has learned more in the time he has participated in the core group than in any other period of his life. So the collaboration has been important for him too, even though his participation in the process has been of a different kind.

Our collaboration does not look like a technique-led methodology. There is no set of instructions to follow. It was not a constant state, and the experience was different for different people. It was not enough to want to collaborate; there had to be a preparedness to learn how to do it. It entailed learning about one's effect on others and sharing one's own experience of others with them. Lave and Wenger (1996) argue that "learning involves the construction of identities" (147). Have we constructed new identities for ourselves? Does the collaborator have a different identity? A new image of self?

A Dialogue in Verse

I shared my thoughts on our group history with the others. Graham took it away thoughtfully and Luke responded almost immediately in the form of a poem. I reproduce it here with his permission.

Luke's Poem

Today's certainty
a brand new truth
carefully crafted
bright in its youth
hanging and spinning
glittering bright,
a shining target for
this dark armoured knight.

This dark knight has
nothing so clean.
No ideas so bright
that they shine like dreams.
So a target it is and
one I'll not miss,
sending it spinning back
into the mist.

Luke explained how he was the "dark knight" dwelling in a misty swamp of uncertainty (like Schon's 1991 "swampy lowlands"). The knight believes there is only complexity in the world; nothing can be seen clearly and we must protect ourselves from false certainties. Then I appear with my new idea "bright in its youth". The knight sees only certainty and his reaction is to attack it and "send it spinning back". I suggested his metaphor was self-contradictory. The knight has a clarity of vision and a sureness of purpose amounting to certainty of the uncertainty.

The "dark armoured knight" is like the characters from my Realist and Critical stories who construct their practice as a fight against others. I suggested to Luke there was some significance in this; why for example had he not seen himself as a scholar or teacher who examined the "carefully crafted" certainty ("I'm not a scholar"); or little red riding hood, lost in the wood, curiously investigating this "glittering" truth. Luke objected and explained the reason for the "knight" reference was far more prosaic - it happened to rhyme with "bright". I am unconvinced.

My story moves next to a group problem solving day when we explored the staff development issue through a variety of unfamiliar media. Several exercises involved painting pictures, and two of our paintings started a particular train of thought for me.

The first picture was mine, painted in response to the question "what is getting in the way?" I painted a barred cell at the bottom of the sheet and at the top, on a hill in the distance, a village based on a vague memory of Winkleigh (Devon). I had a problem connecting the two halves of the picture. I toyed with the idea of a winding road up to the village, but it felt too clichéd. The problem was partly one of colour; the foreground was rich dark greens and Winkleigh was golden orange, like a village bathed in evening sunlight. It was a picture of two halves and I could not connect them. I had painted it spontaneously, although I was aware of the symbolic contrast between the prison cell and an ideal to be strived-for.

The second picture was one of Luke's - his response to the question "what is the solution?" He painted a road winding through a landscape and disappearing up a hill into a rising sun.

We discussed the paintings afterwards. I suggested Winkleigh was like heaven sitting in the clouds, as it might be viewed through a barred window in the cell. I had in mind the renaissance religious paintings depicting the kingdom of God floating on clouds above the earth. I felt the significance of the picture was my inability to connect the two parts; it represented the unattainability of the ideal.

Luke described his picture as a journey along "the rocky road" full of obstructions and difficulties. With care and perseverance one negotiated it and, in time, arrived at the hoped-for solution. Luke's painting was a journey-metaphor that paired well with my Winkleigh picture. I had painted the start of the journey and the destination, whilst Luke had represented the virtuous struggle between the two. However, my thinking rebelled against the idea that the two could be connected. The Winkleigh picture reminded me of childrens' paintings of green land and blue sky, and in between an area of white where people lived their lives. Conceptually, the land and the sky are irreconcilable.

In a moment of clarity I argued we needed to stop using the journeying, holy grail and fight-them-on-the-way metaphors; and to re-frame our problem with new metaphors that did not reproduce all the old behaviours. I later set these ideas into a poem:

Winkleigh Village Seen From a Distance

I painted the future (in Rowney acrylics)
as Winkleigh village seen from a distance.
I named it as a joke, I can't tell you why -
houses on a hill, hunched around a spire;
a memory, a dream of something desirable?
Metaphor. Cliché. Or cheesy symbol?

Winkleigh is at the top of the picture
mimicking heaven in a renaissance master.
Cloud city - an insubstantial promise,
and below, Down Town - grounded but hopeless.
The Kingdom of God defying gravity;
deliverance and Winkleigh inviting levity.

I want to join up the two parts
with a stair-roll of Axminster carpet,
but I just can't see the colour gradient
that would do it. They're *too* different.
So I left it blank white as children do;
a naive green and an irreconcilable blue.

IT is the land of promise;
Never Never Land because
you'll never get there; the jackpot
that *could be you* - not;
thinking "if only they would ..."
but only ever meaning *should*.

"Strive for heaven" demands the holy scripture
of the gullible Man in the Winkleigh picture;
minding the potholes in the lane,
the road blocks, the highway men.
"What matters is the journey not the destination" -
"Three cheers for the virtuous struggle". Again. Again.

But why do cities hang in the air when cities don't?
If your arm can't reach, then your arm won't!
Poles are apart and opposites oppose,
and the road to nowhere's still a road.
When you're always going you never get there;
So stop kidding yourself and paint a different picture.

For me, the important line in the poem was the last one; the appeal for new metaphors that would story our practice as something other than a fight against evil or a journey towards something better. I shared this poem with Graham and Luke. Once more Luke was moved to respond, interpreting my criticism of the journey metaphor as a denial of the need to strive to achieve. His reply, also in verse, focused on the prison cell in my picture. I was characterised as a prisoner unable to pursue the dream of something better - a more literal interpretation of the metaphors. I am suggesting life is a prison in the sense that we are constrained by our interaction with social contexts. We don't free ourselves by striving for something unattainable, but by changing the way we understand our relationship with social situations. Somehow we had once more got into an argument. I emailed a reply to Luke:

You'll Always Want to Argue Back

I bared my soul (I've learned the knack)
And, Bloody Hell! he argued back.

Woe is me, educational researcher
Scribbler, scratcher, philosophical hack
Whatever I write, it doesn't matter
You'll always want to argue back.

But have you pondered this Dark Knight,
That armour while travelling's a bind,
You want to hit the rocky road, right?
You'll have to leave the swamp behind.

You say you'll take another tack
Yeah! - but I know ...
You'll always want to argue back.

I thought this verse would do the trick - point out to him the contradictions in his arguments. In particular I was pointing out that *he* always wants to argue back.

Our dialogue in verse was being conducted at a cognitive level. We were both hooked on the question, *what is the other saying*, rather than, *why is he saying it?* Luke emailed me two more poems, one reaffirming his commitment to the fighting metaphor and the other to the journeying metaphor. It was following these replies that

I realised it was not just Luke who was "arguing back", it was the dynamic the two of us participated in.

My final poem in the series was an act of contrition and an admission that whatever I had said of him was equally applicable to me. We are playing cricket; I'll keep bowling balls at him, and he'll keep hitting them back at me. I know Luke because I assume he is like me.

Cricket

I chucked down a quick one
that spat and sped straight on;
you stopped it in the block-hole
by your feet.
So I tossed up a sitter
- out the back of the hand!!
I'm no quitter;
are you? Nope.
It tripped across
the boundary rope.

The ultimate eponym for the journey metaphor is the Odyssey. In his poem *Ulysees* (the Roman name for Odysseus), Tennyson (1965) presents us with an insight to the traveller's psyche. The ageing king has been returned home for three years and is unable to find peace. "I cannot rest from travel" he says "I will drink / life to the lees"; this is not a lament about having to abandon his home once more, his sadness is in staying not in leaving. He appears to us a man who is out of his place and time, he "*will* drink life", and that cannot be done at home. His value system is shaped by a will "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield".

Tennyson interprets 'journeying' as a form of heroism and he contrasts it with 'rest' as stagnation, "This still hearth, among these barren crags". The journey is the metaphor for fighting and struggling, "one equal temper of heroic hearts" who "drunk delight of battle"; and 'fighting' and 'struggling' are virtues, "How dull it is to pause, to make an end, / to rust unburnished, not to shine in use!"

In my late teens this poem was a favourite of mine, and I can still recite parts by heart. I was attracted by the romantic idealism of a world made less complex by defining it as something to be struggled against; and its corollary, the simplistic valuing of people according to their ability to resist. Those who, like Ulysees' son Telemachus, remain "centred in the sphere / of common duties" do not rate alongside the "unbecoming men that strove with gods." In this metaphor the work that is valued is to "seek a newer world" and "To sail beyond the sunset". It contrasts with the mundane work of lesser people, whose task is "by slow prudence to make mild / a rugged people, and thro' soft degrees / subdue them to the useful and the good."

The journeying metaphor is reductionist. Social reality is made less complex by forcing onto it a dualistic order. There is a dearth of categories to represent qualities like risk-taking, work, rest and virtue. Journeying is ultimately a sad and lonely existence. I am reminded of my question to Luke when he first wrote his poem about the "Dark

Knight"; Why not a scholar? Or teacher? Or child? Is the "slow prudence" of Telemachus the different picture I want to paint?

4. A REFLEXIVE PERSPECTIVE

From this perspective I consider what the "different picture" might look like. The scholar, the teacher and the child all lack status when compared with the Dark Knight. Changing our metaphors has to be more than an intellectual exercise, it entails giving-up our attachment to that status by learning to value different things and to live in different ways. In this story I make connections between biography and practice - I see my practice as a teacher reflected in my practice as a researcher, and both are the biography I want to tell about my life.

The reflexive perspective shows me in the process of transformation. Learning is itself a transformation; as I learn about my practice through researching it, both my practice is changed and I, as a person, am transformed. I transform myself in the sense that I begin to write a new biography - a different story that justifies a new person.

Unpicking the Metaphors

I begin this section with an extract from a piece of writing developed using the methodology described above, and seeded using the line from *Ulysees* with which I headed this chapter: "I am a part of all that I have met."

I've been doing this research for two years
I know I have done some 'finding-out',
but in the main, I thought I had worked
with others to change things. So it came as
a bit of a shock when I realised the
story of this research is a story about me.

I have been changing throughout, if only
because I am becoming an educational researcher
and replacing my old identity of police trainer.
Taking a new identity - that's what it is. I'm not
just learning a new set of skills, or, even worse
just gaining a qualification. I've had to learn
to think differently about the things I do.
My relationship with the world has altered.
I understand it differently now. It carries
different meanings. I give me, and my practice
new understanding. I've begun doing some
very different things. It's not just about a new
set of books - a new knowledge. Living that
new knowledge means living differently.

And that has meant telling a different story
about me. What is the story I used
to tell? It was the mountaineer; the biker;
retirement to France. Even to think of some
of these things now feels strange.
They are the parts of my biography that I tell
differently. I remember now, after finishing
university the first time, I liked the idea of
"Dr. White". My old Uni had the motto
"Do Different" - and I do. That's me! Coincidence?

A sign of things to come? Or do I remember it because that's the way I want to tell it now?

I tell a story that links my past to the present as it is for me now. And the present is represented in the things I do - my practice. I story myself as I story my practice. I am my practice. I am my story.

The things I have done in this research are not disassociated from me. They are my effort to rewrite my practice. I find a story of my past to justify the new things I do. Whether an initiative goes well or not, it has to be written in. It has to be rationalised to the biography I am writing - and vice versa.

I don't do things because they are right, or logical, or rational, or because they are good methodology. I do them because that is the practice I have storied. Where I have encountered difficulties, the story - and so my practice - has been changing. No wonder that doing a PhD is so traumatic; you've got to rewrite your biography, and your practice.

This next short extract picks-up the theme of "the story" as central to the understanding of self. The seed was the refrain "a story is a wonderful lie".

A story is a wonderful lie.
What do we conceal when we tell a story?
Which story do we tell - how do we choose?
A story is the proof for the self I am presenting.
Do I have as many stories as I have selves?
What are my favourite stories - why do I tell these?

When I am telling a story, what do you see?
Do you share in the story? Perhaps you start to tell your own; we tell our stories to each other - it's a social act; we recognise each other by going through this ritual.
Sometimes, do I perform my stories rather than telling them? Do I tell my story in the way I behave; is it implicit in my actions?

The stories we tell about ourselves are produced by a complex mixture of influences. If I tell you about my practice there is a sense in which I do it in order to justify what I do. I cannot just "tell you what happened", because it is my practice that makes coherent the idea of things happening. If my aim is to justify something to you, then I have to story a practice that you will find justifiable. The listener plays an integral part in constructing the story. Finally, I cannot justify something to you that I have not first justified to myself; so my story must also make sense of myself as a person existing through time. In this way, practices can be seen as historically produced, socially constructed and personally significant.

As an example of this I want to use the tragedy of King Lear (Shakespeare 1943), and the story he tells about himself - the elderly father with three loving daughters who will support him through old age. He plays a game with them *How much do you love me?* to justify the pretence of his generosity in dividing-up the kingdom. His favourite, Cordelia, refuses to participate in that story (I.I: 88-97):

Lear: ... What can you say to draw
 A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.
Cordelia: Nothing, my Lord.
Lear: Nothing?
Cordelia: Nothing.
Lear: Nothing will come of nothing. Speak again.
Cordelia: Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
 My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty
 According to my bond; no more no less.
Lear: How, how, Cordelia! mend your speech a little,
 Lest you may mar your fortunes.

Lear's expectations of his daughters flow from the story he is telling about his 'practice' as a parent (and as a king). He expects they will 'tell' him their love because such expression represents their acceptance of his story about himself. However, Cordelia wants to negotiate with Lear over the story he has prepared "[Aside] ... I am sure, my love's / More richer than my tongue." He adopts a new kingly practice of travelling between his daughters' households with his knights - the story of a retired monarch who has given up the cares of state and the attendant possessions, though retaining "The name and all the addition to a king."

The result is not the biography of a good father that he expected, but rather the bitter realisation "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is / To have a thankless child." In time his other two daughters show they too do not accept this story and Lear is left homeless and without supporters. Lear cannot tell a story about himself that is not socially negotiated with others, and so the biography with which he dies is the tragedy we know well: "A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all! / I might have sav'd her; now she's gone for ever!".

Elaine Feinstein's play *Lear's Daughters* provides a fascinating insight into the social construction of this family's stories. She depicts the three women produced as adults through a childhood of victimisation and abuse; it makes Lear's later rewriting of his own biography - the loving father - more piquant. There is a balance of power to be considered when we decide how to story our practices; ignoring the contribution of other participants in a relationship will be physically, mentally or socially manipulative.

In another piece of writing (White 2003a) I argued that "the present" interrupts the telling of our stories about ourselves, producing the paradox that the present is located in the past. But perhaps this is not quite right, the interruptions are more like clues to the sort of story we should be telling. We cannot tell any story we choose, it has to fit the social context. A story that is not adapted to the situation seems to be the story of a madman, like

Lear. Stories, biographies and practice are linked. We write our stories to justify what the social context will allow us to believe.

I can see the course of my research in this way. I have been learning a new practice, it called for a new biography, and so I started to tell new stories about myself. The stories I write are constantly interrupted by the social context and become modified until I have a set that will serve me well as a source of support in each of the situations I am likely to meet.

A Slow Prudence

I began questioning my relationship with research practice in an earlier piece of writing (White 2003b) where I examined my drive to analyse data into its common meaningful parts. The visual metaphor is sorting data into boxes and investigating the relationships between categories. It is generally accepted there are no theory-free data, which means that theory which is deduced from the data is as unreflective as theory which is imposed on it. Data have their own theories of coherence, and it is this coherence that allows something to be recognised as a piece of data in the first place (Kushner 2000). Scientific tools for data collection and analysis are examples of theories of coherence. The materials I have presented in this chapter gain their coherence through my biography and my practice, and these are produced through reflexive interaction with the social context.

I contrasted the data-in-boxes paradigm with speculation about a less ordered approach - the possibility of just stuffing the research data into a plastic bag - "If the plastic bag were a research metaphor what would it represent?" (White 2003b: 161). Certainly it would be to paint a different picture! This final section examines what the metaphor of the plastic bag can add to a theory of coherence for practitioner-research.

I began by imagining myself taking things out of the plastic bag. The contents must have a meaning for me, or I would not have collected them. I thought of the 'bag lady', an itinerant wanderer who moves from town to town carrying her possessions in plastic bags. But, what do I mean by "her possessions"? Her bags are not packed like a walker's rucksack - map and compass, waterproofs, first-aid kit, survival bag - tick tick tick, all present and correct. That is just a list of things, utilitarian, like the contents of a cutlery drawer. It does not answer the question "Why *those* possessions? What do they mean to her?"

I saw the bag-lady as carrying her life in a plastic bag, her souvenirs like photographs for example. But I also imagined her as a collector of things, all kinds of rubbish that others have discarded and she has collected. Each thing she collects has meaning for her; today's newspaper may have a different meaning to an old photograph, but they are both souvenirs of her life. They take their coherence from the value she gives them. Her life is told through the things she collects.

Because she is a collector, her possessions must at some time have meant something to other people, they carry

the imprint of others' lives and what they valued. The imprint of the original owner is mediated through the story the bag-lady is telling about her life. The contents of her bags tell us about the lives of other people through her understanding of her life. And as we examine those artefacts, the imprint of hers and others' lives is mediated through our own biography.

Can I look upon this thesis as a plastic bag full of valued things? When I go through the contents with you and explain what others once valued, am I telling you what I value now? Is my life told in the contents of my plastic bag? Is there a theory of coherence to be found in the shared values? The 'bag lady' is not such an elegant metaphor as Ken Gale's (2002) flaneur(euse), but neither is it the heroic figure criticised by Stronach (2003). I continued playing with the metaphor of the bag lady in the following poem.

The Bag-Lady

What does she carry in those plastic bags?
Why those things; what do they tell?
I watched as she collected the paper I'd
dropped in a bin. An expert's glance and
she made it hers. But was it read later on,
or swapped for tomorrow's when the chance came?

When it rained she sheltered in the bus stop,
though she packs a collapsible umbrella
with a 'raining-cats-and-dogs' motif.
She could have changed it for
a plain one that would have worked, but
hers was valued once and she values it now.

She keeps the photo of a child who shares
her eyes; does it tell a mother's story? Or
some different secret perhaps? But why
the photo of the boy she found in a
park in Leamington Spa? A lost memento
of a proud parent? Or a careless one?

It's not just *her* life she carries
in those bags, it's yours and mine.
Lives collected in pursuit of hers;
her story told in others' stories.
She creates her life from what we leave,
revealing the values we all share.

Am I a collector of other peoples' lives?
What do I carry in my plastic bags?
Why those things; what do they tell?
I say I'm an observer, outside, apart -
but No! not detached. I empty my bags
and find the things I share with you.

I dropped a pound coin into her lap;
I'll be charitable, but I don't want part
of me in her carrier bag. She spent it
on a cup of tea and a bacon sandwich,
and then collected me - on a till receipt
and the memory of a man with a kind face.

This poem was written with the intention of exploring the relationship between the bag-lady and the enigmatic purposes of her collection. I wanted to be in the poem as an observer in order to satisfy my own puzzlement, but at the same time I was conscious she represented a metaphor for the researcher. The following discussion is a more rational analysis of the ideas which emerged through the creative process of writing the poem.

1. Newspapers seem to be an important constituent of itinerants' bags, so the choice of artefact was simple. But why did she want the paper? And what is she expert at?

The purpose of a newspaper seems straightforward, but if so, why are they so hard to throw away? Why are there so many stacks of old papers in peoples' sheds? As a teenager I had an evening paper round, and I collected a spare copy of each edition and stored it under my bed. I felt it was important to preserve history. The fact of newspapers presupposes social activity and a social organisation that, whilst of interest to archivists, social anthropologists and archeologists, is taken-for-granted by the reader. The newspaper has both intrinsic and functional meanings.

The bag-lady cannot satisfy all possible reasons for collecting newspapers; she can only act by those motives which are important to her. It is in satisfying her purposes that she is expert; thus she would not read it, or look for tomorrow's. Perhaps she saw a photograph that connected with her past; or the name of a place in a headline; or maybe it was her birthday and she was collecting the date.

The paper contains an imprint that is political, economic, and social, as well as personal to both the previous owner and the new one. It has no unitary meaning, but for a moment in time it is woven into peoples' lives and indicates their passing.

2. An umbrella also seemed a likely artefact, but again it is not there *qua* umbrella - which is why she has to shelter from the rain, and why she would not swap it for a functional one. Is it just the motif that appeals to her? Perhaps she once had cats and dogs. And why is it significant that the former owner "valued it once". Might she collect something just because it had been valued by another?

In this verse I wanted to indicate that the importance of an item might be interpersonal, rather than intra-personal. The umbrella-manufacturer may use the motif to increase sales; the purchaser may be seduced by the sentimentality, or making a statement of identity. The bag-lady may be identifying with the purchasers sentimentality, or saddened at the purchaser's fickleness, or laughing at the cynical materialism of it all. The umbrella may represent all of these interconnected things.

3. This verse continued to explore the interpersonal connection between owners. An artefact has a particular type of connection with peoples' lives, circumscribed by the social context of its production. A photograph will play a different part in a personal story to an umbrella or a newspaper. However, the particular emotional attachment

that gives it meaning for an owner, depends on personal factors.

The image of the woman fingering the two photographs occurred to me when I first thought of the metaphor. It conveyed her emotional attachment to the things she collected. The photo of the child tells a story of her past, perhaps as a mother, but we don't know how she tells the story to herself. I added the photo of the boy because it gives a sense of the woman, as a collector, writing someone else's story into her own. Is this the son that she wanted? Or the one that she lost? What does she think of the carelessness of the parent who lost the photograph? Is she rescuing the child? The way the photograph left the life of the previous owner may be intimately connected with how it enters hers.

The photograph says something about the previous owner, and something about the bag lady. She creates those meanings but they imply a relationship between her and the previous owner.

4. and 5. In these verses I began to overtly extend the woman into my world by recognising her as a metaphor for the researcher. The plastic bags contain her life, but expressed in terms of the lives of those around her. Her biography is not merely *in* the plastic bag, it is written through the contents. She has storied herself through the cast off rubbish of other peoples' stories. Likewise, in the research context, data are not inert matter conveying the facts of a biography. The researcher and informant jointly construct the latter's life, and in the process write the researcher's life too. The lives of researcher and informant become entangled in the production of the text - the artefact.

6. In the final verse I conceived of money as 'inert matter', an immutable medium for exchange. The coin was a metaphor for a more enduring truth - something whose meaning was transferable from person to person without being changed. It was meant to be the twist in the plot - the point at which the whole metaphor of the bag-lady broke down. However, I was surprised by the direction the poem took; as I wrote the last line I found she had still managed to collect me, understanding me in a way that made sense to her. The coin was immutable, but it was not what she collected. Her story was about the "kind face" - the act of charity rather than the fact of the coin. 'Facts' are important artefacts, but they are the result of human action rather than determinants of it.

Acts and Facts

The metaphor of the bag-lady breaks down eventually. It contains the contradiction that whilst I resist detachment from the social context, it is 'detachment' which defines the bag-lady. She is excluded from society. As a practitioner-researcher I have valued the discovery of the reflexiveness of my action, but the one thing the bag-lady cannot do is to act in social situations. In common with King Lear she has a biography which was not negotiated with others.

As a writer and researcher I have felt driven to seek an overall theme to link together my ideas; by discovering

the coherence I can begin to write the story which leads to it. But perhaps such activity is less a search for coherence than a fabrication of it. Berlin (1969) warns against the assumption that all our ideas must be connected in some way. Perhaps the only thing the contents of the plastic bag have in common, is that they are the contents of that bag. That is why I have gradually adopted an action-oriented, autoethnographic approach - the story should be about *how* those things came to be in *this* bag.

I have collaborated with colleagues in filling-up the bag, rather than agreeing what the artefacts mean. We shared a process of meaning-making, rather than making a process for sharing meaning. The measure of our collaboration, the coherence of our action, was in creating new meanings. Our group history is a story about a story. The historical artefacts of the research mark our passing. I have stopped and forensically examined the scene of our presence, and in discovering our imprint I have left another. Fingerprint on fingerprint. I cannot touch something without changing it.

Stuffing data into a bag is much less scientific than methodically ordering it into boxes. However, the metaphor of the bag-lady suggests the adjective "scientific" is a normative evaluation of our theory of coherence. Both "rationality" and "collaboration" are based on the sense we make of the world and our affective commitment to that meaning. Calling either "scientific" is to make an ethical judgement on it. "Science" and "rationality" appear to offer an impoverished ethics for research.

5 Authority and Legitimacy

Attempts to work participatively with groups

The problems of education are problems of acting educationally in social situations

Carr and Kemmis (1986: 180)

INTRODUCTION

Alongside the development of the core group I began to pursue opportunities for collaborative working with other groups of staff around the college. This chapter is a discussion of the methods I used and the understanding I gained. It illustrates the hole-in-the-wall gang social dynamic between myself and others, and the fear staff hold for what change may bring. It marks my transition from attempts to impose on the other participants my understanding of collaboration, to the development of new concepts out of the complexity and contradiction of their experience of teaching police officers.

I begin to work through the ideas on 'collaboration' introduced in Chapter 4. I focus on the nature of the relationships between people, how these inhibit cooperation and what it might take to overcome the blocks. I introduce notions of 'authority' and 'legitimacy' to understand my relationships with trainers, and extend these using spatial metaphors such as 'border crossing' and 'negotiating access'. I identify the motivation to cross borders in terms of 'worthwhileness', and recognise blame as the significant inhibitor to risk-taking. These ideas are related to wider academic theory, including postmodern concepts such as transgression and Berlin's (1969) concepts of negative and positive liberty.

The chapter is in four parts. Parts one to three focus on a meeting with the Probationer Training Unit which exemplifies the situations I encountered. I adopt a layered text approach based on "multiple tellings" (Mullholland and Wallace 2003) or "restorying" (Clandinin and Connolly 1991) of the group meeting. This form of textual layering enhances the validity of narrative enquiry by providing other perspectives on the initial experience. Part one, *Practice Revealed in a Story*, is based on the minutes of the meeting and provides the closest contact with a literal experience. The text was shared and discussed with other participants at a subsequent meeting. Part two, I have called *a Story About Practice*. Here I take one step back from the data about the meeting and begin to interpret the situation and its translation into the minuted record. The final restorying in Part three - *a Story On Practice*, is further removed again from the original data and is dominated by interpretation and theorisation. At this stage I locate the events in the wider field of intellectual debate and indicate how the multiple retellings contribute to an understanding of police training.

The substance of Part four is a more general application of this theoretical understanding to my research work.

1. PRACTICE REVEALED IN A STORY

This narrative relates to the first meeting I and my core group colleagues (Luke and Graham) had with the 9 members of the Probationer Training Unit. The purpose of the meeting was to begin negotiating a group-based process of staff development, and it came about through protracted negotiations with Richard, the unit manager. Richard had seen staff development as a management issue and his agreement to discuss it openly with his staff was a significant first step towards a more democratic engagement.

I wrote a record of the meeting based on my detailed field notes and circulated it to all participants. The following narrative is an abridged version of that meeting record. I have added notes to aid understanding and to bridge the edited gaps. The original narrative has been inset to distinguish it from my later notes. At three points in the meeting the mood of participants changed; I have marked these in the text and they are discussed in Part two.

The Meeting

Richard chaired the meeting at my request because I wanted my colleagues and I to be considered as guests. We were there to advise on staff development, not to prescribe it.

Richard listed three reasons for holding the meeting that comprised a tentative agenda:

1. We should be doing some form of staff development just because it is good practice - we are trainers after all;
2. There is pressure nationally for police trainers to be involved in continuous professional development;
3. Senior managers want us to have a process for trainer development.

Richard added that whilst there is no compulsion now, there would be in the future. We cannot sit back and do nothing. By taking steps now we ensure we can choose how to do it rather than having it imposed on us. He then invited comment from others.

Irene expressed some confusion about the purpose of the meeting and wanted to know what we were meant to be doing.

[There were some long, awkward silences at the start of the meeting which puts Irene's remarks into context]

The tone of Irene's voice indicated her question was confrontational - *Why are we here, because we shouldn't be* - rather than expressing confusion. She was not seeking a rational justification for the meeting, but blaming us for making her attend.

Martin said it was the first time our two units had come together for a meeting, and he found

the feeling quite strange.

Neil said he felt the same as Martin. He added that he felt it was important for us to get together.

It was wrong that we remain separate in our own little boxes, not communicating.

Graham echoed Neil's point about being in boxes and how the separation led to poor communication and understanding.

I said I had been pleased when Richard asked for the meeting. I felt there was a lot to be gained from tackling staff development in a group format and expressed a personal view that one-to-one coaching/assessing as a form of development was limited.

[Some more long silences]

Richard had come prepared with group exercises aimed at encouraging discussion about personal development, and examining the relationship between his team and mine. I had talked these through with him beforehand. The first exercise involved collecting thoughts on post-it notes which were then stuck on a flip chart.

He asked for a volunteer to lead a discussion on the exercise. He explained he did not want to run the meeting and that it was for the members of his team to decide what they wanted to do and how they would do it. I detected some consternation amongst his staff, no one wanting to take on the role. Following a protracted silence, Martin (a senior trainer) volunteered. Richard took no further part in the meeting.

Martin picked out one of the notes - Irene's. She expressed a number of feelings including worry and discomfort. She had unanswered questions like "Why are we here?" "Why is it happening now?" and "What has happened for it to be an issue suddenly?"

Martin suggested the notes expressed a general feeling of discomfort about the purpose of the meeting and concern that too much separated our two units for them to work as one.

Irene again asked the question why now? What is it that has led to this meeting?

I explained we had always been responsible for trainer development, but other work demands had seen it take a low priority. Luke, Graham and I had unilaterally shifted our focus back to trainer development and gradually more time is being devoted to it.

Irene questioned what our unit does on a daily basis.

Irene's question once more carried a significant covert message. She was not asking for a clarification of our role, but saying - *I don't think it is any of your business to be here*. Graham responded by explaining the elements of our work.

Irene thanked Graham for his explanation, but she still wondered why we were there and what we were going to get out of the meeting.

First change point

I asked her if she felt she and her colleagues were here *for* us (i.e. for me, Luke and Graham).

Did she feel it was something we were leading.

She thought not, but was surprised at having had no contact with us - except Luke to a small extent - during the year she had been here. She didn't know what we did. She felt she had not needed us and had coped without help.

I checked whether the source of her confusion was over the contribution we would make, now and in the future.

Irene said her experience over the last year had shown there was no need for our involvement; hence her question "What is the necessity now?"

[There was again a period of silence]

Richard's team found these silences uncomfortable. Luke, Graham and I had discussed our strategy for the meeting and agreed we would not take responsibility for solving the group's problems. We were thus prepared to cope with the social pressure of prolonged silence. In this context 'prolonged' was a silence of 3 to 5 seconds - not a long time, but significant in a group with relationship problems.

Neil intervened and suggested he could "cut to the chase". He explained that after contact with us, his colleagues were often left feeling confused, lacking direction or unfocused. They often felt they had been "interrogated" by us.

I asked Neil not to speak for others but to separate-out his own experience.

He explained how early in his work with me he had experienced problems, feeling I had interrogated him and left him confused and demotivated. He said he had confronted the issues with me and we had worked them out. He now felt the relationship was working.

I asked if anyone else wanted to talk about their experience of similar problems.

Trish said she agreed with some, but not all of what Neil had said. She explained how she had begun work with Luke and that the first session had left her feeling disoriented and unsure of what direction she was going in. However she too had straightened-out the relationship with Luke.

Criticism was then levelled at the induction process I organise for new members of staff. Following the six week TDP course at Bramshill, new trainers are coached/mentored by us over a period of 6 to 9 months, before being signed-off as competent. This is at variance with the national programme - as Trish goes onto observe:

She explained her surprise at the induction process. Bramshill had led her to believe there

would be a 4-week teaching practice with 3 assessed lessons. It was a shock to discover it was not going to be like that.

April agreed with Trish's point about the sudden moving of the goal posts.

Second change point

Irene expressed similar feelings saying that whilst she knew Luke from having worked with him previously, she did not know Graham or myself. She felt when she spoke to me that I was going to psychoanalyse her. She had asked some straightforward questions in the past and thought the answers "did my head in".

I wondered how this made her feel.

Irene felt it was threatening. She felt unable to say "I don't understand you." She explained that if it were Luke she would feel able to question what he was saying, because she knew him from the past.

I asked if this affected her feelings now in the meeting.

Irene agreed it was one factor. She expressed reluctance to go into our office because of a worry about what might be said.

Trish supported what Irene was saying. She felt there were times when she did not understand what Luke was saying. She too felt uncomfortable about going to our office. She felt that as a group we were "quite deep, heavy".

I noted how Trish had spoken of us as a group; I asked whether these were feelings about a particular person.

Trish said it was about the team as a whole.

Irene said she also felt distanced from our whole team, as well as her particular problems with me.

I asked if anyone else had experienced similar feelings.

Martin explained that his feelings mirrored some of Irene's and Trish's. However he said it was not quite the same. He felt able to visit us, but spent most of his time listening while we talked.

Martin and Jan were the two longest serving members of Richard's team and Jan was the only professional trainer. The others - Irene, Trish, Neil and April had been at the college for less than 15 months, and the latter three were still in their mentoring phase.

Third change point

I said I could understand the feelings expressed by Irene. I felt, on the basis of experience, that I often relate poorly to people whom I do not know well. I have a tendency to talk over peoples' heads as a defence mechanism. When I get to know people I am much better at establishing good relationships. I guess I have a worry about not being liked and maintain a distance by being knowledgeable. I invited everyone to just tell me when they think I am being pompous; I will not feel offended.

Graham explained how he felt he was not reaching a very good level of communication with April in their work together. After each of their tutorials he came away feeling anxiety that the things he was saying and doing were not helping. He felt there was a need for the two of them to find a better way of connecting.

April explained in depth how she felt about the coaching process so far. She wanted more direction, and needed the sense of achievement from gaining the NVQ competences. They are an important motivation for her and a way of providing direction. She was really concerned that without direction she would not get the competences and would have to leave training.

I checked whether April meant that her aims and Graham's were different in some way.

She was unsure, but reiterated her need for a clear understanding of where she was and what she had to do. She felt the NVQ competencies provided that clear target. She thought Graham wanted her to achieve something more complex, and that she was being moulded into something she did not understand. She wanted to be allowed to be herself.

Trish echoed that view.

Neil also expressed agreement. He thought we (Me, Luke and Graham) were there to help them improve their training-style.

I explained the problem that had arisen between myself and Neil and expressed how I felt I had caused it. I remembered thinking "okay, I got it wrong, but at least I'm doing my best for Neil". I explained how I had checked this with Neil and was surprised when he replied "No" - he too had felt I was trying to mould him into my idea of a trainer.

The meeting lasted 1½ hours. A lot had happened and people were tired. Several expressed how much progress had been made and I sensed a general air of satisfaction.

2. A STORY ABOUT PRACTICE

A Problem of Representation

The record of the meeting I distributed to participants was in fact version number two. I shared the original draft with Luke, Graham and Richard but encountered problems when it angered Luke. He complained it did not do justice to his experience of the meeting; it purported to be a factual record of what happened, but he felt it appropriated *his experience* and returned it in the form of *my perception*.

He had a point. Whilst translating it from my field notes I slipped into a factual reporting style. I think the original draft became an objective account of the meeting in the way that a set of minutes would have been. For example I referred to myself as "David" rather than using a personal pronoun, and I used passive constructions for my agency rather than indicating I was making interpretations. I redrafted the notes making it clear they were my personal recollection and including an introductory caveat about the limitations of one person's account.

Luke was still unhappy and at the time this concerned me. I had been using my writing as a way of sharing ideas and engendering discussion about practice. It was an important part of the participatory methodology. Luke's feelings were evidence of the problem with writing accounts which represent other peoples' voices or experience. I had an ethical responsibility for the effect of my writing. I needed to understand how others felt when my account excluded the things they felt were important, particularly where it excluded their contributions. Luke had not said a great deal during the meeting having decided beforehand he would mainly listen. He made one long contribution near the end, but I had found it incomprehensible and reported it only sketchily; I suspect it had been significant to him.

Even the second draft was very much my account. I gave myself an important role in the meeting and I structured my recollections around my interpretation of what was happening. Perhaps this was inevitable because I felt a sense of ownership - it was my meeting and my experiment. These were not collaborative thoughts, but at this stage I was the only person prepared to risk acting outside the norm.

Luke remained unwilling to endorse the use of the record whilst Graham saw no problem with it. In retrospect I give less weight to Luke's objection; I see it as part of a pattern of resistance to my leadership on these issues. Luke "will always want to argue back" (see chapter 4). His reaction to the record can be seen as part of the personal dynamic between us, rather than to my inability to represent the meeting in writing. Our disagreement was a symptom of this.

I got no direct feedback on the record. Relationships with the probationer trainers improved and at the next meeting there was a general expression of approval. However, I cannot exclude the possibility that others felt the same as Luke.

A Problem of Power

I had a clear idea about the purpose of the meetings with the probationer trainers and had taken pains to prepare this ground with Richard in advance. Richard had regarded staff development as a managerial responsibility rather than a subject for negotiation with staff. This model required him to 'teach' his own staff, but since he was hardly more experienced than they were, he had no motive to risk bringing them together as a group. I could not engage his interest until he could see staff development as something other than the communication of expert knowledge. The opportunity came when I worked with him, over three months, on the induction of Neil, one of his new trainers. It was an experiment in collaboration and an opportunity to demonstrate how to facilitate a group learning process.

The successful induction of Neil provided a model for understanding the manager's role differently. Richard agreed to trying a group process and we talked through how he might facilitate it. I saw my role as supporting him in the development of a collaborative group. I was thus surprised during the meeting when, following his introduction, he took no further part. His actions were rationalised as empowerment, but they caused consternation amongst his staff and I sensed he was distancing himself from the process.

There were contradictions in Richard's actions that revealed a tension between his need for managerial status and his desire to empower his staff. He had wanted his staff to take responsibility for organising the meeting but despite being asked no one had bothered. He responded by using his authority to force them to defer to his wishes rather than addressing their unwillingness to collaborate. In the meeting Richard once more avoided confronting the underlying relationship issues and left me to run the risks of the group process.

I suspected a self-satisfaction in his actions - he knew what was good for his team members better than they knew themselves. He was not empowering his team but rather forcing them to take control "because it's good for them". Richard worked to free the group of his influence but gave them no choice in the matter. He still seeks to be teacher, manipulating a group of people to do what he wants. He retains the expert roles (e.g. leadership) but is unable to see himself as learner in the way that he finds out - or researches - his practice.

It had taken me a long time to get Richard to the stage where he chose to call the meeting and invite us along. The suggestion that people should collaborate in groups rather than learn as individuals is counter-cultural and strenuously resisted. Richard only saw the meeting as legitimate once he had understood a way of running a group process whilst still maintaining his authority. An empowering process became legitimised because it could be subverted by the usual power relationships. It mirrored the problems I encountered when forming the core group in the early stages of the research (White 2003b), and it was by sharing this that I addressed the issues with him.

A Problem of Blaming

Soon after the meeting began Irene asked the question *Why are we here?* It looked innocent and understandable

in the context, but the tone of her voice indicated it was a confrontational and blaming statement. Her response to the answer was the equally irrelevant question *But I don't know what you do?* And after Graham's measured explanation she returned to the original question *Yes, but why are we here?* She phrased her complaints as questions but it is not clear that she wanted an answer.

Her complaint is an emotional response to being railroaded into the meeting - *Why are we here - we shouldn't be, We don't want to be here - you're to blame for that, We don't need to be here - why have you done this to us?*. Irene is an outspoken person who feels confident enough to complain. The contribution of others during the meeting shows that she was not alone, and confirms Richard's report that his team were generally reluctant to participate.

It is important to note that Irene, whilst confident, was not able to express what really bothered her about the meeting - the relationship issues that emerged later. The blaming was a symptom or substitute for the real issue (White 2000). This links to the hole-in-the-wall gang metaphor. A new group process posed potential risks and Irene and her colleagues could only interpret it as the threatening dust-cloud on the horizon. Their response was not to "go underground" as Kushner (1994) suggested, but to attempt to re-establish the fight against the old enemy - the educational bandits. Confrontation and blame were ways of making us fight-back, and so diverting the threat that collaboration posed. Blaming is a response to a threat, and the interplay of threat and blame emerged as the meeting progressed.

What does Irene want to keep safe from? What are the threats? Richard had the authority to call his group together and I had the authority to impose whatever system of staff development I chose. I could have instituted a system of classroom observations in which my team sat at the back of their classrooms and assessed them against competence standards. Such an approach would have fitted better with their frame of reference because they expect to be told what to do. Nonetheless, it would still have worried them because, as the dialogue from the meeting shows, they were aware we had a different idea about what constituted good teaching. This could have been one of the threats, and it is worth emphasising it arises out of my *authority* to act.

Irene's emotional reaction to the threat suggests that whilst she accepted my authority she did not want to accept its legitimacy. This was something she would resist. I had the power to do it, but not the right.

First Change Point

The first change of direction in the meeting came when I began to tackle the underlying affective issues. I saw myself in a facilitator role as opposed to 'teaching' or communicating messages about what ought to be done. I took the role of listener, using techniques like paraphrasing and reflecting-back the thoughts and feelings I was detecting (White 2002).

However, I noted in my journal how I wanted to 'convert' Irene - part of me wanted to make her understand that *she had something to learn*. I was aware I had to stop judging Irene and her colleagues if I wanted to collaborate with them. Educational banditry reinforces the separation and inhibits collaboration. Exploring these feelings in my journal was part of the personal dialectic that helped me understand why I felt disappointment at not being able to impose my will.

The record of the meeting shows the facilitative approach I took. Irene responded by explaining that we have no place in her practice - a clear statement that our interference is not legitimate. I did not ask questions nor make judgements. I paraphrased how I understood Irene, and in doing so I articulated something that was at the forefront of her colleagues' minds but which they dare not say - they were content with their teaching and there was nothing we could contribute to it. In saying this I broke a taboo because it openly challenged the hierarchical authority, albeit my own. In doing so I made it possible for Irene to repeat it. It was dangerous ground for the group because the misalignment of authority and legitimacy ought not to be acknowledged. In a hierarchical organisation authority is not challenged openly, it is achieved in passive-aggressive ways like blaming and sabotage (Adler and Towne 2003).

Permitting the challenge to my authority entailed showing honesty and vulnerability, qualities which the hole-in-the-wall gang could not risk. I gave permission for my practice to be questioned, and refused to seek protection in my hierarchical status. I felt I was role-modelling openness and, in doing so, making an invitation for them to do the same. I suspect the dangers inherent in challenging my authority were relatively less scary than those inherent in examining their own practice.

The silence that followed this suggested my action was barely legitimate. Honesty is in itself a threat because it invites reciprocation. Neil legitimated my intervention by accepting the invitation with "let's cut to the chase". He was saying to his colleagues "Come on! Let's be honest about what we think". He suggested they do not want the relationship with us - and this admission of what they are *really* thinking seemed worthwhile to him. He responded to my vulnerability with his own honesty. The others follow his lead and the group took the first step toward articulating their fears about working with us.

Second Change Point

The discussion was gradually subverted away from honesty, perhaps indicating its limited legitimacy. Once the group had expressed their resistance the need for honesty subsided. April and Trish reverted to blaming: *We've told you how we feel, and it's all your fault*. However, Irene ignored their complaints and returned to her feelings about the situation. She spoke honestly about her experience of working with us, and I helped her by seeking understanding and avoiding evaluation.

I had negotiated legitimate access to their thoughts about working with us. However, the agreement was still one sided; we had made ourselves vulnerable to examination but the trainers did not reciprocate. They were willing to be honest about us, but there was no reciprocal discussion of their fears. They maintain a united front about their practice, and we must *keep our noses out*. They will discuss our practice, but not their own. We represented a threat to the way they worked and they held back from saying so, or explaining why.

Third Change Point

Besides the issues around practice, I was aware we had still not got to the bottom of the problems with relationships. For example, I knew that both April and Graham, and Luke and Trish were having problems working together. I thought these issues could be surfaced and so I once more used my own vulnerability (in relation to personal relationships) to invite further reciprocation.

I think Irene was shocked by my revelations. She seemed to feel responsible for my having said it, even apologising at one point. She recoiled from my honesty by blaming herself for having overstepped a boundary. She treated me as if I were incapable of my own agency by assuming I could not have chosen to make myself vulnerable for my own motives. Irene's response to my invitation is guilt. To use Somekh's (2002) metaphor, I had invited Irene into my castle and she had stepped tentatively across the threshold. She lost her nerve and hastily retreated. Back in her own castle she feels guilty, for which she had to be punished.

This third change point enabled some one-to-one relationship issues to be brought into the open, and an important clue emerged about the underlying problem. Three of the trainers talk about their feeling that we were trying to "mould" them into something they do not want to be. They felt pressured to do something which did not fit their frame of reference and over which they had no control. We hold a power over them because, in the coaching relationship, we are ultimately their assessors. Our action is authorised, but they resist the legitimacy of it by avoiding or minimising contact.

We understand the practice of teaching differently, and our ideas do not fit with their team culture. They are not prepared to take risks with us because the personal relationships are not right. They will not risk doing something that is outside the borders of their social practice.

Some Conclusions

Legitimacy does not seem to be about fixed boundaries between different frames of reference (or practices, or discourses). It does not describe what is inside or outside a boundary. Rather it describes whether or not it is worthwhile to risk stepping across a boundary; it is a concept linked to the *action* of crossing rather than the *place*. It is legitimate when the participants think it is worthwhile. I used vulnerability to invite people into new and unexplored regions, but only they could chose whether it was worthwhile visiting. 'Vulnerability' is not a magic

key that unlocks doors across boundaries. It is only a key to the extent that people want it to be. 'Vulnerability' is an invitation.

'Authority' is something I bring to a situation through my role within the hierarchy, and to that extent it is part of the 'landscape', or the 'place'. 'Legitimacy' is something the participants give to the action of transgressing rules or boundaries; it is a quality of the action of crossing and judged by what seems 'worthwhile'.

The meeting concentrated mainly on relationships between members of our teams. It avoided the subject of staff development, and it focused on the new trainers because only they are required to work with us. As they become qualified they can look forward to closing these borders. The experienced trainers were probably happy to see the meeting go this way, because the issue of authority to access their borders (i.e. to talk about staff development) was never brought up.

Collaboration seems to be concerned with leaving the border crossings open. The barriers to crossing into each others' lands are questions of legitimacy; and as I have suggested, seem to be connected to worthwhileness. A participant can choose to legitimise a crossing point, but will do so only if he/she feels it will be worthwhile.

The trainers respond to our demand "We need to do staff development" with their affective response "We do it all any way"; whilst we respond to their criticism "You are too distant to work with", with our affective response "They are bad trainers". In the first case, we have authority to cross but our insurgence will never be accepted as legitimate. In the second, they claim an authority over their practice, that we say will never be legitimate. There is a symbiosis between these two positions in which each side feels safer with blaming the other than risking a step towards collaboration. It is the symbiosis I discussed in Chapter 4 with the hole-in-the-wall gang metaphor. Looked at from the point of view of the townspeople, I am experienced as beginning from the position that "you are going to have to change". I do not respect their worlds - I just want to shift them out of it (Mulholland and Wallace 2003). No wonder they close their border crossings!

3. A STORY ON PRACTICE

The headline purpose of the meeting with Richard's team was the promotion of a participative approach to staff development. I sought to help his team members begin to think like practitioner-researchers. My interest in the process was not merely as a researcher, it involved me as a teacher and concerned the pedagogic principles I value. I have argued elsewhere (White 2002) that there is a link between the roles of researcher, teacher and learner. I approach situations in one role but have access to the particular activities of all three (Losito et al. 1998). I research my practice as manager of a training development team and regard the process as learning about that practice. As a practitioner-researcher, I role model a teacher who values a learning orientation towards my pedagogic practice. The three roles of researcher, teacher and learner are inextricably mixed. (This three-way relationship is dealt with

in more depth in chapter 7).

One of the areas where this linkage has been most noticeable is in understanding the influence I have on others - my reflexivity. The authority of my position as a training manager is paralleled by the authority of my position as a teacher. In a hierarchical organisation, neither trainers nor learners are regarded as producers of knowledge; they are expected to be consumers of an objective, expert knowledge produced by others. Understanding how I influence others is an important element of a pedagogy that claims to empower learners as knowledge producers. It could be called the emancipatory element of my research.

Berlin (1969) describes two logically separate notions of freedom. The first is a "negative freedom" that relates to the area within which a person can act without obstruction. It is the freedom from coercion or influence, "Liberty in this sense is principally concerned with the area of control, not with its source" (129). The second is a notion of "positive freedom" which relates to the sources or processes of control:

I wish my life and decisions to depend on myself, not on external forces of whatever kind. I wish to be the instrument of my own, not of other men's acts of will. I wish to be subject, not an object; to be moved by reasons, by conscious purposes, which are my own, not by causes which affect me, as it were, from outside.

Berlin(1969): 131

McNiff (2003) applies these concepts to the sphere of pedagogy. The teacher works to free learners of her influence by extending their power to choose - their positive freedom. The independent learner can be understood as one who does not regard the teacher's influence as of greater importance than other influences. However, the idea of a liberated learner contains an inherent contradiction between the freedom to choose whether to be influenced by the teacher, and being denied that influence regardless of choice. To nourish a positive freedom the teacher must enable learners to decide for themselves whether they want to be free of her influence. Her role is finely balanced on this conundrum of freedom and compulsion.

Berlin (1969) argues that when social practices fail to recognise the two forms of freedom, dilemmas about power and influence lose their situatedness and are expressed in a dualism between an "empirical self" and a "true self". It permits decisions to be made on behalf of others, on the grounds that "it is best for them", and that if they understood the situation they would choose it. The dualism is based on one of "two forms of certainty" that provide an objective basis for solving such moral dilemmas. The first of these is a dependence on pure reason, or "the retreat to the inner citadel"; and the second is self realisation through a specific principle or ideal, for example, historical materialism (135). For Berlin, the search for certainty is the real enemy of positive freedom.

To realise the relative validity of one's convictions ... and yet stand for them unflinchingly, is what distinguishes a civilised man from a barbarian. To demand more than this is perhaps a deep and incurable metaphysical need; but to allow it to determine one's practice is a symptom of an equally deep, and more dangerous, moral and political immaturity.

Berlin(1969): 172

My argument is that much of what I have interpreted from the meeting with the probationer trainers is symptomatic of this "moral and political immaturity". Indeed, in so far as I play the role of educational bandit, it is also symptomatic of me. Richard's curious leadership during the meeting demonstrated the giving of negative freedom, but the retention of its sources - positive freedom. The safety that both Richard and his staff find in the authority of the hierarchy is a form of Berlin's second form of certainty. Finally, there is a clear link between my notions of authority and legitimacy and Berlin's two types of freedom.

I have developed a pedagogic approach situated in the contradictions and complexities of the police training context. This is to act in accordance with the emancipatory principles I teach; to have sought to impose an external definition on my practice (Berlin's second form of certainty) would have been to prefer an expert version over my own locally produced knowledge. The researcher/teacher/learner relationship implies an approach to research that honours local knowledge by producing it in a way that enables others to do the same.

I want to make use of the phrase "negotiating access". In the context of police training I hold an authority based on my role and position within the organisation. In the groups I teach I have the authority of group leader, and in my staff development work I have the authority of training manager. As a participant-researcher I do not need to negotiate access. However, as the material from the meeting showed, authority is an insufficient condition to generate collaboration. My experience of working with police groups has revealed that authority is all too easily subverted, which renders a reliance on it counterproductive. I cannot achieve the kind of learning outcomes I intend if I use authority and hierarchical relationships. To extend the 'access' metaphor, it is clear that learners in my context have restricted areas which I have no authority to enter.

The meeting record shows these restricted areas being used. At the level of rational action the trainers accept I have the authority to discuss staff development with them. However, the early stages of the meeting showed how that discussion left untouched the problem of access. The rational argument seemed to be a symptom, or substitute, for examining the underlying feelings that motivate action. I had little access to peoples' affectivities: this was the 'restricted area', and my authority did not grant me access. My pedagogic approach is thus concerned with negotiating access to this feeling-world.

Authority and legitimacy are distinguished by their sources; authority has its source in my power to act within certain limits - it is a determinant of negative freedom. Legitimacy has its source in participants' willingness to allow access to their feeling-worlds - it is their sense of a positive freedom. Authority can be given but legitimacy must be received, and the evidence from the meeting shows that authority and legitimacy are not necessarily aligned. Linking this idea with the analogy of negotiating access, a critical pedagogy would be concerned with helping participants to see it was worthwhile for them to legitimise access to each others' restricted areas. I will return to

the discussion of the quality of worthwhileness.

The spatial metaphor of 'restricted areas' fits with metaphors used by others working with action research. Somekh (2002) uses the metaphor of 'castles' representing the participants' worlds, and urges readers to "inhabit each others' castles" (79). Her context was the first and second order research relationship between university researchers and participant teachers in schools. Her situation has parallels with mine; she recognised that her research team had both a responsibility to teach research techniques to the teachers and at the same time to research (i.e. to learn about) their practice of collaboration with them. The activities associated with teaching and learning were shared between researchers and teachers. She writes:

"... true collaboration is only possible if there is an intention and belief that both partners will make an equal, but different contribution to the action research process, and each will change as a result of the collaboration."

Somekh(2002:95)

Mulholland and Wallace (2003) characterise teacher and researcher learning as the crossing of borders between one subculture and another. Their research was done in the context of initial teacher education, and specifically the passing of novice teachers into the world of teaching science. Their learning as teacher-educators was recognising that the science subcultural space was not any more special or real than any other subcultural space. This changed their pedagogy. They had seen their students' knowledge as merely a starting point, and their role as teachers was to get them to inhabit the new space. Recognising the presence of a border enabled them to think in terms of barriers and hazards at the boundary, and to learn to identify these from the students' points of view.

They write:

"Listening to students, starting from their concerns and adapting what and how we taught now became more legitimate than teaching in a way that honoured our conception of what was important in science. It seemed that we needed to know that the borders and hazards were legitimate before we could believe that finding ways to cross, other than traditional ones, was valid science teaching."

Mulholland and Wallace (2003: 20)

They share with Somekh an understanding of research as learning about their pedagogic practice. They crossed into a new subcultural space where teaching science was less about communicating a body of traditional knowledge and more about easing students' passage across their own boundaries.

My thinking was also influenced by the postmodern conceptions of transgression and boundary work (Stronach and Maclure 1997; Guile and Young 2001). Stronach and Maclure are resistant to the dualism underlying the idea of movement from one subcultural area to another. They argue that crossing a boundary needs to be told in terms of both a "discontinuity" - a change to something new or different; and an "accumulation" - a series of events that leads to the current position (117). They identify a movement/stasis contradiction in these two qualities in the sense that a person, in crossing a boundary, both becomes a new person, but remains essentially the same. "People both 'become' and in a sense were *always already*" (118) (see chapter 4 for the effect of this on biography).

Stronach and Maclure focus on the "liminal" or "in-between" spaces (59) at the boundaries between dualisms. As researchers they do "boundary work" exploring practitioners' situated confusions between movement and stasis. Stronach et al. (2002) in another example of boundary work, argue for a re-conceptualisation of "the professional" based on the contradictions of practice rather than the certainties of competing subcultures like the "competent technician" and the "autonomous professional". Carr and Kemmis (1986) argue a similar point, though without the postmodern epithet. Their argument is that theory has to be developed within the particular pedagogic context if it is to be educational. The development of theory by researchers for application to pedagogy by practitioners is not educational research. The classroom has to be both the laboratory for the discovery of theory and its proper testing place. It is a liminal space and teaching is boundary work.

These ideas reinforce the call for educational researchers to be both teachers and learners. Stronach and Maclure add the important idea that boundary work (the hazards) involves coping with contradiction, conundrum and paradox - although even this might be seen as the working-through of Berlin's two freedoms. Passing a border entails resolution of emotional conflict. New understanding is constructed out of the crossing, not absorbed on arrival in the adjacent territory.

Part of me still expects students and participants to absorb something. Mulholland and Wallace (2003) confess the same doubts. Berlin (1969) calls it our "deep and incurable need" and Stenhouse (1983) our "natural cry" for "the reassurance of certainty to ameliorate the agony of responsibility" (193). My research practice is emancipatory in the sense of nourishing a positive freedom that enables participants to see themselves as valid producers of knowledge rather than its passive consumers. Making this transition entails facing social and cultural dangers, and borders will be opened-up only to the extent that participants feel the risk-taking is worthwhile.

4. BOUNDARY WORK WITH POLICE TRAINERS

Over a period of about six months I met with the three unit heads and their teams a total of nine times. The meetings with each group were received in much the same way as the example in Part one, participants quickly realising I was not going to use my authority to restrict their negative freedom. The result was that, whilst relationships with them improved, I never reached the position where they would discuss their practice.

They defined the core group's contribution as "giving training updates - new models" and as "keeping the trainers abreast of changes in the training world". By giving us this technical role we were fitted back into their paradigm and kept at arm's length. They could maintain a belief that they did not need to inquire into their practice and that what they did was already satisfactory. They organised their own feedback and discussions and reviewed their own material; help was not needed from us.

They were willing to allow us a traditional assessment role, but even this independent perspective was limited

to checking their training style - "do I jangle the coins in my pocket?" Their examples of how we might help were risible, and if pressed, they could not articulate anything that would be worthwhile. I once asked "*do* you jangle the coins in your pocket?" and the answer was "No - but you know what I mean. Do I have any bad habits?". One could argue they suggested this harmless task as a concession to our authority. However, I am left with the impression that, at a deeper level, they were asking for help. They experience anxiety in class because things generally do not go well (White 2000); it is as if they are saying "tell me how I am doing - but if it's really bad news I don't want to know". It once more illustrates the hole-in-the-wall gang symbiosis, and creates an impossible task for me.

During the meetings I often felt the discussion could become confrontational. It was no mere disagreement over *how* I could help them develop their practice - it was evident that the whole idea of practice was at stake. The confrontation indicated they were protecting their practice from me - I was the threatening dust-cloud. In one meeting, with the Criminal Justice trainers, I introduced an extract from the Stage 2 Review (MacDonald et al. 1987) concerning the professional development of police trainers:

Any system for appraising training methods and personal competences should conform to the following general principles:

1. It ought to foster the professional development of trainers.
2. It ought to enhance the trainer's capacity to improve his/her own practice through action-research.
3. It ought to enhance the trainer's capacity to open his/her practice to public scrutiny while maintaining control over others' access to and use of data.
4. It ought to enhance the trainer's capacity to define and diagnose problems of practice and pose problem-solutions from a multiplicity of perspectives e.g. from those of observers and students as well as his/her own.
5. It ought to enhance the trainer's capacity to participate with others in a free and open discussion about his/her practice.
6. It ought to foster the development of shared insight.
7. It ought to enable members to develop methodological understandings and skills.

What is called for is a gradual evolution ... [and the following] points ought to be emphasised ...

- The need to create organisational structures to support staff development ... It is likely that these organisational structures would have to be more collegial and less hierarchical if they are to maximise the potential for staff development and a problem-solving approach to training.
- There is a need to develop a dialogue about training, about its methods, its contents, its contexts and its effects, which is not determined by the authority structure of the organisation. The exercise and demonstration of authority is a significant constraint on open dialogue and a significant constraint on the capacity of people to reflect about their own practice.

(MacDonald et al. 1987: 128-130)

The initial comment from one of the trainers was "The language is very hard". I asked what action research meant to them and the only reply was "Keeping a reflective log". Other comments included a concern that looking at one's practice too closely was dangerous and we need to be careful of being over-critical of ourselves. Finally, one trainer observed "This way ... it's so alien to the police service". The extract did not engender debate.

I wrote in my journal afterwards:

There was some linking of action research to methods of reflective practice. *We ought to do it*, they were saying; but I got the impression that it was not something they did. Thus they could talk about it being 'alien', but did not really talk about their experience of doing it.

I made several attempts to introduce discussion about training practice, but each time the trainers either turned the issue into some technical problem they could blame others for creating, or else they discounted it as irrelevant - "bean-bagging", "self indulgent" and "exaggerated".

This pattern is repeated in other meetings. It seemed they could not think about changing (or even improving) their practice because they did not understand what their practice was. One trainer said to me "You talk about your *practice*, but to me, it's only a job." They were barely able to discuss classroom problems and they saw their practice as going into class and "delivering training". It emphasises the last paragraph in the extract above (MacDonald et al. 1987); there is a need to develop a dialogue that will explore our understanding and philosophy of teaching (Torrance and Pryor 2001; Adlam 1997). The barrier for these trainers is not that their teaching practice is something they do not discuss, but that it is something they *cannot* discuss.

What are the repercussions of this attitude on the environment in police classrooms? In later chapters I will show that 'knowledge', 'teaching' and 'learning' are all taken for granted. The classroom is uncomfortable for student and trainer alike, and what the teaching does is to train them to endure it. It is a training in compliance. Participants do not just refrain from questioning this, asking questions is not recognised as a valid, or even a possible, activity. It puts a different spin on Somekh's (2002) castle metaphor - a militaristic one recalling the strings of castles setup along borders to deny access to invaders. The practices I identified in my research were more to do with defence than with learning and teaching (see also White 2000).

I often introduced participants to discussion of my own practice. It was always safer to ask difficult questions about what I did than any type of question about their work. On one occasion I shared with the probationer trainers the following extract from my journal concerning the collaborative work I had done with: Richard and Neil:

I felt I had been doing development-work in a more honest way than I have ever done before. I felt the commitment to collaboration (rather than teaching or coaching) had led to a shared experience; I had exposed myself to risk, got my hands dirty, suffered and triumphed along with two other people.

No matter how hard you try, coaching and mentoring leaves you safe, with clean hands, and you do it from

a position of safety perched on your status as an expert.

It's all about the fear of losing my status as expert. The fact is that I've been quite happy to sit in others' classes and make judgements about their teaching, but I'd think twice about doing the same thing in front of them. That's what I mean about the safety of my status - and that's why I say I'm being dishonest if I continue in that way.

The probationer trainers were content to be the apprentice in a coaching relationship with me, because their subordinate position had the advantage of being the natural point of resistance to authority. They could use blame to discount what I said, thereby denying my legitimacy. Ironically, police culture sanctions their own use of hierarchical authority with their students. Consequently, my expressions of "honesty", "risk", and the "rolling-up of sleeves" and "dirtying of hands" are just the things that do not form part of their practice. It is significant that one of the trainers exclaimed "So you see yourselves as practitioners!". Evidently he had not seen me as being involved in teaching, or my role as capable of even being educative.

It would be easy and comfortable for me to slip back into being critical of my colleagues in the three teaching units. That would be to return to educational banditry. It is important to see their reactions as expressions of their understanding of the hazards and barriers to crossing borders. I had begun my research from the premise that trainers needed to begin asking questions about their practice, but this entirely discounted their point of view. How can you think seriously about researching your practice when you lack even the opportunity for basic planning - as most of them do? The pressures on police trainers are to deliver back-to-back courses, for which they need ready made 'packages' to take off the shelf. Learning - theirs or the students' - is a secondary factor; they must maintain the pace of training delivery.

Mulholland and Wallace (2003) describe how they made a similar mistake. As teachers they wanted to communicate a pure approach to science teaching that required students to abandon their former knowledge. We have to recognise that learning begins from the context students find themselves in, and failing to account for this ignores the presence of barriers that to students seem very real.

The probationer and criminal justice trainers expressed a tension between the national demand to use approved generic lesson plans with "narrow, prescriptive objectives", and a genuine concern to "look at a subject and teach what we think the students need to know". Some of the trainers felt more constrained than others. The tension was also expressed in terms of risk-taking. Richard explained how the Internal Affairs Department (responsible for investigating complaints against police officers) contacted him "at least once a week" to check whether a particular officer had been taught the law for which he/she was being investigated. A computer data base is kept showing

which officers attended which sessions; a check could then be made against the objectives for that session and a definitive answer given - *yes, officer A was taught XYZ*. He said it was a question of vicarious liability; if the officer had not been taught then the organisation was liable to be sued and the trainers held to blame. He added, "We need to cover our own backs", where covering a subject means "evidencing what you did through a lesson plan".

There was an acceptance of this tension; no one criticised or questioned it; it was part of the landscape in which they worked - part of the certainty of things (Berlin 1969). In particular there was no questioning of the conflict between learning and teaching. They taught in that way because of the constraints placed on them by managers; and it was the students' duty to learn in the prescribed way because of the constraints placed on them by trainers. That is how things are; those are the barriers to crossing into a different paradigm. The worries about litigation and vicarious liability are diversions. There is a strong sense that the organisation has a right to expect them to conform to these constraints, and in turn, they have a right to expect it of their students. Knowledge is an expert commodity that trainers and students consume passively. One only has the right to construct knowledge when it is used against a subordinate. In this kind of learning/teaching culture, negative freedom is a function of hierarchical status, and positive liberty is not cultivated at all.

Researching one's own practice is to resist the fundamental power relationships on which the culture is based. A collaborative relationship entails resisting other's power over oneself - which is difficult because the superior party will object; and at the same time giving up one's own power over others - which is resisted by the inferior party who accepts others' rights to domination.

Concluding Comments

The aim of my research was not to report how police trainers construct their practice, but through participatory action research, to enable them to see how they could construct it differently. In terms of the spatial metaphors I have been using, I was inviting them to cross boundaries. The picture I have painted, particularly in this last Part of the chapter, has been more descriptively critical - it could easily be read as David White (the well known educational bandit) once more criticising colleagues' shortcomings.

However, my account must be seen as the result of my interaction with colleagues, and a joint construction with them of our practices. The fact I am unable to describe their practice as trainers in more glowing terms is connected to the failure in my practice to enable any changes. As described above, my own learning was a better understanding of the conundrum of showing leadership whilst not being the warrant for all knowledge (Stenhouse 1983). I want to conclude this chapter by highlighting the mistakes I made in handling the issues of power and positive freedom.

I have already explained how I began with the idea that the trainers needed to do better; that their current

knowledge/practice was not good enough and that I would introduce them to the 'real' thing. It is an approach that issues from the same cultural assumptions as the trainers' own practice. Whilst I spoke of collaboration, my actions were generating opposition through the imposition of my authority (White 2003b). My core group colleagues achieved similar learning as they came to understand their fears about doing things differently.

Over the first six to nine months I undertook a campaign that amounted to the marketing of a different approach. In meeting after meeting I grasped opportunities to tell people about my ideas for trainer development and the vision I had for how it might work. I spent a lot of time talking, and insufficient time listening. I was able to articulate my view with an assurance and in a language my colleagues could not challenge. I used the authority of my position in a way that ensured people had to listen to me, and I used the strength of logical-analytical argument in ways that ensured they could not respond.

My field notes show how colleagues listened to what I said but rarely expressed any opinion back. I was often left with the uneasy feeling that their smiles and nods were not assent, but a refusal or inability to engage with the ideas on my terms. Later, I began to understand how they experienced this as criticism that they were not doing things properly - a criticism implicit in the statement that things would have to be done differently. They felt I was blaming them, from my position of authority, for not teaching people properly.

My actions fitted the cultural paradigm. Those in authority criticise those in subordinate positions, whilst the latter work to undermine the efforts of the former. Both their practice and mine were constructed around the power hierarchy and responses to dominance. No one was teaching badly, and no one was incapable of teaching well; what we were doing was teaching in the way that is expected in that context. Our practices were constructed by the need to survive.

The researcher/teacher/learner relationship was the conceptual framework that helped me to think and act my way out of this debilitating paradigm. I stopped making myself responsible for designing the learning of others and instead focused on my own learning (Hargreaves 2001). I asked Whitehead's (1989) question "How do I improve my practice?" as an integral part of my pedagogy, by attending more closely to the students' experience of what I was doing.

6 Blame and Responsibility

Two critical incidents illustrating hierarchical authority

*It means that our cute iambs
Had weak wings and hardly flew,
Unlike Pegasus, our horses
Do not soar nor even trot ...
That's why physics is in honour,
That's why poetry is not.*

Boris Slutsky *from* Physics and Poetry (1999)

I have used the phrase "hierarchical authority" to describe normal relationships within the organisation. They provide a degree of certainty to life by permitting police officers to construct their practices in a way that is symptomatic of Berlin's (1969) "moral and political immaturity". Police culture attempts to tidy-up human complexity by institutionalising relationships in objective standards. Moral and ethical engagement with other people becomes rule-bound (Gregory 2000), and in so doing, the affective side of human relationships is denied (McNess et al. 2003). This chapter will focus on two critical incidents which show how hierarchical authority generates mechanisms to sustain itself (Adlam 2002).

Firstly I will look more closely at the link between blame and responsibility, and will show how hierarchical relationships are used to apportion blame. I identify a blaming ritual that encourages the practices of one group to be constructed in opposition to others. Justifications of practices are relational, a practice is only justified if it is critical of another. It demands a number of social roles; there must be two or more parties in dispute with each other, and a third party to whom the dispute can be referred. The ritual becomes debilitating when the structure of relationships prevents legitimisation of others forms of conflict-resolution, and it becomes self-sustaining because practices are defined in terms of the way they blame others. Collaborative relationships are inhibited by the reciprocal and hierarchical social roles.

Secondly I will look at the part performance standards play in the blaming ritual. Competences give objectivity to behaviour by reducing complexity and providing an authoritative basis for making judgements about performance. The authority for judgements is hierarchical, people feel unable to make their own judgements and evaluations of behaviour and look instead to their seniors in the hierarchy. A dependence is created in which decision making has to be passed to a more senior person who is required to act as judge. This dependence on the objectivity of standards absolves people of responsibility for their actions. Decisions which affect peoples' lives can be cast in the language of objective standards. Responsibility for the painful consequences of the blaming

ritual does not have to be borne by participants, but can be blamed on the standards. It becomes debilitating when people construct themselves as powerless in relation to this authority. Collaboration is inhibited because people fear the consequences if they stop competing against each other.

My action research was prefaced on principles like 'emancipation', 'collaboration' and an emphasis on values rather than standards. However the embeddedness of the blame ritual and the institutionalisation of standards rendered irrelevant such external notions.

BLAME

I begin my investigation of blaming relationships with a short story about my colleague Luke. It shows the acute personal fear that blaming generates, and how the fear leads people to construct their work relationships as 'fights' with the hierarchical authority. I use this story to introduce the ideas I will develop in the story of Morris, later in the chapter.

Fighting

We have a number of trainers based outside the college and who run local training events. Luke chaired a regular liaison meeting with them, and used the opportunity to organise and coordinate their work. He was proud of the progress he had achieved. However, without any warning, the Force Training Manager (my line manager) replaced him with another person. I sat with Luke over a cup of coffee and listened to his feelings about this turn of events. He expressed a number of emotions, but one thing that particularly impressed me was his description of the "pang of guilt" he felt when he first heard. His question "What did I do wrong?" conveyed his fear rather than an appeal for information. I identified with that fear; when he described the guilt and the fear of punishment, I knew just what he was talking about and what he was feeling. It seemed a good entry point to the issue of blame and I wrote the following poem to explore it.

You Want to Fight?

I've been pulled off the project.
I don't care. They do what they need.
I've got lots on - so I don't object,
And I'm actually quite pleased.

But it worries me too - I feel guilty.
What did I forget? Who did I miss?
Did someone complain? - what did they say?
I can see me being blamed for this.

I was different, unconventional.
I made things happen.
I cut through the bull.
No - I'm comfortable with what I did.

My boss? He's a 'process' man.
People? He couldn't care less.
He wants his next promotion.
Change? It scares him shitless.

[The 'boss' meets me later]

"Morning" (now what's the matter?)

"Morning" (you arrogant sod!)

(you arrogant tosser!)

He hasn't a clue! ...

I've a mind to put him right ...

Ha! give him the news!

(You want to fight? ...

You'll lose!)

I used the range and order of Luke's emotions to structure the poem, and then checked them against my own experience. There are five stages to the 'argument' in the poem:

1. "I don't care"; a denial of feelings - the organisation can do what it likes but it does not worry me.
2. Fear and guilt; there must be a reason for this happening. I have done something wrong, and I am going to be punished
3. Justifying self; a rehearsal of the story that will be used to justify one's practice when called upon to do so.
4. Blame; based on my self-justification it is the other person who must be wrong.
5. An us-and-them fight; my self-justification constructs a dualism to provide a target for the blame. The 'fight' can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Luke tried to accept the decision with nonchalance, but it was his feelings of fear, panic and guilt that most influenced his action. Guilt is handled by justifying action, and that justification is most legitimate when it is critical of another. It is a situation that lends itself to being structured through fighting and journeying metaphors. We focus our emotions on the achievement of some good worth striving for, and along the way we make striving a battle against other forces that are easily recognisable. The underlying feelings of guilt are never explored or expressed, and are perhaps denied. The hurt is rationalised in the form of a fight against the other, and the fight is expressed as blame.

An us-and-them dualism forces people into reciprocal roles. We cope with our feelings by hitting out, so both sides in the dynamic are pressed into taking up the appropriate role. Berlin (1969) calls this "objectification", the assumption that others' motives are dependent on a relationship with ourselves. It is the basis of the hole-in-the-wall gang symbiosis; life is retrospectively constructed as a fight in order to protect against the hurt.

The College had just undergone a reorganisation which had left a spare manager who happened to be senior to Luke. A role was created for this person by assembling a portfolio of coordination tasks, and this included chairing Luke's group. At worst the change was made thoughtlessly. It could be argued the purpose of repeated

reorganisation is to disrupt change initiatives, and at a group-psychodynamic level this may be happening (Menziés 1970). But it does not justify the setting up of a dualism purporting to structure the world as a confrontation.

The disagreement appears to be about something rational but is really about the feeling-world problem. Clarification of each others' motives would make blaming less easy to complete. In this sense collaboration acknowledges a moral engagement with others and a refusal to force them into a reciprocal role. However, each person objectifies the other and to break out of the cycle requires the cooperation of both. It is a social problem not an individual one. Socially, people have to believe in the worthwhileness of entering a different kind of dynamic.

My next story looks at blame from this social perspective.

Morris: a Critical Incident

Graham and I ran a Part 1 7307 Course on which Morris was a student, but he abandoned the course after just two days. One way of telling the story of Morris would be in terms of his failure to complete it. Morris was not prepared to adapt to the changed relationships between people that we promote. This story would justify the practice we have developed. It would explain how we take police officers who relate to each other with suspicion and competitiveness, and by confronting these, enable them to experience other, more human and caring ways of relating.

Typically, people find this process difficult because we ask them to question their habitual ways of relating to each other. Such relationships may not be rewarding, but they are predictable. By the end of the week the group will have experimented with different relationships and discovered it has been an empowering experience. For many it is uncomfortable. It requires adopting changes to one's persona and looking for different sources of support. Morris was unwilling to take the risks - he was too committed to his existing self image.

This way of telling the story brands Morris as stereotypical of the hard, chauvinistic, blaming, ambitious person our hierarchical organisation seems to engender. He would be a little sexist. He would not understand institutional racism in the police service. He maintains his persona at the expense of other people. In class he is a performer; it is more important for him to teach than for students to learn. He is the expert and he imposes his knowledge on others. His terms demand acceptance of him as master and others as apprentice. This story puts Morris *beyond the pale*; he lives with the barbarians and his soul is lost. He had the opportunity to come in, but he lacked foresight, his mind was closed. He was a dinosaur.

That is one way of telling the story of Morris. It is the story I must tell in the blaming ritual if I am to justify my practice. I want to retell it now from other perspectives.

A Second Perspective

I first met Morris at an assessment day for the appointment of trainers for the Special Constabulary. Morris and the other applicants had to do an assessed micro-teach and I had been invited to assist the interview panel as an expert observer. I was interested in the appointments because I was designing a new curriculum for training special constables and the successful applicants would have to teach it. All I knew about Morris was he had once been a police officer, and he had experience as a self-defence and first-aid instructor in the armed forces.

His micro-teach was on "Creativity", and comprised a series of exercises designed to show how we (the participants) could switch-on our creativity. I didn't like it. I didn't feel safe to participate because I was afraid of looking foolish. I rationalised my discomfort on the grounds that creativity was not instantaneous, or disassociated from deep thinking. I resented the way I was forced to participate and my less than wholehearted commitment brought several sarcastic comments. He talked for half an hour, and we participated on his terms. He gave us mnemonics for remembering his lists of prescriptions (he insisted on calling them *new*mnics). I wasn't impressed with what he did, it was power-based demonstration and instruction. However, he was offered one of the jobs.

I am afraid I stereotyped Morris. Ex-forces (Oh dear!), self-defence instructor (that figures), learning is something he *does to* people (well - it's what you'd expect). But the real injury was knowing he would soon be teaching my new curriculum for special constables. I was unaware of these feelings at the time; I was conscious only of my judgement that he "Wasn't much good". I decided, and Luke and Graham agreed, that we should make space for him on a Part 1 7307 Course. He already possessed a CertEd but I thought the course would introduce him to the approach used in the special's curriculum. I judged he would benefit from it.

However, there were deeper motives behind this judgement which I later surfaced through my journal writing. I wanted to teach Morris something; I was going to show him what teaching was really about. I was going to show him he was not doing it right and he would have to change. I think I knew Morris would not cope with the Part 1 7307 Course and that is why I had to have him there.

Over the next few months I prepared the ground for inviting him. I spoke to his manager: "The course is an introduction to facilitative teaching techniques. Morris is an instructor and with limited experience of other ways of teaching. If he's going to take on the specials' training he will need this kind of experience."

Morris was obviously asked to phone me. It was apparent from his manner he did not want to come on the course, but he was well disciplined to hierarchical authority and felt unable to say so to me. I guessed his manager had told him to go, he had questioned the need, and was then told to take it up with me.

I remember the phone call. I played the *authority* card:

"Most of the people there will be doing the specials training as well. I see it as an opportunity to begin focusing

peoples' minds on the curriculum. It will be useful to have you there - particularly as you will be the most experienced trainer of the group. This is an opportunity we shouldn't miss if we are to make a success of the special's training. I can't insist that you go, but I think you will find it worthwhile."

But I was insisting. I sensed he wanted to be given the choice and that if he was, then he would say no. I pretended to give him the choice but really I was "power-playing" him from a position of seniority (Steiner 1981). He could not turn down my invitation without exposing himself to criticism and blame; how could he justify having declined to attend? So he agreed to come. I put the phone down and triumphantly declared to Luke and Graham "I've got Morris on the course as well." Their reaction was, "He doesn't know what he's letting himself in for" and "We'll give him a fright".

I recognise the educational bandit in this story. I wanted to show Morris "how to do it" because "I don't think he can."

Having secured Morris's attendance on the course he merited as much care, thought and attention as everyone else. I was now the change-agent, the cavalry under the dust-cloud, and my means of getting him there were forgotten. Morris stopped being a distant, unreachable object-person, and became a closer, tangible, subject-person. It is important to bring this balance to the story. I did not feel at the time I was acting manipulatively. Morris was going to be involved in the training of an important section of our staff and it was necessary that he understand and be capable of teaching the new curriculum.

So there is the real start of the story. Morris is destined to leave the course. He did not want to attend. He must have known what to expect and that he would not like it. He must have resented being manipulated into it. He must have resented the fact it was *me* who had done this to him - the person who had been so unimpressed with his Creativity micro-teach. He and I had a history, and it was about to become part of the present.

But Morris has one weapon in his armoury. He can walk out of the course and complain about my competence to run it. And that is what will happen. It has the character of a tragedy. You do not know what is going to happen, but when it does it is obvious, and you can trace back the chain of causality.

The Course

I will relate an incident from the course because it gives an indication as to how Morris experienced the unfamiliar forms of relationship. It occurred on the second morning during a review exercise. The reviews are used to encourage people to think about how they are participating in the group and to focus on learning about their learning.

A discussion had started about the group forming exercises from the first morning. Morris could not see why we had "wasted valuable time playing trainer games" and he particularly criticised one exercise, the spider's web

(Scannell and Newstrom 1980), a game where participants join hands randomly and then have to disentangle themselves. He said, "I can't see the point in ice breakers" and added "I can't see the point in games that involve touching". He argued that touching had nothing to do with training, "We won't be touching while we're learning, so what's the point in it as an ice breaker?"

At the time, I remember thinking there was a lot more to Morris's apparently innocent rationalisation. I sensed from his manner that, for him, there were considerable inhibitions around the subject of touching. I decided it was not appropriate to develop the issue, but in the split-second it took to think through, another group member challenged it. "Is it the intimacy you don't like?" It was a powerful question that went straight to the heart of the issue. I realised immediately it was a question I had not wanted to ask. It made me feel uncomfortable and I wondered whether I had backed-off because of a taboo around touching and intimacy in our macho police culture.

Morris waffled a cognitive response that denied any underlying feelings, "No I just can't see the relevance". I stepped in and changed the subject, saving both Morris and myself from further discomfort. Morris was quiet during the remaining plenary sessions that day.

Morris Withdraws

During the afternoon Morris asked to speak to Graham and me in private. He told us he wanted to leave the course. He was very nervous. I sensed he was doing something difficult - defying our authority - and it was against his normal instincts. His initial approach was to try to get us to say he should leave, but I did not want to influence him either way. I wanted him to be responsible for making the decision.

I was both surprised and unsurprised about this turn of events - at least that is what I wrote in my journal. I sought to empower him to decide, so I neither made it easy nor difficult for him. "Whatever decision you make I will support you, but I will not make the decision for you"; and once he had made his decision I did my best to help him leave with the minimum of embarrassment and pain.

He explained he had been feeling like this all day but had not wanted to mention it in front of the group for fear of being disruptive. I told him it would not have been disruptive and said that discontent needed to be brought out into the open, "It is helpful when the group discusses it". I offered him the opportunity to explain to the group why he was leaving, but he declined. My offer was disingenuous because I sensed he lacked the strength to talk openly in front of the group. (Was it the bandit twisting the knife?)

He expressed his reasons in clichés: "I'm not getting anything out of it", "It's not for me." Once he had seen I was not going to criticise him from my position of authority he became bolder and began to tell us what was wrong with the course. "I've got an open mind to new techniques"; "Facilitation has it's place"; "I don't think I've got anything to learn from this"; "I don't think this is the way to train new trainers. They need to have the basics first.

They're trying to run before they can walk."

Graham and I listened to his criticism of our course. We did not argue back and our silence was read by Morris as the call to justify himself. To challenge or argue back would have closed him down, so we just listened. It was a powerful silence that led Morris to say more and more. "There are people in class who aren't coping with this." He named some of the least experienced. "I'm worried about their ability to handle it"; "There are others who think the same as me but they're too scared to come and tell you - they're afraid because they need to finish the course for their jobs. So they're just getting on with it"; "You don't know what's really happening".

He said other things as well, for example he admitted to being anxious about running his teaching session on day four. This was a very honest remark, prompted I think by our refusal to be drawn into arguing. We listened to him, and listening shows respect. He was anxious about doing such a difficult subject (race and community relations) and felt he didn't have enough time to get to know the material. I sensed he was a lot more anxious than he was prepared to admit, and I guessed that in part at least it was because he knew he was not able to teach in the way we had been role-modelling. He spoke of wanting his teaching to be "a good performance" and it reminded me of seeing him 'perform' at his interview.

After Morris left I was worried - I took what he said very seriously. Are our students really afraid to tell us they are unhappy? It was not what people said in the plenary sessions and review exercises, but then Morris claimed they were too scared to tell the truth. I felt our reviews enabled people to speak their minds, and if fear was an inhibiting factor then there was something fundamentally wrong with the course design. On balance I thought Morris was exaggerating. I trusted our process but was still anxious.

The class were working in groups researching for day four. I visited each one and checked-out their feelings about the course, the research task and the fact of Morris leaving. I found nothing to support what Morris had claimed. I said Morris felt people were afraid to speak, but everyone expressed satisfaction and felt Graham and I were people who would listen; "David, you know me! Do you think I'd stay quiet if there was something wrong?" Two people seemed pleased that Morris was leaving, though they did not express it in words. One made her satisfaction clear nonverbally. I was surprised because Morris was a big character. I had imagined he was popular and that his departure would disturb the group.

I got the feeling that Morris was isolated from the others, with little or no support. I brought up the subject at both the evening's closing plenary, and the opening plenary on the following day. I wanted to give the group an opportunity to grieve, but there was no discussion about it. Morris was forgotten and only referred to once during the week as "a Londoner" with "down to earth views".

Redressing the Balance

The perspective I have related is still concerned with justifying my practice - perhaps to you the reader. It constructs Morris as an individual with certain deficits as a teacher. Before moving on I would like to add another perspective that treats him (or at least the person I have created here) as a construction of the social situation.

Morris had recently completed a CertEd, and had been involved in training and instruction for many years. I surmise he saw himself as more experienced and having a higher status than the other students, most of whom were novices (this was a beginners' qualification). In our classroom, everyone is at once teacher and learner; it is not a place where one can adopt a position of superiority in relation to others. Morris's persona as an experienced practitioner would have been constantly undermined by the approach we were role modelling - not out of disrespect, but because each person is expected to be a learner about his/her practice. We opened our teaching decisions to examination by the group, and we acknowledged feedback and criticism by listening and making changes. The group began to accept and value this approach, but it was one that contradicted Morris's practice.

He must have experienced us as very powerful and challenging of both his knowledge and his practice. His frustration would have increased during the second day when he saw the rest of the group begin to understand what we were doing, and so to change the way they understood the practice of teaching. He had set himself up as an experienced practitioner and could not back down without losing face. He would have become increasingly isolated from the other students, both drawing back from them and them drawing back from him.

There were other antecedents that would have weighed on Morris's mind. In the police service, training is characterised by a 'facilitative-didactic' dualism that structures reality in terms of just two possible styles of teaching. The dualism enables criticism of the former position, one associated with the approach to training taken in the late 1980s and early 1990s (see Chapter 2). Facilitation is stereotyped as "all beanbags and sandals"; instead of law testing there was only the persistent question "How do you feel about that?" and when probationers asked questions they were met by the all-purpose redirection "what does the class think?" It is a caricature of the term "facilitation", although it has to be admitted that a lot of bad training was done by inexperienced police trainers.

Morris was aware of this. The mention of "facilitation", combined with the resentment at being forced to come is likely to have predisposed him to look for grounds to criticise us, and to resist what was happening. When Morris arrived in the classroom, he was not just experiencing a different approach; he was being subjected to everything he felt was bad about police training. It was an implicit criticism of his teaching and a demand that he had to change. It is irrelevant that my teacher persona was a caring, empowering one, because the battle-lines had been drawn up before Morris arrived. Morris was not resisting the teacher in me, he was resisting the bandit. He was not given the opportunity to show he was not a dinosaur, or that he could learn, and design teaching that focused on the

learner rather than himself.

Morris Justifies his Practice

It is unacceptable to the hierarchical authority to leave a course after two days on the grounds "it wasn't for me". Such a rationale would invite criticism. The only legitimate justification for leaving would be if the course was to blame. No other rationale would be sufficient. To take responsibility for one's actions is to admit culpability and invite punishment. In this sense, 'responsibility' means 'blameworthiness' in the eyes of the hierarchical authority. Personal responsibility is discouraged by denying the authority to judge one's own actions.

Morris was required to explain himself to his line manager, Milton, and inevitably he had to blame us for running a bad course. Milton had no authority to punish me and so he secured Morris's complaint in the form of a written report. A 'report' in the police environment is a formal document used to pass matters to managers at higher levels in the hierarchy. This puts Morris's report into context. It is a rational justification showing how his experience of the course deviated from what he would describe as good practice. He has to be critical of the course because the context in which he is required to tell the story demands it.

In the opening paragraph of his report Morris confirmed my story that I persuaded him to come, even though he thought he had "enough experience of basic trainer skills". He went on to explain his "amazement" at the problem solving task we set the group. He felt there was insufficient time for an experienced trainer to research and plan a session, let alone novices who would have "no formal teaching on presentation skills and lesson planning". He saw day one as "a series of aimless discussions" that failed to meet his expectations; the day was "a wasted opportunity for the trainers to pass onto the students their obvious wealth of experience". Morris continued by explaining that day two "was no better ... we sat around once again in aimless discussion". He expressed his opinion that the subjects for the students' teaching sessions were "too in depth", and the time should have been spent on learning "conventional teaching methods". He offered a suitable syllabus of subjects fitting his definition of "conventional", and concluded that once these methods have been learned then "the student can move onto facilitative teaching methods, which are not for the novice trainer."

The Blaming Ritual

Milton sent Morris's report to Steve - the head of training and my manager - indicating the course needed closer inspection and that he would like to talk about it. A copy was sent to me. The ritual called for me to justify to Steve what I was doing and, just as with Morris, the only acceptable justification would be one which was critical. Steve asked for a report and suggested we should meet at a later date to discuss it.

The situation was discussed in the core group. We were livid at Morris's accusations - "how dare he", "who is he to say these things" etc. and our view was that we had to make a robust defence of our practice to Steve. It

raised an ethical issue however; I felt uncomfortable about using material I had collected during the course and about having to be critical of Morris in a situation where he could lose his job. Luke expressed the view that we should "throw the book at him" and I admit at times I felt it was exactly what I wanted to do. But I struggled with the idea that there must be an *educational* way of solving the problem. I felt we were being forced to respond by blaming Morris, and this was no different from him blaming us. I did not want to participate in something which seemed so dishonest, but the blaming ritual required I do it. It required me to tell a story about my practice that explicitly branded Morris as unsuitable to be a group leader.

My analogy for the situation pictured Morris as a third former, me as a sixth former, Milton the Head Prefect and Steve the Headmaster. Between us we had setup a situation which had to be referred to the Headmaster because none of us saw ourselves as able to sort out the problem. It did not seem very adult. I want to tell a story about my practice that gives me responsibility for my problems; I do not want to story myself as dependent on a senior person to do it for me.

The blaming ritual requires a third person - the headmaster - to report to. We cannot just blame each other and not involve a third person. Each party has to tell a story to the arbiter that both blames, and in doing so justifies his/her practice. The nature of blaming is *as a story*; it is a story that explains ourselves (and our practice) and the audience for the story is that person in authority. In our hierarchical setting, professionals' stories of their practice tend to setup dualisms; they tend to be about fighting another position; they tend to be self justifying; and they tend to be blaming. The blaming ritual is a way of avoiding taking responsibility for one's problems and it means storying one's self and one's practice as part of a dependent relationship.

Breaking the Ritual

In my search for an educational solution I met both Morris's first and second line managers. I hoped we could negotiate a solution to the problem by understanding each others' positions better. I offered time and resources to address Morris's needs but despite smiles and thanks at the time, I was rebuffed. I ignored the request for a report and the matter was forgotten for a while. When the summons to the Headmaster's study came I was not reprimanded for the course design, I received a ruler across the knuckles for not keeping the customer satisfied. Steve's concern was with appearances.

I could try to step out of the ritual, but it continued anyway. If you don't play the game you are considered to have something to hide; if you don't justify yourself then your actions must be unjustifiable. I declined to play my part in the ritual but the result was the galling feeling I had not defended myself. I went away feeling I had been told-off and that Steve interpreted my acquiescence as guilt or incompetence. It seems I could not win either way. The unpleasant consequences did not stop there. My refusal to blame Morris meant he did not experience any

negative consequences from his complaint and so he continued to criticise what we did. That too was galling.

I asked myself, *am I being too proud?* I am happy with my practice. If I had time and opportunity then I could do something to change both Steve's and Morris's understanding. I do not have those opportunities and so I must accept the situation as it is; I must work with their understanding as it is. Allowing them to be the judges of my practice is what launches us into the blaming ritual. If I am to take responsibility for evaluating my own practice then I must be circumspect about their criticism. To do otherwise is to get into blaming. That will involve acting unethically and uneducationally. It is unethical because the structure of the situation is that one can only defend oneself by attacking the other; and it is uneducational because blaming and criticism do nothing to help each others' understanding.

I feel there was an inevitability about the way my initial manipulation of Morris led to the blaming ritual. It began because I had assumed the authority to judge Morris's practice, in exactly the same way that the blaming ritual called on Steve to judge mine. The only personal responsibility a practitioner has is what he or she can be blamed for, and the only authority for judging a practice is the hierarchical one.

It is in this way that practice is produced over time. Practitioners' stories are written as battles. "We" are trying to do a good job, but it is a constant struggle against those who get in the way; those who do not understand how much better it would be if they would cooperate. But of course we will always find someone to fail to cooperate over something, and it will enable us to continue writing that story of the journey and the virtuous struggle.

Collaboration as I am conceiving it involves working with others in ways that do not impose dependent roles. The ability to make choices about which roles to perform implies the responsibility to evaluate one's own practice - the external authority is not required. Blaming is not collaborative because it forces people to take on the roles of accuser, accused and arbiter.

RESPONSIBILITY

One of the ways in which hierarchical authority removes practitioners' personal responsibility is by its adoption of objective, competence standards. In the next *vignette* I look at a personal experience of the police service's obsession with standards, and then, in a longer critical incident I look at the social consequences of the search for objectivity.

Standards

I attended a meeting of police training managers from various parts of the country, our agenda being the discussion of difficulties with staff development. I had been invited to talk about our innovations (see chapters 7 and 8) and their variation from the 'national model'.

The concept of a national model was important to most people present at the meeting; in fact it was more than

a concept to them, it was something objective and real (see Macdonald et al. 1987). It was illustrated in the first discussion which centred around criticism of the Centrex trainer development programme (TDP) and its apparent failure to produce a consistent quality of trainer. Delegates expected the 'output' of the programme to be a predictable trainer who knew, and could perform, a specific range of tasks. The national model was real in the sense of being an instrumental process whose output could be controlled in detail.

One area where delegates wanted controls to be tightened was the experiential learning cycle (Kolb 1984) or the ELC as it is called. The ELC has become a central dogma of police training (NPT 1996) to the extent that Centrex added its own competences to the National Vocational Qualification standards to specifically cover it (NPT 2000; Centrex 2003). Police trainers are expected to structure their lesson plans using the ELC, and their role in class is to "take students around it" in relation to each of the learning objectives for a lesson. A vocabulary has developed around the dogma in which 'to ELC' becomes a verb; trainers will *ELC* a subject, and students are spoken of as having been *ELC'd*. Trainers will also discuss the doing of *ELCs*, of mini-*ELCs* within the main-*ELC* and so forth. Assessors will look for the *ELCs*, assess the *ELCing* and expect trainers to share in the discourse. The language has a strong sense of a physical operation on learners - an assault, a doing-to. The ELC has become the objective indicator of learning. If the students were *ELC'd* then they were learned-to.

Delegates' reaction to my presentation was perhaps predictable, "What do you do about quality assurance?", "What do you do about a trainer who does not come up to standard?" The Centrex standards were seen as the definitive method for identifying whether a trainer was good enough or not; if a trainer does not meet the standards then there is no question about it - the matter can be decided objectively. If there is a problem with a particular trainer then it is seen as a personal deficit; the role of the coach is to "implant" the required knowledge (implant was their term). Once the knowledge has been given, it is assumed a trainer does not use it because he/she does not want to - and should be blamed for being a bad trainer.

There are two issues here. Firstly, there is a faith in the objectivity of standards, based on the assumption that performance criteria can represent a complex social situation. Secondly, adherence to the objectivity of standards and rules obviates the need to consider the moral aspects of a situation. Values can be factored-out of the equation by the rules, and indeed this has happened in the Centrex training design model (Centrex 2002). This is an example of the general tendency for police organisations to rationalise social situations in technical or legal terms (Metcalf 2001; Westmarland and Yearley 2001; Macdonald et al. 1987). The world is made a simpler place by not considering the ethical dimension (Gregory 2000; Adlam 1999).

Police organisations understand national standards as value-free and therefore as denying the affective issues underpinning any performance. Values are institutionalised in the sense that the worth of the product comes to

be identified with the measuring process (Illich 1971). Goodman (1971: 13), calls this "a progressive regimentation and brainwashing, on scientific principles". The standards appear to provide an objective answer: they allow us to deny all of the other affective issues that demand ethical and moral engagement.

My pedagogic practice brought a concern for the ethical aspects that was alien to the police environment (see chapters 7 and 8). I argued with the delegates that if we began to rely only on competence standards to develop our staff then we were renouncing any philosophy or principles of ethical and educational action. We needed to build a practice that did not appeal to an objective external authority to give validity to our decisions, and this implied a quite different approach to the issue of assessment.

I wanted to develop self and peer assessment. I saw group norms being established through team teaching, with the tutor "downloading" (Hargreaves 2001) assessment information. I wanted to say we needed faith in a new paradigm, not expert assessors. I felt assessment information could be regarded as knowledge, like any other form of knowledge. Assessment has to be learned, rather than *done to* people. We would not impose knowledge - so why do we impose assessment? We have to learn to value assessment; to learn to live it.

The principles I brought to this project were emancipation (in the terms discussed in chapter 4), a concern for the values behind action rather than their institutionalisation in standards, and finally collaborative relationships rather than competitive and blaming ones. Delegates at the meeting still wanted to know how I would cope with a trainer who had not come up to standard; the only answer I could give was that I had a faith in the relationships it would create. My faith was put to the test in the following story.

Isabel: A Critical Incident

We had begun to apply a new process for training our novice trainers. They complete the six week TDP course run by Centrex and then come to us for a period of work place learning and qualification. The Centrex model requires new trainers to be allocated a work place coach/assessor who will devise an assessment plan of three, 1½ hour observed teaching sessions. Traditionally this is done over a four week period.

We had moved away from that system because it minimised our chances of any long-term influence on the work place. The police cultural understanding was that a qualified trainer was an expert in the field who did not need to expend any further effort on self-development. We agreed a longer period of development of six to nine months, which increased our contact time with new trainers and improved our understanding of their team cultures. The first six months focused on coaching and development, then a plan for assessment could be organised if we were confident in a trainer's ability to continue his/her development. My assumption was that, after 9 months work with a trainer, the NVQ standards would be irrelevant.

Isabel was a specialist trainer working for the Community Affairs Department and one of her roles was teaching

race and diversity related subjects. She was one of the first trainers to join us under this new system and it was planned for Graham to work with her. He found after the first two months that Isabel was not improving. She occupied a position of authority within her groups and was concerned more with supporting her role as the knowledgeable expert than with facilitating group learning. She worked at a superficial level and was unable to reflect on her practice or her relationships with the class. She was the omniscient giver of information and treated her class as the repositories for the knowledge she imparted.

Graham coached her for six months but felt she was still not ready to be assessed. Isabel ignored his advice and assembled and submitted her NVQ portfolio. Naturally Graham assessed it as not-competent, and as the second line manager I verified what Graham had done. Isabel declined to continue with Graham as her coach, and because at that time I was the only other person available to work with her, I took on the role.

I experienced the same problems as Graham and within two weeks our relationship had broken down. I decided my department could no longer support Isabel in her development, which meant she would lose her training role. However, before this decision was ratified she found another post and resigned. The story is the straight forward one of a novice trainer who was not up to the job; she was assessed as not-competent, given a second chance and then left when it was obvious she would not reach the standard.

That is the story I had to tell to the hierarchical authority to justify what had happened. It tells of a training department operating a rational development policy. The practice of teaching is a rational one, based on national standards, and operated by assessors who are trained to apply them. Judged by those standards, Isabel was a teacher with deficits who did not take advice given by experts and who ultimately paid for her inattention by failing.

It is a story which is designed to play a part in the blaming ritual. However, my interest in the incident is based on two different questions: firstly, what part did objective standards play in the outcome; and secondly, what part was played by my own principles of emancipation, values and collaboration.

Isabel's Perspective

Graham, Isabel and her line manager Jim, met to discuss Graham's verdict on her portfolio. Isabel feared losing her training job, but felt she had a good case to show she had been treated unfairly. Her story makes that case by criticising the work of the core group, and as such the intended audience is not Graham, but the hierarchical authority who can overrule his decision. Isabel wrote her own notes about the meeting and distributed them to other interested parties. I quote from them below:

Why has it taken seven months to be told about this? Why wasn't there a proper debrief done after every session? And the developmental areas then discussed? Is that my fault? I question the format of the development process: is there one?

... I don't have the same learning style as Graham and those in his team, but I am still developing and I have to find my own style. I feel that Graham is being subjective and not objective. Their style of learning and training differs from us slightly. I am not saying it is wrong, but I feel a person has to develop in their own way - with guidance - but without the pressure of someone else's style being put upon them.

I cannot believe that I have not hit one C unit! [the NVQ competencies] ... I disagree with Graham; I feel that I have hit some of the competencies ...

... seven months later I am told I am not developing. Well am I? Yes; but to whose agenda?

There is a strong sense of both injustice and blame in what Isabel writes, and I would like to develop these two points.

1. Isabel feels the national standards (the C units) are quite clear and objective. She demonstrated this for example in the way she wrote her lesson plans, marking against each paragraph the competencies she had "hit". She saw the portfolio-building task as the accumulation, over time, of the necessary competences. Her belief is that the gap between current performance and overall competence can be precisely specified in terms of the individual performance criteria still to be collected. She felt it was unreasonable for Graham not to supply her with a list of the competences she had not "hit".

Additionally, she felt the development process should have made clear how her collection of these competences was progressing, and clearly it had not done so. Her argument is she has been disadvantaged by this, and asks in her story, *Is there a development process?* This brings me to the second point - blame.

2. Isabel feels blamed for not attaining the standard. She responds predictably by first justifying her practice, and then by making accusations against the other party. This ensures the issue must be decided by a higher authority. Neither she nor Graham is now capable of solving the problem.

Her questioning of the development process and her statement that her teaching style is different from Graham's (and mine and Luke's) is a direct criticism of the new procedures we had introduced. She calls on the authority of her colleagues - Graham's practice differs from "us" - i.e. from the rest of her team. She and her colleagues all teach in the same way, but Graham expects her to work by different principles. Her criticism is tentative, "I am not saying it is wrong", but she clearly thinks it is unfair. She wants to be assessed according to the standards of the other trainers, with whom she identifies.

The case she is making is based on the familiar us-and-them dualism, a fight between her department and ours. The national standards are the authority to which she appeals, and her grounds for blaming our department are that we changed the rules and attempted to measure her against a subjective standard.

The Line Manager's Perspective

Jim had what he called "a history" with Isabel. He never described what this was, and would only say he could not understand how she had got a job in the Community Affairs Department in the first place. It was no surprise

to him she had not made the grade as a trainer and his aim was to get rid of her as quickly as possible.

This surfaced when I offered him options for handling a development process with Isabel. I was keen to work with her as part of a group in order to expose her to the practice of other trainers. Jim was reluctant and I sensed he had already made his decision based on that secret "history"; she was not going to make a trainer, and he would find a way to move her on. Jim had good reason to support assessment of Isabel against national standards because it would achieve his objective.

However, whilst he supported our action he harboured reservations about the development process we were promoting. He thought the old system would have dispensed with Isabel's services within four weeks; but he had to wait eight months. He asked the question, "Can I afford to have someone in my department for that time if they're not competent?" He wanted to know what it implied for all the students she had taught, his worry being connected to the vicarious liability of the organisation (an issue discussed in Chapter 5). He argued that if we were going to have a trainer teaching other staff then we really ought to be sure the person was competent.

So Jim supported the outcome of our development process, but was concerned about our overall practice. He felt we needed a clear procedure for identifying those people who were incompetent, and he saw the national standards as providing it. In a way his position was quite close to Isabel's; they both wanted a quick decision making process, she because it would have qualified her and Jim because it would have eliminated her. On balance I feel the old system would have worked in Isabel's favour.

The Headmaster's Perspective

From my point of view there was no reason why Steve, my line manager, should be involved because staff development is my responsibility. Isabel considered using our grievance procedure, but did not, and in the end she departed voluntarily to take up a new job. There was no part for Steve to play, and at best I would have informed him of the events in terms of the realist story. So it is surprising he has a perspective to add to this.

It was Jim who referred the matter to him. He was responding to the blaming ritual. Graham made accusations against Isabel, and she made counter-accusations against our whole department. Jim had no authority to require me to justify my practice to him, so he concluded that the matter had to be passed to a higher authority to decide.

Steve communicated his decision to Graham, and then later to me as manager of the department. He accepted the need to get rid of Isabel and supported our decision. I found his judgement irritating because I did not want his support, nor did I ask for it. I felt it was a matter for me and I did not need his validation of my action - and far less so, the need to have him evaluate me by it. However, Steve saw it as his role to play headmaster - to be the sanctioning authority, and the ultimate locus for any evaluation.

He picked-up on Isabel's complaint that Graham had not made it clear to her, throughout the process, exactly

how and where her performance was failing. His judgement was that it is typical of managers in our organisation to avoid telling people they are "under-performing". He thought managers needed to be "less squeamish about hurting peoples' feelings". He saw it as a character trait of the "new style" of trainer (i.e. the facilitator), considering them to be too "fluffy", and unwilling to make difficult decisions.

However, Isabel's tentative criticism of our development practice carried no authority with Steve, thus she was destined to lose if she tried to fight us. On the other hand, though our practice was vindicated, Steve still found some reason to evaluate and criticise what we had done. It is interesting that in both this case and in Morris's, his criticism had nothing to do with the facts presented by either side; he had his own, different agenda. In that sense he was not an arbiter because he did not arbitrate the dispute. He made a decision based on factors that were important to him, and his response "we mustn't upset the customers" is perhaps a clue. In a hierarchy there are always bigger fish and I suspect he was concerned he may have to answer to a higher court if the matter became public knowledge.

There are no winners in the blame ritual. Everyone is judged - even the headmaster.

Graham's Perspective

In several places I have referred to disapproval of our staff development process and I must now be more precise about what this entailed.

We had not merely changed the protocol for coaching new trainers; we had begun to understand differently what that coaching should involve. We saw the trainers concentrating on teaching law subjects and thus decontextualising police work and contributing to the institutionalisation of values (see Chapter 2). One of our motives was to engender the teaching of a more holistic police practice. The longer development period was part of the prescription for changing the trainers' practice, rather than a more rigorous qualification process. Their resistance to us was perhaps a reaction to feeling blamed for doing police training wrongly.

This puts some of Isabel's complaints into perspective. When she complained that Graham was trying to impose a different way of teaching upon her, in fact that is just what he was doing. We had decided on the nine-month programme because it allowed more time to confront the attitudes embedded in work teams. It is unsurprising that, by extending the period of development, we actually created a more difficult problem for ourselves; coaching would necessarily confront the culture, since that was the purpose of the change.

Graham saw Isabel as a person who could play the traditional hierarchical trainer, but could not facilitate learning. He told me a story about one incident; Isabel and three colleagues were doing the introductory session to a short course. The four of them sat at the front of the group, in a line. Graham described a feeling of deep embarrassment "It was as if they were holding court", and he was concerned that, as a member of the training department, he might

be associated with what they were doing. He described himself as sitting unobtrusively in the horseshoe of students hoping not to be noticed. He then described how Isabel disregarded the life-histories and experiences which people brought to the group and valued only the new set of skills they would have to learn.

On several occasions Graham asked me to be present during his tutorials with Isabel. I felt she did not listen to him; when he invited her to consider something she would accept it or concur with it, but her response was just a little too quick. I sensed it was an habitual or automatic reaction because it never allowed quite enough time to have actually considered Graham's point. I wrote in my notes that she refused to show any vulnerability in front of him, even that small commitment involved in being a learner. We discussed it once and Graham said he felt she did not respect him. It was something I too had sensed.

Graham often talked to Luke and myself about his relationship with Isabel. I asked him if he would address the problem by confronting her with his feeling that she was not listening and did not respect him. Graham would always agree it was necessary, but felt he could not, or would not do this. He was concerned about his own vulnerability in front of her, fearing she would interpret it as weakness and take advantage of him. Graham could only see himself becoming more vulnerable to her.

I recorded another occasion when we discussed the same issues. Graham said he was feeling bad about the way things were going with Isabel, the relationship was unrewarding for him and he felt frustrated and concerned. I knew from experience that if one person in a relationship was feeling frustrated then the other would be too. It was only a short step to the conclusion that Isabel's continued problems with meeting Graham's expectations were partly symptoms of that relationship.

I felt I had a responsibility to help Graham develop. He had willingly adopted the new development practice, but in this instance he was not following it. I sought-out opportunities to discuss the problem but never pressed beyond the point where he expressed his fears. I just hoped I had done enough to get him thinking. I noticed an uncomfortable parallel; Isabel refused to collaborate with her groups, Graham avoided his relationship problem with Isabel, and I drew back from intruding in Graham's practice. Were these all connected?

Three months later the problem returned and Graham called a meeting to discuss our options. His opening suggestion was that we needed to be more prescriptive with trainers when we first began working with them; we should use our authority to get them to do what we want. I recalled that months before Graham had made the same argument. He and Luke tried it at the same time, but it was an effort to teach enablement by overpowering the learner. It had not worked for either of them, and Luke was the first to disagree with Graham's proposal.

Luke agreed with me that Isabel's difficulties in class were the symptoms of other problems. She had to be invited to solve these, which implied sorting out the relationship problem with her mentor. I think Graham saw this and

it was evident he was still very uncomfortable with the prospect. I broached the issue directly and he expressed the same fears as he had done previously. He rationalised his position on the grounds that delving deeper into Isabel's problems would be crossing a line into counselling he felt was inappropriate. I still avoided suggesting he was part of the problem - which appeared to make me part of it too.

Within days of this last discussion the matter was taken out of Graham's hands because Isabel refused to continue working with him.

My Perspective

I am certain that to progress with Isabel, Graham had to tackle the issue of their relationship. He had adopted a practice, together with the rest of our team, concerned with helping the trainers develop more satisfying relationships with their classes. One of the requirements of this practice was that we role-model those same relationships ourselves. In doing so we teach the practice we expect them to adopt, and enable them to rethink their understanding of what they do.

I was responsible for introducing this new practice and I therefore had a responsibility to help Graham develop into the role. He showed signs of being unable to work in that way, and it is ironic that the alternative position he advocated was the same hierarchical approach for which he criticised Isabel. He could not find a way of getting Isabel to work collaboratively with her groups without just telling her to. I question now whether I experienced the same difficulty with him. I had an understanding of what he needed to do, but I found no strategies for helping him to rethink his practice. All I had done was to tell him what he needed to do - perhaps in a more sophisticated way than Isabel with her class - but with the same effect.

I needed to spend much more time with Graham working on the problem, but whilst I had instituted the new practice I had not made the time and resources available for the proper management of it. I held the philosophical position that an appeal to the national standards was self-contradictory, but I had not thought through its practical consequences. Isabel was being asked to do something that neither Graham nor I was capable of supporting.

Luke and I discussed the crisis, and shared an understanding about what had to be done. We each felt capable of doing it, and I suspect we both agreed that Graham was not, though we never said so. I worked with Isabel over a short period and was able to do some of the things I had suggested to Graham, but my achievement was too little too late. At the time I felt the biggest success was that Isabel decided to leave without us resorting to a competence assessment. But this was a pyrrhic victory.

Concluding Remarks

I presented the story of Isabel with two questions in mind, "What were the parts played in the final outcome by (a) observable standards and (b) my pedagogic philosophies".

National performance standards are a thread running through each perspective of the story, but what is their importance to the unfolding drama? My contention is the standards have been institutionalised so that the function they perform for the organisation has become disassociated from their original purpose. The standards were adopted to ensure teaching staff were sufficiently trained, experienced and knowledgeable to run police training. It is a purpose which cannot be understood outside of the context of our expectations for a policing service, or of the financial, political and social constraints placed on the teaching situation. If the story I have narrated were about 'standards' then it would have been an exploration of these issues; it would have been about people making sense of standards, applying them to their situations, overcoming the limitations, and resolving the contradictions and paradoxes.

However, in each of the perspectives I related, the standards are taken as non-problematic. They are not questioned because it is not their meaning or application that is important. For Steve, standards are about performance management; for Jim they are managers' protection against vicarious liability; for Isabel they are the gatekeepers into a new job. Each of these ideas implies that standards convey hierarchical authority, and in doing so they play the role of arbiter in the blaming ritual. They are not used to secure objective measures of performance, but to legitimate the right to judge others. They are an institutionalised form of control that structures relationships between people in exactly the same way as other symbols of rank and status. National standards have been subverted by the police hierarchical authority to produce more control mechanisms rather than good teachers.

If the stories I have narrated are not about national standards, then neither are they about my pedagogic philosophies.

My first principle was emancipation. In both Morris's and Isabel's stories the theme from my perspective was the empowerment of the trainer to make decisions, rather than having to depend on an expert authority. However, the context overwhelmed my intentions and they were offered a Hobson's choice, which I rationalised as something more virtuous. In none of the perspectives is the issue of emancipation important; I had an emancipatory practice, but neither story is about emancipation.

My second principle was a concern for values over standards. I wanted to make it possible for decisions about the future of trainers to be freed from the certainties of national standards, and instead for us to value the generation of our own contextual, knowledge. But this was not a debate about the autonomous professional versus the competent technician (Radnor 2002). Neither of the stories is about the ethics of decision making or the practical morality of relating to others.

My third principle was collaboration, but this does not seem to have figured in the stories either. Blaming is the antithesis of collaboration, and the blaming ritual inhibits ethical or educational action. I learned more about

what collaboration is not, in my context, than about what it is. The relationships between the participants in the two stories were complex and do not offer a straightforward model for participatory research. An array of circumstances combined to construct Morris and Isabel as incompetent trainers, and despite my principles and good intentions I could do little more than spectate.

The stories in this chapter show how authority constructs its 'regimes of truth'. Blame is of course a natural human reaction and 'standards' express justifiable worries about behaviour. Neither is intrinsically bad. My argument is they become dangerous when they are used to structure a version of reality, and in my context that reality implied debilitating forms of relationship. Truth is associated with particular ways of relating. My truths were irrelevant to participants because they did not trust the implied relationships. This is why it is such a risk and takes great faith to believe something new.

7 Learning and Identity

Training the trainers: Part 1 of the City & Guilds Certificate

One way to think of learning is as the historical production, transformation, and change of persons.

Lave and Wenger (1996: 146)

In this chapter and the next I move the focus of the research from the trainers' work groups to the City and Guilds 7307 programme we run at the College. The programme developed a methodology for police training aimed at the specific relationship problems identified in Chapters 5 and 6. My theoretical context was the researcher-teacher-learner model of research introduced in the previous chapter, and a link between relationships and knowledge I have called the Learning Triangle. Reflexive examination of group processes foregrounded unhelpful relationships, and practitioner-research was engendered through dialogue about teaching and learning.

Part 1 of the 7307 programme is a week-long course and Part 2 consists of 15 days spread over 10 months. We run four Part 1 courses each year and take two or three groups through Part 2. The first section of this chapter relates to a Part 1 course which I ran with Luke in the first year of the research. It looks at the experiences of four people, two students - Peter and Naomi, and Luke and myself. The second section of the chapter focuses on the classroom situation on the final day of a similar course run nine months later. The aim of the chapter is to show how collaboration and learning were legitimised by the removal of barriers to new forms of relationship. The trainers and students transgressed boundaries into new frames of reference and the quality of that action is what I call 'collaboration'. The chapter is a study of the nature of the relationships and how they developed, rather than the specific pedagogy and content of the course.

The complexity of human social behaviour emphasises collaboration as characterised by difference and diversity, rather than compliance and conformity. Linking this to the discussion of Berlin's two forms of liberty (Chapter 5), collaboration is not related to negative freedom - the content of agreement - but to positive freedom. It is a quality of action concerned with how we collaborate, rather than what we collaborate over.

There is a piquancy to the stories in this chapter when taken in the context of the mean-spirited culture I have illustrated so far. Our 7307 programme was counter-cultural in its emphasis on the quality of relationships.

1. TRANSFORMING IDENTITY: PETER

I want to begin by telling two stories about Peter. He is a police officer and I met him when he came on one of the assessment days I organise to select new staff for the training college. I remembered him in particular because he had missed the closing date for the assessment and telephoned to talk to me about it. Job applications are sifted

and reviewed by our Human Resources department, who then send me a list of candidates I can invite to the assessment. Late applications are not accepted - those are the rules.

I broke the rules for Peter. I made an extra place, bypassed HR and invited him direct. Rules are too arbitrary for real people. I felt an affinity with Peter because the rules had excluded him.

When I met him that day, I think I already wanted to like him and I hoped he would do well. I was assessing one of the selection exercises in which candidates do a presentation in front of the other applicants. They are given a random subject to prepare in advance.

Peter stood before us, his subject was 'communication'. On the table in front of him was a loaf of bread, a carton of margarine, a jar of apricot jam and a knife.

"I'd like you to pretend I'm a visitor from Mars" he began. "I want you to give me instructions how to make a piece of bread and jam." He looked around the group smiling, and waited. There was a silence; no one had anticipated having to join in. The best performers on this assessment task manage to gain the participation of their peers - no mean achievement if you can do it meaningfully in just 15 minutes! But it was unexpected and so it was a moment or two before anyone responded.

"Open the packet of bread" offered one person.

Peter picked up the loaf, his fingers digging into the package. Then with a swift movement of arms, the plastic flashed and the loaf exploded before our eyes.

I was impressed. I couldn't believe he'd gone to the trouble of practising it, so it was a spectacular result for a first attempt. I laughed out loud - it was very funny.

The point of his demonstration became obvious; for several minutes the group struggled to give him instructions precise enough to get a slice of bread buttered, jammed and eaten.

However, it turned out to be a fairly mediocre presentation. The promise of group participation did not materialise. He had a message to communicate to the group, and our task was to sit back, passively, and absorb it. It was just about as enjoyable as a slice of cheap white bread.

I still remember how I felt when the loaf of bread exploded. I took a risk and ensured Peter was offered a job. A month later he was sitting in my Part 1 7307 class.

Peter reminded me of myself. I remembered many years before, when I was new to teaching - on my teaching practice in fact, I was struggling with the problem of teaching 'Criminal Damage' to a particularly dull class of probationer constables. It was a time when I still blamed the class for being dull. I thought, *how about walking into class with a large vase, and then smashing it on the floor? Hey presto criminal damage - and it would wake them up!* I didn't do it. I knew, whilst it might shock them, it wouldn't make them think. And anyway, I didn't have

a vase.

In the explosion of Peter's loaf of bread, as I laughed out loud, I saw my vase smashing on the floor. I felt I knew what he was thinking. I knew what he wanted to do. It was to make people think. He knew it was important for them to be engaged. It didn't work of course, it was only entertainment, but I chose to mark him on the basis of what I thought he wanted to do, rather than what he achieved. And so he got the job.

My second story about Peter begins on the first day of the course. As part of an exploration of our experiences as learners, Peter described to the group his example of a good learning experience. He had attended a firearms course in Canada, several years before. It was gruelling (his description), and brutal (my judgement). The instructors were relentlessly bullying. Weak members of the course were picked-on by the instructors and harried until they chose to leave. The rest of the group dare not show any support for fear of becoming the next victim. Peter described it as a positive experience because fear of the instructors encouraged the group to rely on each other. It ensured they "gelled as a group" and "got things right" for the benefit of each other. Peter wanted to make learners feel that same sense of team spirit.

I was worried he saw this as exemplary teaching and learning. It was not the kind of pedagogy we encouraged - even in the police!

When he later joined the training team, I recall he had a framed photograph on his desk. It reminded me of the film "The Deer Hunter"; a group of young men including Peter, crouched, smiling at the camera, in camouflaged gear and holding their guns. I mused, *and they're all dead now except one*. I assumed it was from the firearms course in Canada. I felt it said something about the relationship Peter had with the world and with others; or at least the way it was displayed said so - "This is me. This is who I am. This is my story."

Evidently his colleagues thought the photo was out of place because they pulled his leg about it, particularly the women. I was with him one day when he told me it was just a day-out, paint-balling with friends. He had thought of putting it away because of the sarcasm it attracted, and he asked me if I thought he should. It was a moment of deep intimacy; an intimacy far beyond the norms of police culture. Peter was not just asking for advice about where to hang a photo - I felt he was saying "*what do you think of me?*" I liked Peter, but the person I knew was not conveyed in the militaristic message of the photo. However, the photograph was obviously significant to him and I thought he shouldn't remove it just because I, or anyone else said he should.

I said, "No. If it's important to you, I think you should leave it there". He looked pleased and thanked me, and determined to leave it.

Twelve months later, the photo was in his locker. It was important to him as a memento of old friends, but it is no longer presented as part of his public identity. I have witnessed a transformation in Peter; he tells a different

story now.

Peter and Naomi

Our Part 1 course uses problem based learning (Atherton 2002). Students work in pairs to produce a two hour micro-teach on a race-relations or diversity subject. The whole curriculum is carried by the process of learning to work together on an issue which is about learning to live together. Thursday (day 4) is the critical point in the course when participants present their work to the group.

I watched Peter on the course with the kind of paternal interest I had taken on the assessment day, but his characterisation of teaching and learning was worrying. I began to doubt I had chosen the right person. I wrote in my notes:

Peter is naturally controlling and didactic. He is concerned about his self-image. He has had problems coming to terms with the whole issue of power. Our teaching has challenged this approach and on occasions he has reacted against it.

I saw my task as confronting Peter over his use of personal power; unless he understood how it was counterproductive, I could not recommend him for a training post. I created opportunities to bring the issue of power to the group, and as I was doing it, I had one eye on him.

Naomi was a trainer with the Community Affairs department, responsible for promoting links with minority groups and for teaching race awareness to other officers. She began the week in a contented mood, other members seeing her as responsible for "the group hugs", a private joke that was not shared with me. I was glad when Naomi and Peter paired-up for the teaching task because I knew Naomi had experience running training on diversity issues. She was a strong character and I reckoned she would be a good foil to the dour and disciplined Peter.

Part-way through the week I discovered they were planning to run the micro-teach in much the same way as Naomi always had. She evidently held her own against Peter, but I was disappointed she had not been more adventurous. She proposed to remain within her comfort-zone, repeating what she had done many times before. I discussed evaluation with them - it was part of the task that they should design some means of evaluating their session. Naomi was reluctant to consider evaluation; she said it was impractical in her role, she just had to "deliver her package". She was particularly resistant to asking participants what they thought about her teaching. "I would never do that". She spoke with an immobile face, no shock, no emotion; just an even and decisive *I would never do that*, as if it needed no explanation.

She had once expressed concern about coping with officers who resisted the race equality message, and I began

to suspect it dominated her relationship with teaching. She worked in a hostile environment where she dared not show any weakness; her strategy was to "deliver the message" and then get out. I did not pay enough attention to Naomi - I was too busy trying to convert Peter. I did not notice their relationship stagnating and Naomi becoming quieter. On Wednesday we did an exercise with the group to help them form personal objectives for their micro-teaching. Naomi said she had no objectives. I only became aware of the depth of her problem when, months later. I went back over my field notes.

Their session on Thursday was not as good as others', despite their greater experience. Naomi was unsmiling and mechanical in the sense that it did not seem to matter whether we participated or not; she just did what she did and sat down. Peter was stiff and formal, embarrassed and self-conscious. He was like a sergeant-major teaching embroidery. Time was running out for him; but it had run out for Naomi - and I had not noticed.

On Friday morning I began a review of the previous day. It had been a significant event for most participants and there was much to share. They were motivated and excited about their learning.

Peter had the knack of surprising me, and he did it once again.

He admitted to the group he was disappointed with his session. That evening "for the first time" he decided to write some reflections. He explained how he realised he had resisted learning all week, or withdrawn to avoid it. He had rejected the student-centred approach because he thought he could do it better his own way. But most of all, he wanted to demonstrate to me how it should be done. And it hadn't worked. He realised he had got in the way of his own learning, and blamed it on everyone else.

It was like the loaf of bread exploding once more. I was struck by Peter's ingenuousness. His admission was volunteered; it was not a response to others' revelations. It was an unconditional expression of how he felt he had prevented his participation in the course. I was pleased - this was the person I thought I had picked as a colleague.

The group were taken aback and responded to Peter's vulnerability by sharing their own learning experiences. Naomi was the exception, "Now you can organise the group hugs" she said to Peter. Her voice was cool and unemotional. I wondered whether it was envy or disappointment. I sensed she felt out of step with the group; they had moved on in their learning and she was left isolated. Later, Naomi returned to the question she had asked at the start of the week "how do I cope with resistance". But this time it was an accusation *You've not helped me - you're to blame for that.*

I was really pleased about Peter's learning. Now I am very sad about Naomi's.

Teachers as Learners

In both humanist and traditional approaches 'the learner' is treated as stable and uncomplex (see Chapter 3). In the same way 'the teacher' can be assumed to preexist the classroom situation. In the preceding narratives there

is a sense of omniscience. I am the one who designs the context; I am the teacher, the stable background against which the students learn. In this section I want to present the teacher as learner, and the teaching performance as provisional and negotiated with other participants.

The Part 1 course was an experiment in problem based learning, and the context of the experiment was my own practitioner research. The students' experience of the course was the data for the inquiry into my practice, and the learning I achieved was about how to improve my action as teacher. For me and my colleague Luke with whom I ran the course, it represented the opportunity to be researcher, teacher and learner.

The following is an extract from my journal, reflecting on the planning that preceded the course:

We seemed to collaborate well. I felt we had an equivalent understanding of things. I think we were both making compromises, but we were happy to do so - partly out of respect for each others' feelings. ... We both expressed the feeling that, even though we had never worked together before, we were looking forward to co-facilitating. I feel a great deal of trust in Luke's ability.

I think Luke is a bit anxious about the course. He expresses regularly the fact he sees himself as only just setting-out on the road I have travelled. He says he doubts his ability as a teacher and he doubts his intellectual understanding of what we are doing. But I have confidence and trust in him because of what he says - the way he talks about teaching both theoretically and practically. ...

We experienced a disturbance to the equilibrium of our collaboration. I introduced some new material to help with structuring our ideas around learning about learning. At this point Luke became very uneasy and I got the impression he did not want to use it.

I felt Luke thought I was being too theoretical, that I wanted to impose on the students some theoretical models they would not understand. He said it had taken him years to get to his current understanding and our group would have only a matter of days. I felt he was saying I was going to teach theoretically rather than practically.

I said I used theory to inform my practice; I don't necessarily teach it to the students. I explained how I have learned to recognise the signs in myself when I am imposing things on students that they do not want. I said I thought he knew me well enough to be able to say *stop* if I do something that is not working.

I was concerned I had pushed Luke too far and regretted introducing the material. I felt it was the wrong thing and wanted to turn the clock back. I felt responsible for spoiling our collaboration. I said we should just put the new material to one side. I wanted to reassure Luke I had no intention of imposing anything on him against his will.

However, Luke was evidently thinking things through. He began to express his anxieties about the course - his fears that our experiment would not work and his reliance on me. He described himself as having two voices - one sitting on either shoulder. One voice urges caution, *use your power and take control of the class*; whilst the other wants to take the risk, *trust the students*. He described his resistance to the new material as a symptom of his anxieties rather than the problem itself. He said it was a problem with himself rather than with me; it was his emotional reaction to the anxiety of the risks we were taking.

This extract is from a piece of post-course writing:

I was keen to make the course work, and I was keen to allow Luke to bring-in new ideas. I was worried about imposing my ideas on him - something which I felt did happen. ...

I felt at the time it was more important that Luke do things he was happy with. I think we developed a mutual respect. I think as the course progressed we were able to give each other feedback about what had happened without feeling uncomfortable or defensive. I would say there was a caring for each other; however I don't think I felt strongly about it until after the course. At first I cared that I did not want to spoil our relationship by imposing things on him; the caring which developed later was a recognition we both felt like learners and it was a great kindness to give feedback. ...

Our learning is not the discovery of some new knowledge, but the creation of a more productive relationship. We arrived at it through the sharing of ideas and through compromising. However, it also involved facing a challenge - namely the Part 1 course. It was the 'engine' for the development of the relationship. It provided a purpose; it provided difficulties; it provided an opportunity to do the things we had only talked about. ...

It provided an opportunity for each of us to see the other working, to see what actions the other was capable of behind the talk. What we did was accepted as provisional - efforts on the way to mastery. We could accept a performance as the best at this time and look for ways of improving it. We approached it as learners, not merely as teachers. It is in that sense it was an engine, driving forward the desire to learn.

Our ability to run the course differently developed alongside our changing relationship. Our trust in each other enabled us to take risks we would have avoided in other circumstances. However, there were still aspects of the course which we ran in a more habitual way. Luke wrote in his reflections:

During the course there were things that did not go so well. I recognised them because they made me feel uncomfortable. I suspect that in the past my strategies for dealing with those feelings would have involved using my power to control the class and to do things in a structured and trainer led way. ...

I now recognise that doing those things in those ways is about my personal view of myself (ego) and not about the class. By concentrating on the relationships and the sorts of things that fall out of them, I am no longer under an internal pressure to live up to that image I have of myself.

I had similar feelings about some of the 'teaching' I had done and it was based on understanding a difference between action that was enabling and action that fostered dependence:

I cannot forget how, on Thursday afternoon, I had felt really pleased with what the students had achieved.

I was aware how Luke and I had actually taught very little in the conventional sense. We had achieved more by teaching less. I felt awed by the feeling of "power-for" the students. I had not realised how our actions could be so powerful; but it was a power generated by holding back, by trusting, by relationship building; rather than a power gained by "teaching" or by imposing subjects on people.

I remember feeling embarrassed about one of the sessions I had run - not because it went badly, actually it was a good session in a conventional sense; but an embarrassment because I began to feel how disempowering it was. I felt I should not do it, that it was not right to use power-over people.

It was significant learning for me.

In the weeks following the course these ideas began to crystallise:

I have begun to see the social element in learning in a different way. I had always accepted learning had to be located in a social context, but I still felt vulnerable to the question "why?" ... I was aware I had not really addressed where and how this resides in people.

The revelation is that I am seeing learning and relationships as two sides of the same coin. A certain type of relationship entails a certain type of knowledge. You cannot change one without simultaneously changing the other. If something new is learned in a cognitive way, you might be said to "know" it, but you cannot *use* that knowledge (i.e. *know* it) in an experiential way, unless your relationships with other people change.

So, enabling people to see themselves differently in relation to others is the same thing as enabling them to learn.

Analysing the learning on the Part 1 course supports this. Those who are not learning are inhibited by the

relationships they create. They cannot for example, learn any facilitative techniques until they are willing to give up their controlling, power-over-others relationships.

The process of getting people to learn about their learning focuses attention on their learning strategies. By giving them strategies to learn by, they become independent learners. They are no longer inhibited by the evaluations of other people. They are prepared to risk looking foolish.

So in order to facilitate learning our course has to both supply new ideas and enable people to relate in substantially new ways. ...

This makes the whole idea of learning about learning really important. I think it emphasises the importance of getting people into groups where they can become conscious of their relationships. I think it places a huge responsibility on us to find ways of teaching that foster independence rather than dependence. This means examining the often subtle ways in which we play the expert role through possession of knowledge, judging and evaluating others, advising, helping etc. in ways which make it impossible for us to be questioned by the learner.

The experience Luke and I shared was a willingness to enter into a changed relationship with each other and with our group of students, and it led us to new learning. The learning was both in terms of a changed understanding of teaching and learning, and the discovery of new ways of acting in educational situations. The experience was piquant because of its juxtaposition with some of our old ways of teaching, and the clear difference in outcomes.

I now understand the stories of Peter and Naomi against this learning-relationship link. Peter experienced a pattern of relationships on the course which was both strange and unexpected. It was most noticeable in terms of the teacher-student relationship; his expectation was that Luke and I would be "instructors" and would explain to him what he had to do. He later told how he felt the course was "excessively student-led" and by day two he had become "extremely frustrated": "I wasn't getting what I was used to ... I began to ask myself, is training what I want? Do I want to come here?".

He wanted to do well in the micro-teach with Naomi, and he had formed an idea of what he could achieve. But he found his old knowledge no longer worked - or at least it was not going to produce the results he had expected. It was this mismatch between his knowledge and the outcomes of his action which caused him to begin to re-evaluate his position. He stopped blaming Luke and me for not teaching him and began to seek the causes of resistance in himself. His relationship with us changed from blame to acceptance as he legitimated our action and risked venturing across his borders.

Such changes are learned gradually. Two months after the course Peter said to me "I can take on board the

facilitation ideas, but it's not going to change me". His philosophy was "If you see a snake, kill it." Ten months on again, he remarked to me "I can't believe how much I've changed since the course". I reminded him of what he had said to me about never changing and we both laughed; "Now when I see a snake I want to understand it."

Naomi had a different experience. For her, teaching was a painful and anxious exercise in which it paid to maintain her defences. She recognised the same cultural barriers in Peter as she saw in her groups. The course never became enabling and she never dropped her defences nor entered into closer relationships with peers. Her difficulties at the start of the course were exactly the same ones she voiced at the end; she even avoided the pretence of adopting an objective for her learning. The course finished with perhaps the greatest betrayal; the person who represented her Nemesis suddenly dropped his guard and opened his mind to learning. She was abandoned - even her enemy had been taken away.

Unproductive relationships may be unpleasant, but they seem to be safer than taking risks and being rebuffed. Naomi confirmed to herself that it will never be worthwhile risking the vulnerability of close relationships in a police context.

Coping with Reflexivity: the Learning Triangle

My stories about Peter give a sense of how he constructed his identity through machismo, militarism and a didactic pedagogy. It was an identity that held intimacy at arm's length and is reminiscent of both Morris and Isabel in Chapter 6. Becoming a teacher entailed learning a new identity, or unlearning the old one (Atherton 2001). The story of the photograph is symbolic of how Peter's identity was re-storied. At first it is clung to openly, later it is questioned, and later still, when relegated to his locker, it becomes a memento of a different past.

Parallel to the rewriting of his biography he learned to relate to others in new ways which enabled the adoption of a range of facilitative teaching skills. My argument is he could not have acted facilitatively without making these other changes. He was introduced to the new skills on the course, and he might even have said he knew and understood them, but he would not have been able to use them without first beginning to change the way he related to his students. Peter would not need to act democratically while he still saw himself as the powerful, didactic instructor. He would only understand emancipation if he first believed the individual's knowledge could be valued over expert knowledge. Naomi knew this, but to indicate to students their local knowledge was as valuable as her expert knowledge, would be to undermine her authority and expose her to risk.

Our understanding of teaching and learning is linked to our understanding of the relationship between ourselves and other people. Furthermore, as our understanding of what counts as knowledge changes, so does the method of its apprehension. Thus a knowledge warranted by experts will be learned in a different way to a knowledge based on our own evaluations; the first is likely to be memorised and tested by recall, the second is

likely to be experiential and tested through interaction with others. Stenhouse (1983) argued this when suggesting that education theory has both to be developed and tested in the classroom. It requires different relationships between teachers and researchers, a different way of apprehending - practitioner research - and a different knowledge - practical, knowledge-in-action.

Relationships between self and others are linked to those things that are to count as knowledge, and to the ways of knowing or apprehending them. I have called the three-way link between relationships, knowledge and ways of knowing, a Learning Triangle.

The traditional relationship between teacher and student is a power-based expert/learner one. The teacher is the possessor of wisdom and imparts it to students who acquire it passively. Knowledge is of the encyclopaedic variety, cognitive, and capable of transmission in a literal sense. Students demonstrate their knowing through rote memorisation and recall of the knowledge in tests and examinations. In contrast, in an emancipatory context, the teacher/learner relationship is more democratic, and the knowledge is produced, or constructed, in the encounter between participants. Knowledge is concerned with how things get done, how people interact, and how the individual acts on social situations. Knowing is an experiential and participative process.

Whilst I have explained these three elements separately, I do not intend to imply they can be so easily separated. I see them rather as three sides to the same object; they occur concurrently. To participate in a social situation is to relate to others in a particular way; it entails knowing how to participate in that way, and one knows this through the mode of participation. Collaboration as I am conceiving it is a form of relationship with an associated way of knowing and a particular body of knowledge.

This is a theoretical relationship which emerged from the context I have been researching. The hierarchical relationships found within police organisations limit creativity and problem solving. They encourage an understanding of the world in legalistic categories because their knowledge is bounded by the covers of our statute books. The relationships are power-based, gendered, and dependent on other discriminations like police/civilian, race and rank. The learning triangle is relevant to understanding the debilitating nature of relationships in this sociopolitical context.

I did not seek-out such a theoretical model in my material, it was something which crystallised my understanding of what was occurring on the Part 1 courses. However, my thinking is the product of a long academic tradition. Dewey (1970) argues the purpose of education should be to prepare people for "participation in social life" (31); he goes on "We get no moral ideals, no moral standards for school life excepting as we interpret these in social terms", and "The school cannot be a preparation for social life excepting as it reproduces, within itself, the typical conditions of social life" (34). His argument is that teaching should contain a "consciousness of ... [the] social

environment" and to the extent that it does not do this it will be irrelevant to the needs of the learner. Under these circumstances the world of the classroom becomes divorced from the rest of the learner's life. Where this occurs "absorption" is favoured over "construction", and "competitiveness" is developed over "team work"; it fosters "individualism", "fear of failure", "emulation", "rivalry" and "superiority" (38-9).

These are just the factors identified as inhibiting collaboration in police organisations (Jones and Joss 1985). Dewey goes on to define what he calls "social intelligence" and its relation to the "moral trinity of the school":

- (1) The life of the school as a social institution in itself;
- (2) Methods of learning and of doing work; and
- (3) The school studies or curriculum.

Dewey (1970: 58)

These are the three elements I identified as the Learning Triangle. It is clear from the preceding paragraphs that Dewey saw them as important, however he does not describe the relationship between them in the same way I have done above. Dewey's focus is on learners' relationships with social institutions and his aim is to highlight the need to make subjects relevant to acquiring social intelligence. My focus is on the interactions between people and the way those relationships construct an understanding of policing. I am working with the same ideas as Dewey but, given my context, I am able to give them a different emphasis.

Dewey's position is similar to that developed by Stenhouse (1983), likewise in Carr and Kemmis (1986), the idea that participants in critical research should be producers of their own knowledge rather than consumers of an expert knowledge, entails the same three elements Dewey records.

McNiff (2001) comes closest to my approach in her analysis of teacher education in the contested territories of Northern Ireland and Palestine. She writes "What we know is shaped by how we know it" and makes it clear the "how" of knowing includes both the way knowledge is apprehended, and the relationships of power that lead to it. Her focus is the prejudice which develops between communities in conflict and hence her argument concerns the roots of prejudice in the power relationship between them. She uses the same three elements as Dewey and I, but once more, because of the change of context, produces a different thesis.

I have used the Learning Triangle as a heuristic in my teaching to aid colleagues' understanding of how hierarchical relationships inhibit learning. It models the social system in order to understand it, but in promoting understanding it changes the system, and is in that sense reflexive.

Coping with Reflexivity: Researcher-Teacher-Learner

My learning during the Part 1 course was not a chance effect but the product of a conscious decision to research my practice. It raised for me an interesting question about the relationship between researching and teaching and

between these and the learning of my students. When research is understood as "looking at others", then the relationship between these elements is unproblematic. However, the relationship is more difficult where the approach seeks to cope with reflexivity (see Chapter 3). I cannot value people-as-learners without valuing my own learning, and my learning has to be about valuing people-as-learners. This is not a logical circularity but an indication that the practical activities of researching, teaching and learning are embedded in a social context where action implies change.

Hargreaves (2001) faced this conundrum in her practitioner research into teaching assessment practice. She writes:

I came to see self-assessment as the essential component of feedback and feedback as the essential component of formative assessment. I came to understand peer assessment as an extension of self assessment.

Hargreaves (2001: 8)

She aimed to teach to her students this understanding of assessment, whilst at the same time *doing* assessment by researching the effectiveness of her teaching. It was important she research her practice because she would be assessing the contribution she made to her own learning, and she foresaw her students as peers assisting her. However, her understanding of assessment conflicted with her desire to *teach* that assessment practice, because teaching was not necessarily consonant with self-assessment. The expectation implicit in her *teaching* was for students to adopt her idea rather than to assess how it contributed to their learning. Her teaching was out-of-step with her beliefs because the imposition of the idea did not foster self assessment.

Hargreaves resolved the problem by concentrating on her own learning. She set out to understand and learn from her students by obtaining feedback, and left them to take responsibility for their learning. Her approach role-modelled the philosophy she sought to teach, by learning about teaching. Stenhouse (1983) calls this research-based teaching, but it could be any combination of the three terms researching, teaching and learning (White 2002).

This collapses the conventional distinction between evaluation and assessment; I evaluate my practice through my assessment of the students' learning. 'Evaluation' is the word given to my learning and 'assessment' to that of the students', but the distinction is arbitrary. As a participant I am a learner, thus I research my practice. As a teacher, my purpose is to enable the students to learn about their practice and I do this by role-modelling a learning approach to mine. As a practitioner-researcher I do both these things; I teach by learning and learn by teaching.

I used ideas from Losito et al. (1998) to understand this developing model of the research relationship. In explaining the difference between first and second order inquiry in action research they use the concepts of 'role' and 'activity'. A person's role is the reason for being present as a participant (researcher, teacher, student) and will remain constant; the activities undertaken (teaching/learning, speaking/listening; leading/following and so forth)

will be shared amongst the participants as appropriate. The point is that, in conventional research, activities are assigned to a given role, thus the expert activities are appropriated by the researcher. In action research, role and activities are independent.

The researcher/teacher/learner model copes with reflexivity by situating learning within relationships between social actors.

2. A CRITICAL INCIDENT: "BIG FRIDAY"

This section relates to a Part 1 course which I ran with Luke about 9 months after Peter and Naomi's. It concerns the situation which developed on Friday morning during the final micro-teaching session, and continued until the end of the day. I called it "Big Friday", an epithet with the qualities of a tabloid headline, but which at the time captured a tacit experience I could not express fully in words.

My narrative of the day is itself a layered text based on field notes. The first layer (in black ink) is an abridged version of my notes, and most closely related to the actual events. The second layer (in blue ink and indented) captures my thinking at the time in the form of 'thought-bubbles', related to the actual events but in slow-time. These first two layers were used in a reflexive exercise with the same group when they returned to begin Part 2 of the 7307, about three months later. The third layer (in green ink and further indentation) was reflection and theorisation arising from that exercise, and its application to two more Part 1 courses over the following 3 months.

The three layers comprise just one story, told in the present, in order to unravel the complex experience that was "Big Friday".

It begins with a micro-teach led by three students whom I refer to as 'the presenters'. Luke and I are absorbed into the group as students.

The Narrative

The micro-teach began with the classroom sequences from *A Class Divided*¹ (WGBH Educational Foundation 1985). The idea of the exercise was that we should look at the video clip from the children's points of view - one group taking the blue-eyes position and the other the brown-eyes.

I had seen this video many times before, but my attention was drawn back to the familiar ethical issues.

In the discussion afterwards ...

I began to ask myself about the teacher's role. She has had this class for six months but they are so suggestible that within minutes she has divided them. Why are her class so easily manipulated? Should her curriculum have taught them independence?

The police service uses this video to focus on what it

feels like to suffer discrimination. We do not notice that it shows us how power can work in an educational situation. How can our teaching institutions be so easily subverted?

It is not the children we should be looking at but the teacher, the school and the curriculum.

This is the idea that shaped my subsequent action.

I expressed my idea to the group ...

and was disappointed that no one seemed interested.

One of the three presenters asked "Could the same experiment be done with a group of adults?" The answer was yes - as the rest of the video demonstrates.

I began to see beyond the trauma of the children to the social context that created it.

One person noted how her partner had some racist attitudes that were a product of the group he worked with, but as an individual he was "a lovely person".

It stops being a question of racism per se; racism is a function of the power relationships between people. Can the relationships that create dependent learners feed prejudice and discrimination?

Luke, Graham and I often describe ourselves as "subversive" - as if it were just a matter-of-fact that we happen to think differently. But, we identify ourselves as teacher-educators with a moral responsibility to challenge relationships which feed ignorance.

One of the presenters began to talk through the difference between "prejudice" and "discrimination", using a flip chart.

I guessed the plan was to use the prejudice/discrimination paradigm?

I began to suspect that any exercise which did not question authority was likely to be implicated in the power relationships.

I looked at the definitions on the flip chart, "prejudice" - "... based on little or no fact."

This seemed too rational. Prejudice is about how we feel - not about the facts. We have our prejudice and then look for the "facts" to rationalise it.

Is this how our values are institutionalised? They are

explained away in rational categories so that, instead of feeling them, we cognise them.

Luke must have been thinking along similar lines because he spoke out challenging this.

Challenging the presenters!! Should we do this? I'd been running the ethical problem through in my mind, because my earlier intervention was an implicit challenge to their focus.

Are they the group leaders? Are we learners or pretend students? What activities are legitimate for which roles? And how do you decide?

I agreed with Luke. I said I wasn't sure that prejudice and discrimination should be separated - and I apologised for being disruptive!

I was disappointed that the group did not take up my concern. I thought it was really important, why didn't they?

Making the distinction between them is not the point; the problem is with the authority to do so.

Another group member (Joan) also questioned it. She was not sure why. It didn't seem right.

I sensed she was learning she had the power to say no, and wanted to try it.

"The first step in becoming powerful without using power-plays to control others is to learn to be disobedient" (Steiner 1981: 50).

The presenters introduced an exercise based on the prejudice/discrimination paradigm³. We stopped for a short break first.

I had decided I wasn't going to participate. I spoke briefly with Luke who felt "it seemed wrong" to join in.

Why did I decide this? I felt the prejudice/discrimination distinction was problematic and did not want to commit myself to a choice in the exercise until I had thought it through.

There seems to be a link between the video, and what was happening in our classroom. The group-leader has the power to 'do-diversity-to' us. The learning should be about recognising how activities reinforce power

relationships.

Classroom activities should engender positive liberty.

I was acting as a participant in the group not as a trainer. I had not appreciated at first how difficult this would be for the three presenters. I felt the urge to be true to myself.

The truth is I had not thought about the consequences at all.

The exercise started. The dilemma - "Some land close to your house is being turned into a traveller site; what would your position be on the paradigm?"

Joan, Luke and I moved outside the playing area.

In the ensuing discussion we three were asked why we had not participated.

I said I was questioning the paradigm as a result of my recent thinking, prior to the course, and ideas provoked by the video.

I recall participating in the exercise with another course; I selected the same quadrant of the paradigm for each dilemma, but was dissatisfied because it did not express what I felt. I didn't want to be put in a box - the paradigm speaks for you but does not say quite the right thing. Is it the "speaking-for-you" which reduces positive liberty?

I remember Luke saying "where was the learning", but it was misinterpreted as a criticism of the exercise. His point was the learning is not necessarily where the group leader wants it to be.

Joan felt it was wrong to participate. She remarked that at the start of the week she would have joined in and done what was expected, but now she felt able to choose.

Roger had the courage to say he would be a prejudiced-discriminator. He knew this was not "politically correct", but wanted to be honest.

I identified with the need to be honest ...

... and said so. I felt he and I were doing similar things - choosing despite the power relationships that encourage us to conform.

Roger disagreed.

He was obviously angry about what I had done.

Had we begun to collaborate?:

- Our experience was different;
- Our learning was different;
- We both chose to resist conventional expectations.

The teacher should help the students to learn to be able to choose, not just to conform to social norms.

The action by Luke and me changed the course of the session.

This was no longer an isolated event run by three students; our curriculum for the whole week began to emerge. The group was about to experience collaboration, with teacher and learner roles being shared.

Our experiences were all different; varying from uncomfortable to pleasant. We were collaborating in the sense that we were all risking new learning.

One presenter explained how at the start of the week he would have called the session a failure; "I wouldn't know what to do next", "I would have been out of the door".

But he had asked some good questions, he didn't panic and he allowed things to develop.

It signalled a change from talking about diversity to thinking about what had happened.

We were still standing. Someone moved towards a chair. ...

I decided to sit down.

The presenters later said that when this happened they felt I had usurped their leadership of the session, because they had to abandon their plans.

We could not have continued. Participants' attention was elsewhere and the group was about to develop in a different direction.

I said I just chose to sit ...

the heart of the issue - the ability to make choices.

I felt I was now in the role of participant-learner. I was excited at the prospect of a new

step in my learning.

But I was *making a point* by not participating. It was powerful and perhaps selfish. However, I would not have done it in my teacher-role. Teaching interventions feel more cooperative. I felt I had a right to do this as a learner.

It raises an interesting question. Even a passive teacher role maintains ownership of the teaching activities. Teacher and student roles can only be exchanged when the teacher is prepared to be a learner.

We all resumed our seats. The discussion was strong. Luke and I contributed according to our share - we had no preferred status.

Several were angry with what we had done. One said it was "whimsical"; another described our reasons as "deep".

It is significant they felt able to express these views.

I emphasised I was not criticising the exercise; I didn't join in because the earlier exercises had helped me see it differently. Their session was part of the context of the whole week.

We got onto the subject of the organisation's poor handling of grievances. It provoked much heartfelt criticism of the organisation.

I was surprised how many people felt they had been mistreated by the organisation.

They were beginning to say *no* to unhelpful hierarchical relationships.

This discussion might also have been a way of not-dealing-with Luke's and my "disruptive" behaviour.

We stopped for a coffee break. Luke and I didn't join the group. Back in the classroom ...

... I knew the next session would be important, but had no idea what would happen.

I asked the presenters what stood out in their minds. One said that Luke and me opting out of the exercise had a profound effect on him. His experience was of "the leaders and experts undermining my plans".

Others explained how they felt we were sabotaging the session. They asked if we had been playing a game, or manipulating the group for some reason.

They were able to express their anger without resorting to blaming. I sat and listened.

I was the learner, they were explaining their needs.

I was asked if I had been aware of how difficult it would be for the presenters. I said I was ...

... a white lie - I had not realised just how strong the impact would be.

A big lie!! I was not really aware. I felt embarrassed because I seemed to have acted selfishly. This was difficult to admit - I didn't even write it in my journal until much later!! I don't feel the need to blame myself now.

I described how I felt I was faced with an ethical and educational decision. Should I play the trainer-role and conform to expectations, or should I go with my feelings?

I didn't say to myself, *What would be most educational?* only, *What should I do?* I didn't want to be awkward, I just wanted to express my feelings.

Later, I rationalised it as a *balanced educational decision*. I went through a period when the story I told about my practice was "the heroic version of the teacher" (Stronach 2003).

One student said, as the trainer, I should have contained my own needs and promoted what was best for the students.

I listened ...

... and accepted this as an expression of how he felt.

More embarrassment. What if he is right?

Had Luke and I participated, then nothing would have happened. By resisting, we unwittingly created other possibilities for the group.

We refused to act like trainers; it was role-transgression.

We had faith in our instincts. I rationalised it as a *balanced educational decision* but in fact my action was tacit, emotional and instinctual - there was no rational balancing.

I wanted to ask the three presenters how they felt about what happened. Had they learned from it? But I felt this was a subconscious need for validation - "tell me what I did was all right". Likewise, they were looking for validation from me.

There was a mutual dependence; but it was time for each of us to be responsible for our own learning.

The teacher/student relationship can be a dependent one: by adopting a role the other is forced to take a reciprocal one. Students force us to be teachers, and we force them to be students. 'Choice' and 'independence' do not impose teaching and learning roles on others.

We were all "being" within the group. Learning was collaborative, not individual. The real learning was recognising the warmth and honesty of human relationships.

During the micro-teaching sessions on the previous day I felt a growing frustration that whilst we talked a lot about bullying, racism etc. we were not doing anything about it. What can we do to help ourselves and others cope with these situations in future?

I felt the same thing was going to happen again; another experiment in "awareness raising" which employed the dominant power relationships to make the point.

My learning was something I brought to the group, rather than being provided by the presenters. The group exercises helped me make sense of what I already had. Learning depends on what we bring to it, but the conventional police trainer's role is to design it for you.

After these questions and our explanations, we took little further part. The group decided what to discuss. The leadership role became redundant and group members shared the activities as appropriate.

I noticed one of the presenters was particularly quiet ...

... I was concerned and tempted to check out how she felt, but held back. It did not seem appropriate for me to do it, as if for the moment, I did not have the right.

That was a balanced educational decision.

Another group member had noticed the problem and did the checking-out.

I wondered whether new group norms had developed about who and when a person could play the leadership role.

I recall at the end of the session one person commenting "You realise we've run this debrief".

It was an observation rather than a question and expressed both surprise and pleasure.

We ended the session in a buoyant and happy mood.

After lunch things had moved on. People had organised their own learning. A number said "we had a really deep and intense debrief" over lunch.

The afternoon session involved information giving about Part 2 of the programme.

I felt a few people were still looking for an obvious outcome ...

... "Tell me what I should learn from that".

There is a sense of them being caught between two paradigms.

Another person felt the week was about a new "style" of training. He could use that style, but he felt there were times when he would have to use his old style.

Another wondered if we would send them a letter detailing how well they had done in their teaching sessions, and whether they would get guidance on "basic techniques".

"Do I jangle the coins in my pocket?"

The majority of people saw it differently - it was not about a training style.

"Style" refers to the facilitative/didactic dualism.

There was much talk about "power" and how they had not realised the significance of it. One talked about how at first she thought all the talk of power was "nonsense" and "irrelevant" and thought "I'm not powerful". What she had learned was just how much power she had.

Several people explained their surprise at the amount of feeling that can be hidden behind impassive, compliant faces.

Others expressed how they had enjoyed the week. One spoke of the group as "twelve friends". When she got home her husband would ask her how it went, and she would say "It was good, I enjoyed it", but she would never be able to explain it to him. She felt it was something only people in the group could understand.

Learning about relationships is context specific. Perhaps it is re-learned in each new group (Wallace 1999), through a constant re-invention of wheels (Kushner 2002a, 2002b).

Luke and I shared our learning.

The group was reluctant to break up and despite several cues to finish, we stayed on to savour the closing moments.

Several people spoke about how different the course had been to other experiences within the organisation. One person explained how she felt Luke and I were "people who gave a damn"; another that it was "the caring" which was so refreshing in an organisation like ours. She said she could feel the enthusiasm Luke and I had for our work, that we cared about it. She found that motivational.

Yet another noted how unexpected it was to find two people in our organisation (Luke and I) who could behave in this way.

This resurrected an issue from Monday when we had talked about using managers' first names, "Is everyone comfortable now about using David and Luke's?" They were, but recalled their suspicions on Monday when we introduced it, stepping carefully in case we changed the rules. They expected manipulation and dishonesty.

Luke, Graham and I had discussed names/titles over lunch. These last comments show how big a step it is for police officers to even consider non-hierarchical forms of relationship.

We are no longer "trainers" who "run courses". We construct our identities as "teachers", "adult educators" and "teacher-educators". The new learning goes hand-in-hand with the identity.

It is not good enough for us just to do training. We do it in full awareness of the moral implications of that position. We cannot be accomplices in the continued reproduction of the dominant power relationships in our organisation.

We have a moral responsibility to say no. (There is that heroic version of the teacher again!)

Comment

It is difficult to represent the depth of feeling aroused during the half-day these notes represent. It began with a comfortable complacency; participants had learned during the week to treat each other respectfully and the norms created ensured the presenters were supported during the micro-teaches. These norms were different to those outside the classroom, but were still based on a teacher/student dependency. The life of the group was severely disrupted when the 'true' leaders swept-aside those norms by refusing to cooperate. There was anger and confusion. These were worked through and a period of participation and learning occurred, though still experienced deeply as risk, discomfort, worry, pain, and understanding. Finally there was a period of calm, where participants

felt contentment, caring, togetherness, but still some feelings of confusion.

I chose this incident because it represents a paradigm situation. It demonstrates the institutionalisation of values and the inertia of dependent relationships. It shows how these relationships can be changed through the transgression of boundaries, and the conditions under which it is legitimate for this to happen. It shows what collaborative social relationships look like in these circumstances, and the nature of the learning that is produced. Finally it shows the complexity and interrelatedness of all these factors.

The Institutionalisation of Values

It is unsurprising that the video documentary *A Class Divided* is used so often in the police environment. I have seen it, and used it myself, many times over the last decade. The ethical issues are usually noted but rarely discussed, and I have even heard of trainers stopping debate on the grounds it is irrelevant to the subject of prejudice and discrimination. When I watch the video now I want to see one of the children stand-up and say *No, I'm not doing this*. But the teacher always triumphs and again prejudice and discrimination are done-to the children. To achieve it, the teacher has to employ institutional power structures in the same way as they are used by people who would discriminate against others. The overt aim may be admirable, but what of the underlying curriculum? In what way is this educational action?

It suits training in the police environment because it matches how police training is done. The trainer designs student learning through a series of linked exercises. Each exercise has its purpose in terms of learning outcomes, previously decided by the trainer. The models and paradigms order the students' experiences; they label and categorise them; they have the authority to speak for you. In the police environment the headline message may be "valuing diversity", but what is the hidden curriculum? What is actually learned through these experiences? My suggestion is we learn to conform. We learn to suppress our own experience and express it in the form of an officially sanctioned model, or definition, or rule. We do such training as a substitute for understanding our moral obligations to other people.

The scenes in the video can be studied as an analogy for the events in our classroom. The non-participation of Luke and myself would be like one of the children in the video saying *No*. We did not understand why we had to do it, but we knew we were acting against the social pressure to "please the teacher". The consequences for our group were significant because it helped others to understand their own rights. To have continued with the exercise would have paralleled the psychological abuse in the video. Our group was finding an emancipatory ethic which the class in the video lacked.

I am reminded of the story of Naomi. She teaches prejudice and discrimination in just this way. When she finally escapes to safety her reassurance is *At least I did my best*. Just as police officers are taught to box their experiences

into predetermined rationalisations, the trainer does the same - I followed the rules, I did my bit, it's up to them now, I am absolved from responsibility.

An Ethic of Care

Arthur Miller's play *All My Sons* (1958) is about moral responsibility at the nexus between the personal and the social. A man takes a risk to save his family from destitution, but it leads to the death of others. His eldest son, Larry, kills himself when he finds out. The story emerges at the end of the play and these few lines are the younger son talking about his father:

Chris: ... It's not enough for him to be sorry. Larry didn't kill himself to make you and Dad sorry.

Mother: What more can we be!

Chris: You can be better! Once and for all you can know there's a universe of people outside and you're responsible to it ...

I find these lines quite moving when I think back to the events described above. It sums-up some important learning; it is not enough for me, or any of us, to keep reproducing the unfairness of our organisation just because it is comfortable to do so. We can be better than that.

The refrain "I did my best" is a familiar one in our organisation. I am not saying we cannot be sorry, or that it is wrong to have done your best but not succeeded. My argument is, just because you "did your best" it does not imply you can avoid responsibility for what happens. "Doing one's best" is associated with the rules, procedures and technologies against which one's action is measured. The locus of evaluation is external to the individual (Rogers & Freiberg 1994) and it removes the need to accept moral or ethical responsibility.

This is a crucial point about police training. The relationship between trainer and student does not have an ethical dimension and therefore it lacks an educational dimension (Dewey 1970; Stenhouse 1983; White 2002). Teaching should be a set of normative practices (Golby and Parrott 1999), but in police training it is a set of rules that provide protection from the need for a moral and ethical engagement with other people.

Part of the excitement of my learning was recognising my curriculum contained an ethical element. For a while I placed a lot of emphasis on this. 'Big Friday' took on an epic quality with an underlying principle that was "bigger than all of us". I began to story my practice as a "moral career" (Clough 2002), but remembering Berlin (1969), I realised this was replacing one form of certainty with another, "the retreat to the inner citadel" (135).

The idea in *All My Sons* is important, but it reflects a more generalised principle about how to treat people, perhaps linked to the ethic of care that is central to the helping professions (Glen 2000). I need to construct my practice as one guided by a moral principle about how to relate to others, rather than determined by it; one that recognises decision making is contextualised in complex situations (Simons 2000).

Role Transgression

The crucial point in the story is where Luke and I decline to participate in the exercise, and I suggest this is the catalyst for change within the group. My argument is that our resistance challenged group norms and transgressed the boundaries between accepted classroom roles. The group wanted to associate activities with roles, thus when we adopted the wrong activities we denied the roles they had allocated for us.

I described in the story how I felt I had taken a learner-participant role, and associated it with new understanding about the parallels between the video and the classroom. A number of different influences came together and I felt on the verge of a new step in my own learning. It was clear from the two discussions following the incident that group members had expected us to participate. There was consternation and anger we had not done so, and suspicion we were sabotaging the presenters' plans. It was acceptable for one of their peers to sit-out, but we were expected to operate by other rules. This teaching role was made explicit; the teacher must put the students' needs first. Our role was to "play students", not to be real learners.

Our actions were hugely powerful, far more so than the student who sat-out and whose resistance was hardly questioned. Thus, whilst we had acted unexpectedly, we were still experienced as possessing the power and authority of the group leaders. It is helpful to consider this using the authority/legitimacy distinction; we had the authority to choose either a student or a teacher role, but the group would not legitimise a learner role.

One of the presenters explained how he felt I had usurped his authority, an indication he saw his teaching role as a more powerful one to the rest of the class. He expected participants to behave in ways which respected it. There is a reciprocity between the roles of teacher and student. It suggests that when I resisted, I was not playing a student because I did not reciprocate the teacher's behaviour. The role of *learner* seems to stand outside of this dynamic.

As group leader I behave in certain ways in relation to my students. I am a facilitator as opposed to a transmitter of information. I do not argue for a particular point of view, for fear students will be persuaded to accept it on my authority. My authority could be the warrant for knowledge. My approach is to allow students to develop their own knowledge rather than feel subject to an external, expert knowledge. When I opted out of the exercise I was acting outside the boundaries of my facilitator role. It would have been experienced as different and unexpected. Norms had developed that were concerned with acting in quiet ways and respecting others, and the students had become accustomed to this way of behaving. It was these new norms I broke when I sabotaged the lesson. Their anger was because my transgression seemed to be a manipulation more akin to behaviour they expected in the work place.

The relationships which developed following this second transgression were less comfortable. Strong emotions were released. The group accepted that Luke and I were not acting manipulatively and had to make sense

of it in other ways. As they explored this new turn of events our relationships changed once more. We had shown we could cross the boundary from teacher to learner and it encouraged others to transgress the boundary from *student* to learner. The group had to relate to us as learners.

The feeling of being a learner in the group manifested itself in a number of ways, for example, in the story I explain how I wanted to question the three presenters to gain validation for what I had done, but realised this reflected my own dependency. I had to be responsible for my own learning. I noted how similar such questions would have been to students who say "Yes, but tell me have I learned the right thing?" That is the contrast between being a learner, and being a student.

After satisfying themselves we had acted ingenuously the group members moved their focus from us. It was during this phase when I felt there was far more equality in participation. Luke and I had no special access to the floor, and we waited our turn with everyone else. When we spoke we were exploring the extent of our learning. Our experiences were contributions to the group sense-making rather than legitimised as expert knowledge.

The final session on Friday afternoon was further testament to the sea-change in relationships between people. I recall, at the end of the day, sitting in comfort with the group, savouring those closing moments and knowing something special had occurred for us. As one of the students noted, we were twelve friends.

I don't want to be too sentimental however. By the afternoon it was clear some people had returned to the student role and were expecting Luke and I to reciprocate as teachers. It is unreasonable to suggest everyone's experience of the morning's events was the same. I believe that relationships did change, but I suspect the changes were complex and varied, and different for different people. I suspect some members preferred to return to more familiar ways of relating.

This pattern of diverse experiences but with a shared or common risk taking is one I have recognised in the development of the core group (White 2003b), and which I have suggested is characteristic of collaboration. A group of people came together and shared certain things in common. However, the commonality should not be overstated, because the other feature of our collaboration was a diversity of experience and outcome. At times it was enjoyable, other times it was frustrating or made one angry. It could be painful. But there was a common desire to face these experiences because they seemed to promise something worthwhile. The diversity of experience seems more important than the commonality.

My researcher-teacher-learner model is about relationships between people and is thus based on an ethical precept. The caring for other people evident in my story was the result of the way we began to relate. Giving up an expert role - just as giving up a dependent role - takes faith in other people, because it makes one vulnerable. If people choose to reciprocate one's own boundary transgressions, they are showing a faith in the teacher and

other group members. Participants have a responsibility to those who show that faith because they are willing to risk their vulnerability.

Concluding Comment

I have used the term 'collaboration' to describe a situation where participants in a social context have judged it worthwhile to risk relating to each other in unfamiliar ways. In the context of this hierarchical organisation, relationships tend to be based on rigid distinctions between roles and activities, and where there is a symbiotic dependency between one role and another. I have used the concepts of authority, legitimacy, boundaries and transgression to describe peoples' affective connection with these.

In my context, collaboration is a form of participative action that implies the rejection of dependent relationships. Returning to Berlin's two forms of liberty, collaboration concerns positive freedom because it relates to the individual's experience of the sources of restriction on liberty. The individual becomes free to choose which influences to be subject to. Committing oneself to a team goal is to experience a negative freedom; positive freedom is experienced in the making of the choice.

Collaboration becomes marked by a diversity of experience rather than a conformity to some particular outcome. Though an outcome may be shared as a result of collaboration, what is important is that participants have chosen to share it. It is not the goal per se, but the quality of their experience of that choice. The choice whether or not to be influenced by a team goal is theirs. In particular, in this context, it is experienced as the taking of a risk because of a perceived worthwhile personal outcome. It is experienced as risk because, in giving up a simple reciprocation of roles/activities, one is experiencing a greater liberty, and freedom to choose can be scary.

Notes

¹ *A Class Divided* (WGBH Educational Foundation 1985) was a documentary on one teacher's attempts in 1970s USA to teach racial tolerance to her 10 year old pupils. She divided the class according to eye-colour, and then treated the two groups differentially. The children quickly adapted to the status difference and their treatment of each other is both disturbing and harrowing. The children experience two days of prejudice and discrimination by in turn being both perpetrator and victim. See also Peters, W. (1987) *A Class Divided: then and now* Yale University Press: New Haven.

² The 'prejudice/discrimination paradigm' models the relationship between these two terms. It has four positions: (1) a prejudiced discriminator; (2) a non-prejudiced non-discriminator; (3) a prejudiced non-discriminator; and (4) a non-prejudiced discriminator. It is Centrex sponsored dogma in police diversity training.

³ A familiar exercise based on the 'prejudice/discrimination paradigm' is to divide the classroom into four squares representing the quadrants of the model. The trainer reads-out a moral dilemma involving a minority social group, and participants have to stand in whichever quadrant represents their attitude towards that group and situation. It is a Centrex 'favourite'.

8 Creativity and Evaluation

The 7307 Part 2: formative evaluation of change

Life in groups is embedded in conversation, and language is the essential and unique carrier of meaning-in-the-making. Intervening can be seen as an act of co-authoring a history or narrative, that can create new generative "conversations for possibilities" and new listening in others.

Bouwen and Fry (1996: 532)

INTRODUCTION

I have told a story of my research which progressed from the formation of a core group, through unsuccessful attempts to work collaboratively with colleagues' teams and arrived at teaching and learning situations where that participation was finally engendered. There is a danger with a story that its internal logic renders the happy ending inevitable; the story is told both in order to justify the ending, and because it is in the nature of a story that it has an ending (Goodson 1983; Stronach and Maclure 1997). There is an implicit theory of coherence (Kushner 2000b) that makes the data which is produced look like evidence towards the argument made, and it is the story which provides that coherence.

My final chapter reflects the optimism with which I concluded this stage of the research, but I seek to avoid an ending or closure (Lawson 2001). In earlier chapters I have taken care to indicate the complexity of the social context in which I researched. The incidents described work on many levels, and I could not even take-for-granted the consonance between my own thoughts and action. However, just as I began Chapter 2 with an evaluation of an existing situation I feel I should end with one. This final chapter thus has a more evaluative feel than earlier ones. It considers how my colleagues' thinking changed, how their experience of teaching changed, and how their relationships with the organisation and others changed. Inevitably there will be some comparison of the starting and finishing positions, but I am wary of this means/end rationality. The rationale behind the researcher-teacher-learner model is that it should cope with reflexivity. When evaluative action is performed and shared by all participants, then it becomes ethical and educational.

The context of this chapter is Part 2 of the 7307 programme. At two points in the 10-month course the participants ran formative evaluations of their learning; the first was called the Creativity Day and was aimed at generating new perspectives on practice; and the second was an evaluation of the whole programme, to promote thinking about learning. Both evaluations were intended to be part of participants' continuing development, rather than summative evaluations of their learning or of the programme itself. The emphasis was on the value of the research process rather than any particular outcome.

The aim of the 7307 programme was to enable participants to create more educative relationships in their own classrooms. It entailed self-awareness of their own power and influence and authorisation of students as active knowledge creators. The programme was designed to achieve this by developing participants as practitioner-researchers; by focusing on their learners' experience of being in class they would understand the need to teach in less authoritarian ways. The two evaluations described here are representative of my pedagogical approach. It was important that as group leader I role-model a learning orientation (Watkins 2000) to my own practice; I had to live the researcher-teacher-learner model with the groups.

This chapter picks up earlier themes, showing how the problems encountered can be interpreted in terms of authority and legitimacy. It shows in particular how the current unhelpful relationships result in 'designed' experiences and an impoverished view of learning. As thinking about learning changed, relationships became more satisfying. Participants became more aware of their own agency, and began to create new identities for themselves as problem solvers independent from the evaluations of the hierarchy.

A CONTENT/METHOD DUALISM

I ran two groups of 10 people on the programme, meeting at monthly intervals for 1 or 2 days. Trainers who volunteered for the course saw it as a legitimate form of self-development for two main reasons. Firstly, it led to the award of a certificate, "a piece of paper" that "might prove useful in the future", and whose worthwhileness was measured by the effort involved in "writing some essays". There was little sense that participation in the programme might be valuable professional development; trainers regarded themselves as expert and the "bit of paper" was certification of what they already did. Secondly, they expected it to be focused on skill-enhancement and improved teaching "performances" (Edwards and Protheroe 2003), and the corollary was that they felt dependent on others to "impart" and assess the new knowledge. These two rationales reflect the contradiction described in Chapter 3; the trainers feel they have nothing to learn, but are dependent on experts to teach them so.

In the teaching and learning equation suggested by this analysis there is only one variable - the teaching skill deployed by the trainer. The social context of the classroom is assumed to be neutral, and the content of a teaching session is objective and unproblematic. The trainer only has to "pass the message", and favourite transmission metaphors included "imparting" and "implanting". Their participation on the 7307 programme was legitimated by these expectations.

In the first session, I introduced participants to the idea of practitioner-research, by considering the question "How am I doing?". My approach assumed an understanding of curriculum that challenged both the how and the what of police training - "No curriculum development without teacher development" (Stenhouse 1983:156). I used

an extract from an HMIC report (HMIC 2002) that called for a broader police training curriculum:

Training organisations will argue that the current probationer training programme is balanced insofar that it takes full account of all the elements of KUSAB. However, this Inspection found that whilst the attitude and behaviour elements feature, there is still an imbalance with too much emphasis being placed on knowledge of the law to the detriment of other components. These components should include the following skills vital to being an effective police officer:

- communication;
- problem solving;
- team working;
- techniques of reducing crime;
- evidence based practice; ...

HMIC (2002: para. 4.10)

I asked the groups to consider their own practice against this. The extract was met with indignation; they saw it as unwarranted criticism, and its implication that we should teach less law was an example of slipping standards in the police service. The reaction was emotional and sustained - we should not spend time teaching these items "to the detriment of the basics". The affectivity of the response indicates I had exceeded the bounds of what they regarded as legitimate; the suggestion that we need to teach different things was a threat because it challenged the taken-for-grantedness of their teaching-learning equation.

I analysed my field notes from the session and identified three misconceptions supporting the content/method dualism in their thinking. The first was a simplistic sender/message/receiver model of communication, in which the skill of the sender ensures the message is received intact. It explained their focus on teaching as a skill. It linked to the second misconception which identified learning with the receipt of the message - a traditional transmission model of teaching. Thirdly, the 'message' was conceived as an objective and unproblematic syllabus - the tangible off-the-shelf package. I planned the subsequent sessions around these three misconceptions. In order to avoid the defensiveness experienced on the first day, I decided to use metaphors as teaching resources. I hoped they would be less threatening and enable participants to think about their practice from different perspectives.

Session 2 demonstrated the groups' dependence on me as the expert. I focused on 'communication' and in particular, the identification and interpretation of the underlying messages in social contexts. The groups found it difficult to think about their practice in terms of metaphors, and the sessions generally did not go well. With group 2, I changed my plans for the afternoon and ran an exercise and discussion to discover how they had experienced the morning's work. I found that rather than using the metaphors as heuristics, the group saw their task as trying to guess what I wanted them to learn. Comments collected on flip charts included:

"Were we meant to find a direct link to our roles?"

"How is this going to help me and what *should* I be taking with me?"

"Thought provoking but unclear what the link to training is"

"I was wondering where this was leading"

"Began to realise (hopefully) where we were going"

One person explained how she studied me for clues as to whether she "had got the right points yet", and if she got no confirmation she would try something else. The participants wanted to please me by being a "good group" because they liked me and wanted the session to work for me. They felt hurt when they discovered I did not appreciate their attentiveness. Running the review exercise produced useful feedback for me, but it was clear that participants had not seen themselves as engaged in anything to do with their own learning. And furthermore, *it was my fault*. I had acted non-legitimately and they had warned me off.

It would be wrong of me to present this evidence as if it could be abstracted from the social situation. It should be clear from my writing in other chapters that I see myself as partly constitutive of the classroom context. I am aware there was a side of me which began from the blaming premise "they are going to have to change" (Mulholland and Wallace 2003), and in the second session, sought to transmit a message about "communication". I will not reprise the autobiographical perspective in this chapter, and will instead assume the response described here was jointly constructed.

My action in this phase of the research challenged their dependence on me and sought to co-create new knowledge. The following two sections are both demonstrative of the process and evaluative of the results.

THE CREATIVITY DAY

This session was run about two thirds of the way through the programme. It was intended to support the participants as practitioner-researchers by encouraging them to ask different questions about their practice or to look at it from different perspectives. At the time I felt it was a risky session to run and I was concerned that group 1 in particular would find it difficult to relate to. I was wrong with that assessment, and several members talked about it later as a turning-point in the course. As an evaluation of the programme it demonstrates some important changes in attitude from those just described. Participants had begun to see the classroom context as an important variable, which entailed a self awareness that previously would have been too dangerous to contemplate. The results show formidable blocks to police training becoming more educative, but a significant first step had been taken in being able to ask meaningful questions about it.

The day began with four exercises setup in different parts of the classroom. Each exercise invited creative

thought about the practice of teaching using the following media: writing in verse; writing fictional prose; painting a picture; and thinking in metaphors. The participants were given freedom to follow their own route around the four exercises, and the morning was concluded with a general discussion about their experience of it. In the afternoon participants formulated new questions about their practice, and then in a goldfish-bowl discussion explored how they might investigate them. This exercise was less successful because, whilst participants were able to ask questions about practice, they had difficulty seeing themselves as capable of answering them. They were inclined to feel resigned to the problems rather than empowered to resolve them. The following month we returned to the creative writing for some sharing and interpretive exercises aimed at developing their metaphors.

Some months later, I used the material in an evaluative discussion with peers in a research seminar. The next section focuses on participants' emerging understanding of teaching.

Metaphors

The metaphor exercise invited participants to devise their own metaphors for teaching. The following is a small selection:

Teaching is like being ...

a tea bag

a ripe blackberry - you're always the first to be picked on

a conductor - pulling a crowd of people together to produce music

a cannon ball fired into a crowd - you don't know what harm you might cause

Teaching is like doing ...

a marathon

a crossword - difficult but satisfying

something which you're not sure has a point

throwing pots - making something difficult look easy

The "tea bag", "blackberry" and "marathon" ideas represent the side of police training which is about meeting targets and objectives, and delivering back-to-back courses. It is unsatisfying work for the trainers because they are under a constant pressure from their managers on one side, and squeezed by low student satisfaction on the other. The more optimistic metaphors - "conductor", "potter" and "crossword" - see the teacher in a dominant role, solving problems and shaping the outcomes for other people.

Teaching as a "cannon ball" and as "something which you're not sure has a point" are more enigmatic. Both arose from participants' growing awareness of their personal power and of the influence of an underlying hidden curriculum (Snyder 1971). The second of these quotes was from a student who, nine months before, had said to me "You talk about your *practice*, but to me it's just a job." I feel that in the context of police training where a lot

of classroom activity does not have any educative benefit, someone who has begun to ask *what is the point*, has moved beyond just seeing it as a job.

Creative writing

The following is a selection of the poetry and prose.

(a) Lesson

Huff and puff
Grizzle grump
Stamp my feet and cry
Huff and puff
Grizzle grump
Why Why Why Why Why!

Throw my pens
Find a dog
Kick it in the bum
Where's my bloody training shoes
I'm going for a run

Pounding feet
Muscle ache
Lungs screaming out for air
Back again
Find a friend
There's a problem I have to share

Chit chat
Cappuccino
Maybe I'll have a sticky bun
Chit chat
Sorted now
There's other things I could have done

Find my pen
Kiss the dog
Rub its sore behind
Thank you friend you've been a pal
In helping me unwind

The trainer in this poem is frustrated and stressed, perhaps even caught in a cycle of frustration. It illustrates a common theme - the assumption of responsibility. It is the trainer who experiences the problem and who has the responsibility for finding the solution. The members of the class are present, but only in the sense that the trainer's emotions glance-off them (Clough 2002). With the absence of the class, there is also an absence of reference to their learning. This classroom problem is not seen from the students' point of view or connected to their learning experience; they are not given any responsibility in the classroom context. If a problem arises then it is the trainer's responsibility alone; the trainer has to design the learning for the students.

(b) Day at Work

Boy am I tired
Tired but happy
Well maybe not happy as such
Maybe more relieved

Boy am I tired
It's been a long day
Talking all the time
Trying to be believed

Ah, but they weren't such a bad lot
Not like I first thought
Some of the names I saw
Thought the first day was gonna be fraught

They weren't such a bad lot
I think it went well
So why did they all run
When they heard the bell?

There is an emotional depth to this poem. It speaks of a trainer who experiences considerable tensions within the role. The worries begin with an examination of the class list - a search for names that are recognised, always with the fear that the name of a difficult student will be recognised. Then there is the concern over what the day will bring and the relationship that will develop with the class. At the end of the day there is just relief it has been survived. I feel this trainer wants to teach well but is aware that the students do not want to be there.

Teaching is about "talking all the time" and "trying to be believed". As with (a) above, this trainer takes responsibility for the satisfaction of the class, but there is a sense in this case of there being no solutions and the problem just has to be endured. Teaching here is something of a lottery; it may go well or it may not, but either way the trainer has no control over the outcome. The best that can be done is to look for omens in the class list - like a seer examining the entrails of a sacrificed animal; and then pray until the bell.

(c) At the End of the Day

Have I just been shot,
I feel all tied up in knots.
But can it be my fault
if there's been a revolt?
Why am I depressed,
or am I the oppressed?
What is the value of life
to be put to so much strife?

This poem continues that sense of bewilderment and confusion; the trainer feels got-at, asks *why me?* and again feels powerless to do anything about the problem.

However, there is a hint of something different in the question "can it be my fault?" and the puzzlement "am

I the oppressed?" All of the extracts I have chosen focus on the perspective of the trainer, and this is one of only a few that suggest there are other powers at work in the social context. However, the problem is still insoluble, unless one chooses to leave and do something else.

(d) Sceptic

Knackered is what I am
All I've done is talk
But it's them who I want to talk
So what am I doing wrong?

Knackered is what I am
I feel quite drained
My mind has been racing all day
Why are these sessions so long?

Knackered is what I am
Perhaps it wasn't that bad
They seemed to have enjoyed themselves
So was I really doing it wrong?

This poem has some similarities to (b). It shares the theme of exhaustion, and links hard work with a sense of shell-shock, isolation and desperation - the trainer is saying "everything is awful" and "it's my fault", and seeks a reassuring pat on the head from an outsider. Our trainers often complain that no one has ever told them *Yes, you're doing it right*; and here the statement is more plaintive, a demand to *tell me!*

It highlights another theme, the idea that teaching has a right way, a holy grail they must find. It is a search they do not share with their students; the trainer is the expert and when things are done the right way there is no need for the learners to be involved. When it is *done right*, the learners are *done to*. However, getting it wrong is to be blameworthy, and since the right way is as mythical as the grail, they are destined to be always at fault.

(e) Hero

Hero beamed at himself in the mirror. His armour had never been so bright; only the whiteness of his teeth shone above the lustre of his breastplate.

He had the latest and sharpest of blades forged from the furnaces of the land of the Middle Earth. His shield was freshly painted; the shield itself was once wielded by the warrior king and was not only fantastically crafted but legend held that the carrier of the shield could never be hurt in the fray.

His helmet with its new plumage was resplendent and fitted like a glove. Hero knew he could last for hours without the weight becoming burdensome. He adjusted his belt and tightened his boots (both of finest calf-skin). The boots were recently resoled and he knew he could out-march any of his rivals without discomfort.

Hero stepped out and as he marched towards his new group, tripped and fell in the blackest and boggiest pool in the moor of Middle Earth!

What an irony in the title to this piece of prose! The analogy is with the trainer who prepares assiduously, but despite everything, still fails. What more could have been done? It is the trainer as heroic *failure*. Problems are not just insoluble, the trainer does not know what success would be. Whilst many of the trainers saw the 7307

programme as supplying them with new teaching techniques, this poem makes the point that those techniques, though necessary, are not sufficient conditions for success. That is the paradox; learning new skills will not solve their problems, but they are unable to conceive of learning in any other way.

"Hero" illustrates the fighting metaphor - teaching as the entry into some form of battle or conflict, and the trainer has to prepare much as a police officer tooling-up for patrol. There is a parallel between 'getting into uniform' and getting into the teaching role, and both have to be mediated through other technologies. The trainer, *qua* person, is a less important part of the curriculum than the technology. The analogy with policing constructs the situation as an aggressive action against the rights of others. The technology interpolates itself between agent and object and ensures that teaching is used-on or done-to the other. It does not allow for a direct relationship between teacher and student; in fact the relationship is institutionalised in the technology - learning becomes the application of the technology to someone else. There is a paucity of alternative metaphors for teaching and learning in the police service.

(f) Daniel

Daniel in the lion's den. Entering a strange place with many moving shadows perceived as threats.
Is that a lion coming for me?

It's a different world where the rules are not my own. The lions resent my appearance in their den;
sit in silence eyeing me in a cold, hungry way.

I know they cannot learn anything as they don't speak my language. They will not change. How do
you change a lion without a whip or meat?

In this final piece the analogy is biblical, but rather than the search for a grail with its cycle of disappointments, this writer has given-up on miracles. We can neither tame the lion nor bribe it, and nothing remains but to stare-it-out. The hostility of the environment is familiar to most of the extracts, and, as with "hero", Daniel's world is constructed as a fight. The difference is this writer's recognition that the rules do not have to be followed - they are not our rules. This writer wants neither to fight with students nor to patronise them, but a third way has yet to be found. The extract reflects the same bewilderment as the others, but adds a new perspective - a faith that there is some other way of treating with lions.

Discussion

In reading these pieces one cannot help but be struck by the impoverished ideas about teaching and learning situations. Each of these poems expresses an us-and-them dualism, and a bewilderment that the situation cannot take another shape. Teaching is like "doing something which you're not sure has a point".

The experiences of teaching described in these extracts are divorced from communication - the medium of the teacher's art (Stenhouse 1983). There is little reference to the students, who become the passive other, the objects

of the trainers' teaching. Experiences are designed for the learners and messages are sold to them. They do not need to play a part in the trainers' characterisations of practice, because teaching is different from learning, content is different from method, and teachers are different from students. They evidently lack other role models in their own experiences as learners.

This breakdown in communication between students and trainers is mirrored by the relationship that trainers have with the organisation. Here their experience is of helplessness; they are the powerless objects of serendipity. They have little control over their environment, and even where they feel able to address problems they become stuck in a cycle of unrewarding action. Both students and trainers face the situation stoically because it is the nature of things - the world constructed as a fight. They must resign themselves to being the objects of more powerful forces. It is no wonder they resist self-awareness, because it entails acknowledgement of their own helplessness; they discover there are no miracles.

They are prisoners of the expert/learner dualism. Their way forward has to be the creation of new relationships between themselves and others. I suggest the self-awareness they showed in producing these pieces of creative writing is the first step to challenging that dualism. I had created trusting relationships with them in which they had begun to see it was worthwhile to examine their relationships with others. It is the first step in creating the dialogue between teacher and student which is so lacking in their characterisations of practice (Torrance and Pryor 2001).

It is significant that the majority of police training is done in short courses or modules where trainers have little opportunity for developing closer, personal relationships with students. They do not see the growth or learning in others; in fact a trainer may spend as little as two hours with complete strangers whom she/he will never see again. There is no continuity, no learning history, no caring about the growth of people. Trainers are encouraged to evaluate their courses using the ubiquitous 'happy sheets', where the result of a day's learning is defined by a Lickert scale. Learning has become a simulacrum - a high score on a feedback sheet. The trainers have no experience of what learning in others would actually look like.

I discovered this in running the 7307 programme. I too had been the designer of others' learning, and measured my success in the outward signs of contentment in a class. When I saw a group for only a day, or even a week, it was easy to hide behind my authority and avoid developing a relationship where I might learn how the students related the classroom to the work place. In a long-term programme where students are mixing classroom activities with their work place experience, there is no hiding-place for a reflective teacher. My thinking was fuelled by observing the growth in my students. Only then did I come to see teaching as a set of normative practices, in which I had an ethical responsibility rather than a technical one based on designing learning.

The kind of relationship changes I envisage are subversive in our organisational context. There are social-psychodynamic forces inhibiting the development of training which save police officers from facing the embarrassment and discomfort of relating to others in more intimate ways (Bion 1961; Menzies 1970; Obholzer 1994).

I have presented the results of this exercise in a way that treats the two 7307 groups as homogenous, but this was not the case. There were significant differences between the two which became more noticeable when I ran the interpretation exercise the following month. Neither group identified with their students but there were differences in the way they viewed their own identities as teachers. Group 1 tended to identify themselves as victims of the blame culture. One person described how when she returns from running a course her manager will inquire "how did it go?" and when she replies "some good, some bad" he will only want to know what went wrong. "People always leap on the negative". Another explained how he would be keen to identify the criticism in happy sheets in order to protect himself - "I get the answers ready for the questions that might be asked". There was a strong sense in this discussion that they wanted to have someone else to blame.

Some of this blame was apparent in the classroom relationship with me. For example one student wanted to criticise the creativity exercises, arguing it was pointless interpreting the poems and prose because they did not represent how people really felt - the exercise had no learning benefit, *and I was to blame*:

"I found it easier to think of something bad"

"I didn't know how to do the exercises"

"I didn't know how on earth to do the task"

"It felt an unrealistic exercise"

"I couldn't see it was going to benefit me, writing a made-up story"

Whilst this view was not expressed by others, it illustrated how 'learning' often took the form of a decision to blame other people for how they felt.

In contrast, group 2 focused on their own agency and their ability to choose. For them "Hero" posed a question about identity; the armour was a metaphor for a different identity that we must don before going into class. It represented the fear of being ourselves, or the need to hide behind a mask. They emphasised the need for teachers to be themselves.

Their underlying theory for this identity problem was attributed to a "dilemma" between "bowing to the obligation to the organisation" and considering the needs of individual learners. These two features were seen to be in conflict: "training is basically for the organisation to cover their arses" rather than for the learning of

students. Playing the role of Hero is to overvalue the organisational obligation and thereby distort one's part in the curriculum; "If we deny our identity, that comes across in what we teach. The obligation to the organisation demands we do what we think is wrong." The group expressed a critical praxis. "It's up to us to do something about it; we either stand-up to be counted or else we don't count. It's our responsibility."

I was pleased to hear these expressions of a critical awareness. Both groups have recognised that relationships within the organisation are unhelpful and unfulfilling, but whilst group 1 saw this as inevitable, group 2 sought to redefine the situation. Nonetheless, as their prose and poetry evidence, both groups setup fundamental dualisms. The organisation is characterised as an external power which is either resisted or to which we must acquiesce.

THE EVALUATION DAY

Towards the end of the programme each group was set the task of designing and piloting an evaluation of their Part 2 course. It was a problem-based learning approach with two main aims: firstly it would introduce the subject of assessment and evaluation; and secondly it would provide me with feedback on the programme I had designed. The task fitted with my researcher-teacher-learner model. At one level it allowed me to role-model a practitioner-researcher and at another it allowed the group members to research their own learning by assessing how the course impacted on their practice as teachers.

The City and Guilds follows the convention of distinguishing between assessment and evaluation, where the first is a measure of students' learning and the second is a measure of the teacher's success in achieving objectives (City and Guilds 2001). My approach questions this distinction arguing they are two sides of the same coin; they both apply to the learning produced in a situation, but seen from the perspectives of different participants (see Chapter 7). The approach also muddys the distinction made in standard 7307/FENTO texts (e.g. Reece and Walker 2000) between formative and summative assessment. Again they represent an artificial distinction when seen from the perspective of participants who seek to learn from researching a situation.

Torrance and Pryor (2001) argue that formative assessment is a key interface between teaching and research, and is the pedagogical process most closely approximating to research. They recommend it as a starting point for the development of pedagogical awareness. The model I used was calculated to create learning for me about my teaching practice, whilst at the same time teaching the group how to use formative assessment to reflect on their own. Research, teaching and learning are linked. It demonstrates how to use both assessment and teacher research in planning teaching, and proves its worth in the way it raises pedagogical awareness.

Both groups began by interpreting the task literally, thinking in terms of an evaluation providing summative information for me - but this proved difficult. Summative evaluation required an objective standard or criterion for

measurement, but the programme was not planned with specific objectives in mind - only the broad aims mentioned at the start of this chapter. The groups investigated the learning outcomes specified by the City and Guilds (2001) but found they were not rendered in an easily measurable form either. In any case, neither group felt they did justice to the richness of their learning experience. The programme design had authorised student perspectives (Cook-Sather 2002), which minimised the need for summative assessment methods.

Participants worked on designs which permitted the investigation of outcomes important to themselves. They wanted to assess the success of the course in terms of their own experience rather than subjecting themselves to an external criterion. This collapses the assessment/evaluation distinction, or as Kushner (2000b) suggests, it turns the conventional order on its head.

I began the exercise in the role of facilitator, although undoubtedly I was seen as the expert to whom they would report, and about whom they would be reporting. I knew I would have to show leadership in the early stages because the difficulty of the task would encourage them to make quick decisions without accounting for the views of quieter members. My task was to engender participation, and this entailed helping them understand the emotional blocks to achieving it - the hazards at the boundary crossing (Mulholland and Wallace 2003). For example, I helped the groups recognise when they were rushing to decisions, why they were doing this, and what effects it had on team work and participation.

These were familiar processes for the two groups and in fact they settled down very quickly into cooperative approaches. As the need for a leadership role diminished I found I was drawn into the groups as a co-participant. This could not have happened if the groups had continued to see me as the authority to whom they were responsible. As their relationship with me changed from teacher to participant, the approach to the evaluation task also changed. If there is no authority to report to then there is no need to define the task as the provision of summative feedback. By becoming a participant I made it possible for the groups to redefine the way they saw the task. This change in relationships authorised the investigation of their perspectives, and shows the Learning Triangle at work (Chapter 7).

The evaluation had to account for the experiences of all participants, including mine, which was acknowledged as a different, rather than a superior one. There was no sense in which my contribution was valued more than others, or in which my perspective was held to be truer, or more valid or to be preferred in any way. Group 1 made a specific invitation for me to participate in the planning process, whereas group 2 took-for-granted this fact. There is a temptation for the facilitator to keep one eye on group functioning. I resisted this because it implicitly maintains a leadership responsibility which the group should share. If the teacher covets the expert tasks then he or she will not become a participant. I try to focus on my own learning, and make decisions about participation in terms of

how learning is best served. It requires trust in the group that, given the opportunity to find its own direction, it will function effectively.

I discussed in chapter 7 the link between evaluation, feedback and learning observed by Hargreaves (2001), and I think this situation demonstrates it working. We cooperated by giving each other feedback, and each participant used this to evaluate his/her own learning. Feedback is not given in a summative way as a gift but is part of a learning conversation (Askew and Lodge 2000; Watkins 2001). My example shows how this feedback model fits with the collaborative relationships I have fostered in the police training context. A focus on one's own learning in a collaborative group is not selfishness; it is part of a learning conversation that values self and others as knowledge producers.

The Evaluation Plans

The exercise was run over two days. The first day was set aside for planning the evaluation, and half of the second day was used to run it. The problem posed was "Plan an evaluation of the 7307", and after a few minutes of individual thinking about the task, I prompted both groups with the simple question "How do you want to do it?"

Group 1 played with the analogy of their learning as a railway journey. They wanted each participant to identify where the journey began and to plot the important stops along the route. It was to end with a discussion of where on the line people had reached. They did not assume everyone had started at the same place; for some it was the first day of Part 2, for others it was Part 1; for yet others it was part of a much longer process of career change. Hence the question "where did you start your journey?" was cognisant of peoples' different subjective experiences of the programme. They gave a similar consideration to the intermediate stations along the line. At first these were identified with the key points in the course, but it quickly became clear that what counted as key was once more subjective. In particular they found that for most people the key points of development were located in their own work places and linked to their own professional lives, rather than following the timetable of the 7307 programme.

In talking through the metaphor the group was already involved in a formative exercise, and undertaking the railway journey itself became an exploration of their learning about learning. There was an explicit recognition that the evaluation would have to be formative, because no station would be at the end of the line. They even played with the idea that participants should make a commitment to taking a new piece of learning away with them. Their plan was augmented with an idea they named the 'Think Tank' which entailed decorating the classroom with the work we had done during the year - flip charts, exercises and tasks, books, videos, readings etc. We envisaged ourselves sitting in the midst of this material using it to prompt our memory, or to revisit a subject, or to share a personal learning epiphany. It added the possibility of a spatial dimension to the railway journey metaphor.

Group 2 worked in a more structured way. They began by examining their experiences of being assessed which helped them identify the hidden implications of evaluation. Their experiences were overwhelmingly negative and called into doubt the motives we have for assessment and evaluation. Within our organisation they felt the underlying agenda was always to meet some external requirement - "ticking boxes" - rather than for the benefit of the member of staff being assessed.

They moved on to conduct a mini-evaluation of the course, recording positive and negative features on a flip chart. I sensed at this stage the group were still searching for a way of doing the task. I described it as "structured", but it was not methodical; they went through a number of ways of looking at the problem in an apparently haphazard way, but I saw this as recycling or reframing the problem rather than an inability to work. In fact the activity level was high and there was evident enjoyment in the group. The repeated reframing of the problem was their way of learning about assessment, and gave me an indication of their ability to think through an educational problem.

The list of negative points in their mini-evaluation shifted focus from the course and recorded what they had learned about the organisational culture. The list included:

- A greater perception of organisational blocks to learning
- A lack of understanding of learning in the organisation
- A very negative perception of the value of training in the organisation
- An organisational short-sightedness about the skills of the work force

At this stage the group began to understand the importance of their own experience on the programme. They associated summative assessment with meeting the organisation's agenda in a way which denied the value of their own learning. Their next step was to list the sorts of questions they now wanted to answer and I list a selection of these here:

- How has my teaching changed?
- How is my teaching perceived by others?
- How have I developed as a person (both in and out of training)?
- Has the programme given me opportunities?

This list of questions later framed their approach to the evaluation. I was drawn into the group planning at this stage, with implicit acceptance that my experiences were as valid as theirs and I was to join in as an equal participant.

Both groups observed that their evaluations were designed as learning for the participants, rather than as research or finding-out for the benefit of myself as the course tutor.

The Evaluations - Group 1

I decorated the classroom to create the Think Tank before the group arrived, but organisation of the morning was taken-on by one of the other participants. We spent a few minutes individually making notes in answer to the first question *Where did your journey start?* from which a plenary discussion developed with each person in turn sharing their experience. The discussion was animated and lasted for nearly 2 hours without a break. I have chosen two extracts from my field notes made during the discussion, to illustrate what happened.

Brett: My journey started about 12 months before the programme. I wanted to develop myself, but I also came to see myself as breaking new ground - no other Special Constables had been involved in training before. I saw myself creating opportunities for other specials, so it was important I did well. I was aware of David's style of training. But at the start of the course I thought that his style was extreme. After the first three sessions I lacked direction - what do I read? What do I do? Where am I? So I felt the first three sessions were a waste.

Rosie: [Agreed with the first sessions being a waste because of a lack of direction. Asked if anyone else felt the same.]

Simon: [Agreed he felt the same.] For me the train didn't start for the first three months. I just felt confusion at first. But after that enjoyment replaced the confusion. I can now see the purpose of the 'Rita' video [referring to a clip from *Educating Rita* used in the second session].

Rosie: I was getting very cross at that time. Sometimes I'd say to myself before coming into class "I won't say anything". So being cross was a big barrier for me. There wasn't anything to hook me into it; there was no ownership. Now I want to go back and look at it again, but it's too late. Now I can see the need for it. A lot of my learning has come from myself doing training. It's been more valuable than coming to the classroom.

Neil: My journey started during the week of Part 1. [He described how he had worked through the frustration. He later worked with me for three months and he explained how we came to understand each other after a shaky start.] By the time I got here it was full steam ahead.

Rosie: I think I needed to be prepared for the confusion. We could have been told to expect it.

Neil: I was confused with your confusion. I couldn't un-confuse you. You had to do it for yourself. I couldn't think what I could do for you.

Rosie: Other people dropped out of the course because of that confusion.

The defining moment for me was the creativity day. That's when I started to enjoy the course. [She explained how she often only came to the group meetings because it was a better alternative than going to work]. I thought on that day that I could get something out of the course. We should have done it earlier.

Until then the course was entirely separate from the rest of my life. Now I see the course is more than what happens in the classroom.

Dan: My journey started before the course as well. I was looking forward to it, hoping it would be like Part 1. I got disillusioned early on and it became a chore coming here. But it changed - round about the time of the creativity day. I know it's meant to be self-learning, but it could have been more clearly defined.

Rosie: In the organisation we don't have the luxury of time in anything we do. But this has taken a year to get me here.

Brett: Don't you think this is an important investment in you?

Rosie: Yes, but I'm just saying I could have got here sooner. This style of learning takes a long time.

Neil: I don't think that warning you about the feelings of confusion would have made any difference.

Rosie: I just needed to have permission to be confused.

Brett: The OU do that, they prepare you for what it's going to be like when you start the course. Having said that you still feel confused - but you are less likely to leave because you know to expect it.

Rosie: [Repeated her need to know what the end point was, to know where it was all going]. Sometimes you end up speaking just to please the trainer. [Speaking directly to me] I was wanting things to work for you. I have a respect for you, so I wanted your lessons to be successful.

Simon: Yes, I can remember wanting to try and make this work.

Rosie: I had a feeling of responsibility; of looking for what it is that the teacher wants.

This extract is from the start of the meeting. The discussion is critical of me, particularly in relation to the design of the first three sessions. It is balanced at first with statements about the course getting better later. Inevitably the criticism is followed by suggestions about what should be done differently. There is a general agreement that one of the problems was the 'style' of learning. This style refers to the facilitative approach, and later clarifications made the explicit criticism that they needed to be told what to learn. Finally, the last section highlights that for some, the sessions were not about learning, but finding ways to please the teacher. It suggests dependence - an expectation of being taught that was at the root of their confusion. The role of student became a guessing game, trying to guess what the teacher wanted, and then blaming when it proved unrewarding. This is the symbiotic hole-in-the-wall gang relationship (see Chapter 4), hooking into my own confusion between wanting people to learn but feeling the need to be the teacher.

I did not play an active part in the extract above; I was present, note-taking, but did not feel the need to respond. Their criticism of the course was expressed mainly in terms of how they felt, an important point since valid expressions of feelings have to be acknowledged. I sensed there was comfort in sharing each others initial experience, and some sense of release in being able to say it in an open forum. Statements about personal experience do not contain underlying messages about blame; thus I too was comfortable listening and note taking.

At times the experiences were laced with judgements and prescriptions about what *should* have been done. The discussion continued in this vein for some time with other people talking about their starting points, the various themes being recycled, and the judgments and prescriptions increasing. I made some contributions, offering my own experience of the early sessions so that my data could be considered. The group understood I was a learner in the process too.

About 45 minutes into the process I began to wonder what was going on. I was the focus of the group's feedback, I made notes, gained understanding, accepted others' experience and explained mine. I did not respond to the blame attached to the more judgemental statements, but I found I had to 'contain' it (Bion 1961; Obholzer 1994) for those who could not handle it themselves. I suspected some were using the discussion to unload their blame. They lacked a learning agenda, and their motivation was to ensure I learned from their experiences. Although some were taking the opportunity to explore their learning, they were in the minority. This was not collaborative action in the sense I have explained it.

I began to formulate options for surfacing the issue. I was concerned that challenging it within the group would reinforce their different treatment of me. This next extract shows how the direction of the group was changed.

Brett: [Checked-out with me that I was okay receiving the feedback. It was clearly critical.]

DW: [I confirmed I was comfortable and content to listen to others' experiences. I said it was useful learning for me.]

Rosie: So this is good learning for you, but what about our learning. This is meant to be for our benefit. What about our needs?

DW: [Am I acting selfishly? I remembered Rosie saying this months before under similar circumstances. I took a deep breath and relaxed.] We're responsible for our own learning. That's what we agreed.

Neil: We seem to have stopped evaluating. Everything we've been doing is focused on David. We got all of this stuff around the room but we've ignored it. I want to get on and see what learning is in it for me. It's as if our train left the station but we've been held up by leaves on the track.

Brett: Well I think I have been learning. I've got a lot out of this so far.

Simon: [Agreed with Brett that he too had benefited from the discussion.]

Rosie: We've only just started the evaluation. All we've done is consider our first question. We've got to go on next to question two. [She was defensive here.]

[Question 2 was their plan for highlighting the stations on the journey. Each person had to identify three things they wanted to talk about to the group.]

Neil had inadvertently surfaced the issues I had been pondering. Some people in the group agreed with him. Rosie, who had been prominent in her criticism of the course felt she had to explain herself. It confirmed my feeling that the group had not been collaborating over the evaluation. I was one of a small number of people who were taking risks to learn, the others, like Rosie, were asking to be taught.

We resumed after a tea break. Rosie suggested we move onto the second question, however most people stated they had no more issues, or that their points had already been discussed. This was further evidence that for most people the exercise had not offered a learning possibility. The months of flip-charts, tasks, writing and work stared down at us from the walls. But there were leaves on the line.

Neil was one group member who saw the possibilities of learning and remained excited at the prospect of sharing his journey with us. He talked first about "the power of discussion" and the way we had used metaphors to understand educational ideas and situations. He spoke of the "freedom" it engendered - "You've no idea where it's going". His second item concerned how "effective learning changes who people are." He talked about learning and personal change and how he looks for these in his own students. Finally he talked about handing-over responsibility for learning to students - "you are an adult" he said pointedly, the irony of the current situation not lost on him. He suggested "sometimes we are victims of our own schooling, we have to be told what to do, what we need. But actually you bring a lot with you." There was no real engagement with Neil's enthusiasm.

I explained that an issue which had arisen for me during the morning was the frequent reference to my *style* of teaching. I said I felt irritated by it, and concerned that people were still talking in those terms. I added that for me it was not a question of style, but one of curriculum; the problem is not *Which style do I put on today?* but, *How do I work with this curriculum?* I felt the opportunity to evaluate learning had been seen as an opportunity to blame, and the language of blame was 'style', though I did not say so.

Rosie's question "Who is the learning meant to be for?" is perhaps the most significant clue as to what was going on. I sensed there was a psychological blame message there - *It's all right for you, we're giving you what you need but what are you giving us?* As Neil reminded her, the day had been setup with everyone's learning in mind; we had planned an odyssey through the year's work and made a commitment to the future. His point was that the group had chosen instead to focus on me, and he could not understand why.

Rosie and others had swapped their student role for a leadership role, and expected me to reciprocate by

adopting the student role - I was to learn what they were telling me. This is not a collaborative relationship, it is a dependent one. When it is found to be equally as unfulfilling as the usual relationships the instinct is to blame someone else for it. I was seen as getting in the way of their learning and they constructed themselves as powerless to do anything about it.

The Evaluations - Group 2

This group also chose a discursive approach to the evaluation, the prompts being a series of key words expressing their ideas about the programme. The words were chosen carefully so as not to lead peoples' thinking. Participants took turns in taking words out of a box and speaking briefly about what it meant for them; a discussion then ensued with other group members contributing their thoughts on the subject. Unlike group 1, they focused almost entirely on themselves and how participation in the course had changed their relationships with the organisation and other people. There was almost no comment on the elements of the programme, the variables being the ways in which they had changed as agents acting on the world.

The discussion was organised by group members. No person was required to take a word from the box - several did not do so - and no one was required to speak. However, most wanted to contribute. I was a participant; there was no role for me as group leader. I shared my own learning with the group, and it was not received as a privileged perspective. People questioned each other with the intention of discovering whether their experiences were the same, and when a shared experience was recognised others would want to say, *Yes it was like that for me too.*

The group made a decision to record the discussion on audio tape. I suspect this was for my benefit, because in some respects I was still different from them. I will summarise the discussion using the headings of my learning triangle model: relationships / knowledge / ways of knowing.

Knowledge

This extract shows John and Liz talking about their learning under the key word 'skills':

John: Yesterday I found it hard to do the task [planning the evaluation] because I personally felt that the learning I had been through was very unique to me. Liz said yesterday that, in all the time we had been doing this she thought I had learned and changed a lot ... some of my personal skills and the skills I use in my writing have changed greatly ... it's challenged problems I've been encountering within the job, erm, on a very personal note I think it's something that, if I hadn't done it I wouldn't have got to that point ...

Liz: That's 'cos you've allowed it to change you though.

John: Or is it because I wanted to. ...

Liz: The interesting thing you say about that, I think, out of this group ... you were probably the most

experienced police officer there ... that's why I think it stood out to me more that you've actually changed so much. Because to me you were a typical police officer, and I don't mean that detrimentally - but in a way I do, because police officers ... are all tunnel vision, it's all done very military ... in a way you've had to change a lot more, I mean, you've had more years to change than what we have. To me it really stands out. You have changed tremendously.

John: David asked me a question several years ago when I first applied to be a trainer, and the question's stuck in my mind - *can I change?* I don't think I've changed as a person, I still have the values I had back along; I still have my personal expectations of people ... where I have changed - I don't know if tolerant is the right word, but I'm prepared to listen and realise that there are other ways of doing things.

Liz: Have you changed at home?

John: Yes, because now I have something to look forward to - which I didn't before ... people asked my opinions and I gave it, and sod what they thought, at least now - yeah I've changed at home because now I'm more positive about it. I have the opportunity of going into probationer training which is what I want to do now ... Actually, somebody having a bit of faith in me has put back my faith in human nature. ... I'm still the same person. ... I'm not that self-centred, angry bastard! [Laughs]

John makes a point about his learning being unique and his argument is that the uniqueness of learning makes the task of evaluation very difficult. Implicit within this view is a contrast between his learning and conformity to a set of imposed objectives. His learning is about personal change, and he puts it outside the province of the evaluator - both ethically and practically. John seeks to own his learning and questions the right of someone else to measure it.

Much of his learning seems to be in the form of emotional intelligence (Goleman 1996, 1999) in his relationships with other people. He also talks about 'faith' - a reciprocal process in which people have faith in him and he has faith in others. I sensed as he spoke that, in having faith in others, he was able to act as agent - this was how he now chose to act on the world. (It recalls *All My Sons* from Chapter 7). He has made an ethical choice to look upon others differently, and feels the evaluator has no right to measure it. Along with the faith in others he learned a willingness to challenge the external locus of evaluation (Rogers and Freiberg 1994). It links to my discussion of the planning phase where the group recognised the evaluation could acknowledge the validity of their local knowledge. I look more closely at these aspects below.

The uniqueness of learning became apparent during the discussion, each person's experience of learning having this quality. Here Joan prompts Liz to explain how she "learned to change".

Liz: For me this course has been very satisfying. Somebody said earlier about - "it's restored my faith in the job" - I am very, very cynical. I think the way that the job treats people stinks, I think it's got worse, it hasn't got better. And I felt myself very, very angry at other people when I first came to the Part 1 course. What this has done, I wouldn't say it's changed my views but it has focused me in a different way, so it's made me have something more to look at; I can see a future because of this course. Before I couldn't see a future - because I was part-time and part-timers are a pain-in-the-arse. ... I've always been such a strong person and a fighter, and I've realised I've got to give up fighting ... this course has made a change in me and satisfied me to an extent where I can't carry on fighting, I've fought for 30 years of my life ... but it's just because of how we sat down and we've talked, peoples' emotions, peoples' feelings and you relate to it ... I've thought, yeah! I can do this. It's given me a worth. I feel valued and worthy, whereas I didn't a year ago, so erm, yeah, it's totally changed me this last year. I feel a lot happier with the job - not because of the job, because of this course ... I feel I'm happy here, so I'm happy at work ... that's why I want to continue it, for my own personal development. I don't know whether it's a female thing, because I've really related to Joan in a lot of things she said ... my female side has come out, I have sort of looked at the emotions of other people and got more involved with the Transactional Analysis side of things ... to be honest I think a lot more officers should do it because I don't think as a small minority we can ever change that many people, to be honest, it has to be done *en masse* I think.

Joan: What's made us want to change?

Liz: I think it's being fed up with battling against the organisation all the time and you see an opportunity to address things in a - for instance it's the confidentiality thing, where else can you sit within the organisation, talk to other colleagues and say what you want ... you can't ... just silly little things like that have made a huge difference to me.

Simon: ... it's given us the strength to challenge, not just to conform.

Liz: ... I feel as if, there was something missing. And now it's there again. If that makes sense ... I can write my own lesson plans now, before I'd have had to have an off-the-shelf package that HQ had sent down ... it's my creative side isn't it.

Joan: Your creativity - you've found it again. It has been suppressed by the organisation.

Liz describes an experience similar to John's in some respects, although for her the changes are more vivid. Again, one gets the impression of a growth in emotional intelligence, and a sense that the course had been

empowering for her. She uses the fighting metaphors to describe her old relationship with the organisation but it is difficult to fathom how she sees different possibilities until, later in the extract, she speaks of "the silly little things". Her learning seems to have been connected with finding other things to do instead of fighting - quiet things which for her are not only more rewarding, but are the things that will change the organisation.

Joan picked up on the idea of the organisation suppressing parts of one's identity, like creativity. This fitted with her own growing interest in feminist pedagogy and the idea that in playing the organisational game we have to repress aspects of ourselves that ought to be central to identity. It is a view shared by much of the police research literature (Jones and Joss 1985; Gregory 2000; HMIC 2002).

Relationships

There is a strong emphasis on personal change in both these extracts, but the links to professional development are implicit. They talk of qualities like confidence, faith and creativity that will transform the relationships they have with people in their working lives. Their descriptions of personal change are always set in contrast to the way they are now within an organisation that values the opposite - fear, envy, and conformity. Personal change is not merely about being different, it is about being able to act on the organisation in new ways.

Here the group discusses classroom relationships:

Merv: We talk about being student centred, but do the students want to change the way they are taught? There was a certain feeling in a recent class I taught, they didn't want to interact in the discussion period ... there was a feeling there that - *tell me, just tell me what it is I'm meant to be doing ...*

[Merv joined this group from Group 1 halfway through the course. I felt he was making two points: (i) we *should* be telling people; and (ii) *you should* be telling me. It was a tentative criticism which others chose to understand differently, and I suspect he felt unable to press his point]

Liz: We've had the benefit of knowing what we were coming into and why we were doing it. People that attend sessions - they don't know why we're doing it, and maybe it's the fault of the organisation in not explaining that actually that is the way we are going to be doing things; and, do you know what I mean, they're sitting there wondering what's going on, "it's never been done like this before", because we haven't bothered to explain.

John: I am quite comfortable talking in this group about things perhaps I wouldn't normally discuss.

Pete: It's group dynamics. The relationship issue. If the relationship issues aren't sorted out then people are very reluctant to reveal part of themselves. ... This is the way we've always done it, it's tradition - that's what I was expecting to do, to teach that way.

Merv's comments were not allowed to stand as criticism of the course, but were interpreted as evidence of the problems people face, and how they learn to cope with them. There is a marked contrast in the attitudes of groups 1 and 2; the first sought to have their problems solved by me, but this group actively took possession of the issues, emphasising their desire for agency. It cropped-up several times in the discussion in the guise of 'challenge'.

Pete: I think one thing is now, I think you can challenge. You've got information and knowledge to challenge. ... So if someone comes to you and says "that's your package", before you'd go "oh, okay" and you'd go and do it. But now you'd say "well, what are the learners going to get out of this?" And of course the person giving you the package says "What??" [He is imitating a conversation with a bemused superintendent - the class is laughing. He laughs himself] "Eh??", but no "you've got to measure how are they going to improve -", "What??" [Laughs].

Liz: You missed the "Sir" out there [laughs].

Pete: [Laughing - more imitation] "That's too difficult a question, what are you *doing*??" And I think that's the thing, if you start doing it that way you become an advocate for change ... and I think that's the thing, if you carry on this process you've got like soldiers going out there - who says they won't change the world, I think that's the only way you're going to do it. Otherwise you just tick a box that they've been trained - they've attended.

He continues later:

Pete: It's challenging, especially to challenge someone else's hierarchy, or someone else's thing where they've just assumed, or made huge assumptions that goes right back to the Home Office, right back to the training package that's been approved - you can imagine - by all these professors and boffins and chief superintendents, and it's all come down from the Home Office; and you're gonna go "Where's the learning centred? Where are the learning outcomes?" And you challenge it. I think it's very satisfying, because why not? Why can't you. Because normally the organisation doesn't want you to. They just want you to plod off and do your planning, and go and plod off and deliver the thing. Don't make waves - and I think that's where it's very rewarding and satisfying.

Pete was clearly relishing his mental image of saying *No!* to an array of authority figures and it stemmed from

a confidence in his own knowledge. For him, the learning from the course was in the form of a permission to change the way he related to others; and specifically it was a permission to value his personal knowledge over an externally imposed one. He seems to have a different view of the fighting metaphor to Liz; he sees the way forward as beginning to resist the organisation where she is looking for a different metaphor. The idea of challenge was clearly insufficient to encompass all of their experiences and there was much discussion of what it means, and how we might go about it.

In transcribing the tape I was struck by Pete's emphasis and repetition of the word 'plod', because of its associations with a traditional, patronising stereotype of the slow and unimaginative police officer. This image is not lost on Pete; he later draws parallels with the plodding nature of other police practices in order to distinguish exactly what it is that needs challenging.

Pete: The difference between the process of trying to teach someone something and the process of getting a prisoner charged, interviewed, the rights, the searches and all these different things that have got to, by law, happen to them - you've got no choice ... you can't leave anything out. But you've still got to make sure that the student has got all these things happen to them, but *they mustn't all be the same*. If you can make them conform to what your idea is, or what the organisation's idea is - you will make them conform - that's what we used to do in the past, really. You will do what your organisation wants you to do, and we'll do it by training. We'll train you to do that. And I think now, we've come round from that now. We'll train them but we don't want them all the same. The last thing you want to do - you said about individuals, calling them by names not by rank. That's a classic - you don't want everybody the same ...

DW: I think we do that to the public.

Pete: Of course we do. Look at victims of crime ... it's the same kind of process. It just becomes a job, a crime number, not necessarily a person.

Liz: [Relates this to the treatment of rape victims] ... all we think is *evidence, evidence* ...

Pete: ... the process becomes more important than the person, the process becomes more important than anything.

Reading Pete's words carefully one senses an appreciation of the problem faced by all teachers who have become aware of their power - how to walk the line between showing leadership and being the warrant for all knowledge (Stenhouse 1983). Both Liz and Pete recognise how authority institutionalises values and sets up unhelpful forms of relationship.

Ways of knowing

Joan's question above, *What made us want to change?* suggests an enigma. What is the spur to challenge the organisation? Or to challenge the way things are done? Or to risk doing things differently? How can one know or value a different way, until one chooses to see the need to change?

I return here to the ideas developed in earlier chapters about risk, worthwhileness and legitimacy. In an extract above Merv expresses doubts about the legitimacy of my teaching decisions as the group leader. Other participants chose not to doubt that legitimacy, and for them the foremost feeling was one of risk, rather than blame.

Kate: I just came onto the course after Part 1. I didn't really know what to expect. It was just "okay, let's wait and see".

Liz: That's what I thought. I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know what was expected of me either ... so I thought let's just see how this pans-out, and as it went on I thought Aha! I know where this is going now ...

These were not rational decisions made with the intention of achieving any particular outcome. They were simply acts of faith that crossing borders into unfamiliar territory would be worthwhile. Pete had a more specific aim in mind, but it still required a leap of faith because he could not see how his objective might be achieved. In this extract he once more shares his bemusement with us:

Pete: The biggest thing for us [indicates across to James with whom he works] ... is that learning how to do the facilitative-type training. Both you and I [looking again to James] were quite confident about standing at the front of the class - especially being a sergeant, because you do it all the time, telling people what to do, you're quite comfortable out there telling people what to do. But this sitting down in a circle where your rank disappears and your power disappears and you're all part of the same group, er, and getting the conversation going the way you want it to go, was - I'm thinking *How the hell do you do that? How does that work?* That was my biggest expectation that I was going to learn how that worked. How *does* it work? I remember being baffled for ages thinking how does it work. And only by doing it my self, and experiencing, putting in some of the theories - and thinking - that I realised how to do it.

Kate: And has it come up to your expectations?

Pete: Yes ... and the most important thing it's done is make me *reflect*, which is something I didn't used to do ... it's a discipline I've had to, you have to learn to do ... and it's good because I can show the benefit.

or I think I can show the benefit of reflection ... it seems to have made the course better and the students happier ... instead of being in this decreasing spiral of despondency; now you think you're improving as you go round ... not just as a trainer but as a person.

Again there is an emphasis on the learner as agent - very different from the passive traditional model that each of the group members had expected. They have come to see learning as legitimate when initiated by themselves - or indeed that it has to be initiated by themselves.

Liz: You know the poems? Did you do the one where you had to write the poems? [Speaking to Merv and referring to the Creativity Day]

Merv: No. [Merv had missed that session]. I interpreted the poems [the subsequent session] - I did the best that I could to interpret the poems. And I wouldn't have felt comfortable having to do that piece of writing.

Liz: Like when we all had to write poems? Really? [She expresses astonishment]

James: We were talking about that yesterday [James had also missed the session]. I think it came across as quite humorous. It sounded like everyone enjoyed it. I was disappointed that I missed it. They were talking about it yesterday and I thought, "Oh! that's a shame".

Liz: Because I think it brought peoples' creative sides out as well. Some of them were so creative ...

Merv: Oh yeah, I thought they were. I thought maybe I'm just not creative ...

Liz: ... I just thought, 12 months before, if we said sit here and write a poem about something or other, how many would have been interested? How many would have been written? ... I just think that was a sign of how much people have progressed ...

Pete: Sometimes I think it's good to do something you don't want to do. You're made to do something you don't want to do. You step outside your envelope of what you're comfortable doing. And I think that's something that this course has done, it gives you more confidence to step outside your personal comfort zone. You try things even if you think this is not going to work ... and that's what this course has done, it gives you confidence to have a go at it. Because, what's the worse that can happen? The worse that can happen is that it ain't gonna work. You know? *That's it*. And I think for me, because I didn't know any of this stuff before I started I definitely wouldn't have stepped outside my comfort zone - I'd have been too scared.

John: When we turned up at Part 1, I had this idea that there was going to be a magic wand waved and at the end of that week we were all going to be super-trainers, erm, erm, I sympathise exactly with what you

said, some of the bits we've done I have wondered "what planet are you coming from". erm, yes I have felt uncomfortable doing some things but I've done them ... previously I'd have just sat there and gone through the motions ... I've got the courage to challenge now, previously I didn't have the expectation that it was going to give me that courage ... it was not an expectation I had as part of a trainer's course.

Listening to the tape I am impressed once more by Pete's earnestness: "What's the worst that can happen?" I hear him say; but what I feel he means is "What's the worst *they* can do to you?" Pete gives expression to those fears that abound in hierarchical organisations around doing something wrong and being blamed for it. Taking a risk is matched against the fear, and worthwhileness against the blame. It is perhaps a commonplace understanding that we need to take risks to learn - *nothing ventured nothing gained* - but in practice it is not a piece of advice widely observed in our organisation.

As trainers we will always experience severe restrictions (negative freedom) on our pedagogical decisions. Time will always be limited, there will be demands for performance and accountability, our opportunities to develop learning relationships with groups will be constrained, and we will continue to face resistance from participants asked to think creatively. However, the members of this group have begun to increase their positive freedom by making choices about when and what influences they will accept over their practice.

9 Epilogue

Does collaboration matter?

*My father used to say,
'Superior people never make long visits,
have to be shown Longfellow's grave
or the glass flowers at Harvard.'*

Marianne Moore *from Silence* (1981)

A VERY SUPERIOR PERSON

During the final year of my research, while I was working on draft two of the thesis, I changed jobs. In fact, I was promoted. A new head of training had been appointed - the fourth in just over two years - and he started his own reorganisation of the Training College. A new department was created with responsibility for all induction training, and I was invited to manage it. I was given a team of 12 trainers, nearly all of whom were participants in the work I had completed during the preceding three years. Luke was made head of my old unit, and its staffing was also increased. I could say that my promotion was a reward for the work I had done; however, it would be equally plausible to suggest it was motivated by pure convenience.

I regarded the appointment as an opportunity to begin a new phase in my collaborative approach to learning. The change of role was accompanied by a change of *authority*; my new relationship with the trainers was that of manager to staff, and implied a different set of rights and responsibilities. The problem was how to transform this new *authority* into *legitimate* action. I reasoned I had learned sufficient from the research about how to act educationally, to make the transformation possible. However, I encountered an unexpected factor; the new head of training - let's call him Superintendent X - began to get in the way. In my new role I found I had less autonomy.

I felt downhearted for a while. I had been working a four-day week with the remaining three days devoted to completing draft 2 of the thesis. I probably lacked emotional energy to cope with a setback at work. I took a two-week holiday over Xmas and, having resisted all temptation to do any writing, I returned to work feeling rested. It was in that first week back at the College that I experienced an epiphany - I caught a glimpse of the organisation from a different perspective. It was a bit like seeing something out of the corner of your eye and in that instant seeing it differently. Or another analogy would be one of those stereoscopic pictures¹ which were fashionable about ten years ago; they are apparently random coloured patterns, but if one can perfect an absent-minded way of looking at them, they become stunning, three-dimensional pictures. The more that you practice that peculiar way of looking,

the more you are able to consciously see the picture.

I described it to Luke as a kind of Buddhist enlightenment that produced a sense of calmness. It did not have a spiritual dimension, but the analogy conveyed the idea of *attainment*. I felt I had taken one more step towards understanding an emancipatory project within a police organisation, and found one more way of acting educationally within it. The idea of 'attainment' suggests a process of striving-toward; and indeed, I felt my enlightenment to be the product of hard thinking around the ideas of liberty, ethics and a practical research paradigm.

This vignette describes the impetus behind my discovery.

Superintendent X had suggested that one of the programmes my department ran was in need of an evaluation. Its current format did not seem to justify the expense of running it. I agreed. I felt it was a good opportunity to engage staff in reflecting critically on the work they do - an opportunity to do some practitioner-research. However, my new department had other problems. The trainers felt overworked, their morale was low, and because of managerial neglect there were insufficient trainers capable of running some of the most important induction courses. I felt I could not add an evaluation to the burden they were already experiencing. The evaluation was a good idea, but I decided we did not have the resources to do it.

Superintendent X agreed with me, and yet it would be untrue to say that he accepted my decision; more accurately I would say he *appropriated* it. He appropriated the decision in the sense that he denied my authority to make it, and insisted on making the decision himself.

I felt angry and frustrated. He made assumptions about my intentions and used them to justify his criticism. He wheeled-out an overused police metaphor, suggesting I had wanted to do a "Rolls Royce evaluation", when a "Ford Cortina model" would do. But he used the metaphor as an accusation rather than an aid to understanding.

"The Cortina is good enough."

"The Cortina is 30 years old and doesn't have an MOT" I protested, "It still has to be done *properly*".

But "No" he argued. "The police service just wants quick answers and justifications on the grounds of cost and performance".

I couldn't seem to frame any reply that did not use the word 'properly' or one of its synonyms - and as soon as I did, it was held-up as evidence that I wanted to do a Rolls Royce evaluation! My adverb found no translation in the language of cost and performance.

"Do you understand me?" he asked. I didn't of course, but I said I did and left with the intention of doing exactly what I had planned before speaking to him.

The argument made no sense because it wasn't a debate about how to do an evaluation. That was a smoke-

screen. We were not going to do the evaluation; but we were not-doing it for his reasons, rather than mine. Superintendent X made the decision, not me. It was a power-struggle. That is what we were arguing about.

Our self-deceptions reminded me of Baudrillard's (1994) arguments for the death of the referential which heralded the arrival of the hyperreal or simulacra. A simple intervention can have complex and unpredictable consequences (Wolfram 2002). X can give me an instruction and I may or may not follow it; my action may be agreement with his wishes or resistance to them. Or it may be done through misunderstanding, or through indifference. I may act overtly or covertly. My actions may be neither compliance or resistance, but partial combinations of both. X may find out what happened or he may not. He might not understand what happened, or the combination of compliance and resistance may leave him confused. The variation of possible outcomes multiplies when the reactions of other staff are considered, and each of these factors can be combined to create myriad possibilities whose numbers expand geometrically with distance from the one, initial action.

The assumption that either one of us can control the outcome reduces the richness of human action to the premises of a petty squabble. Even if the result produced is just what the initiator sought, it is still unclear if there is even a contingent connection between the initial cause and the final effect. Causality is a hypothetical reduction whose ontology of 'causes' and 'effects' is entirely dependent on the choices of the people involved. An agent can never know that a particular effect has followed from a particular intervention without knowing the minds of the people involved. Like Schrodinger's Cat², when the time comes people decide for themselves what they will do, rendering the hypothetical control mechanism redundant. And yet, when I argued with Superintendent X, both of us were acting as if we believed that an agent can exercise such control. It is perhaps what Macdonald et al. (1987) meant when they wrote that the command and control culture maintains an illusion of power but ends up "controlling less and less of an expanding spectrum of aims" (174).

I began to see the organisation as a simulacrum. A network of control mechanisms which dissimulated the fact that they were not controlling anything. When I caught a glimpse of the organisation from this new perspective, I thought I saw something authentic behind it. Something which was about human relationships rather than an illusion of control. And, just as with those stereoscopic pictures, the more I practised that absent-minded way of looking, the more I began seeing the separation of the simulacrum from its referential. It was as if I had been playing a game with X that had nothing to do with people, but which we pretended had everything to do with them. We were squabbling over the illusion of control, when from the perspective of authentic relationships we were powerless.

I asked myself *In what way is Superintendent X powerless?* He is powerless to allow me to make my own decisions; he is powerless to develop an authentic relationship with me. He has the authority to tell me to do almost

anything within reason, but he is powerless to influence a social situation. By responding to him at the level of the simulacrum I make myself powerless too. It was just the problem I experienced when dealing with other managers in Morris's story - I wanted to stop playing their game, but didn't know how to do it. I began to see how our organisation's relationships disempowered everyone. One could become powerful only by giving-up power; by giving-up a desire to control others.

If we continue to argue, it does not matter what either of us decides to do because our simple interventions will always have complex consequences. Baudrillard argues that debate is acquiescence to the simulacrum; we deceive ourselves about the absence of control over events by arguing about who has control. The argument both simulates power (feigning possession of something which we lack) and dissimulates powerlessness (pretending that something which is the case does not hold). Power and resistance are operating at the level of the hyperreal and have no connection with the real situation they purport to represent.

So what would it be to act educationally? My answer is that, if argument about the *what* of a question invites powerlessness, then educational action would be concerned with the *how* of it. We should argue about how we make decisions. We should begin to care about how we are to each other. We should begin to collaborate.

The question with which I titled this thesis - *Does collaboration matter?* - is not a factual question. It is not a question that can be answered by examining examples of collaborative research and measuring the outputs or outcomes. It is an ethical question that asks whether collaboration is valuable human behaviour. Does collaborative action contribute to human society? If I collaborate, have I acted well?

Philippa Foot (2001) argues that there is no moral principle which does not issue from a practical rationality, and practical rationality is grounded in the facts of human life. This is an argument which underpins the idea of a situated research ethics. Moral goodness and defect are not separate qualities attributable to action, or expressions or prescriptions of moral approval or disapproval. They are the natural rationality of, specifically, human action, and they elide the distinction between facts and values.

It follows that if collaboration is a good, then research itself *ought* to be collaborative. The research paradigm wars are sidestepped. The question is not whether research (positivistic or otherwise) produces valid, reliable and generalisable knowledge, but whether traditional measures produce good criteria for judging human social action. A collaborative paradigm implies an ethical criterion for good research. It matters *how* knowledge is produced. My discussion in Chapter 3 was an effort to set-down some criteria for a practical educational research which cared for this.

For me, learning how to research has been the same thing as learning about a police culture, and these have been the same thing as discovering what to do in the face of people like Superintendent X. Understanding the

behaviour of Superintendent X (and of my behaviour in response of course) entails understanding what I *ought* to do about it. Research cannot separate one thing from the other without becoming disconnected from human life. And research cannot be educational without then doing whatever it is I feel is right.

Furthermore, if I am to act consistently, my interaction with you, the reader must also be ethical: and if that interaction is by way of research, then it must also be educational. Baudrillard argued that what distinguishes a map from its referential (the territory which is mapped) is an act of imagination. The map operates like a metaphor; our understanding grows through the operation of imagination as we use the map to understand the territory. The perfect map which reproduces the territory in every detail does not operate in the same way. It firstly breaks down the distinction between the referential and the copy, and secondly it does not engage the imagination in an act of understanding. Much as Superintendent X's use of the Rolls Royce/Cortina model worked. If the model purports to be a perfect representation then there is nothing to prevent us understanding the world as this dualistic model - the world becomes the model.

Stake (1995) perhaps has a similar thing in mind when he urges us not to "map and conquer the world" but to "sophisticate the beholding of it" (43). Research is *to do seeing*, and good research is seeing in more sophisticated ways. It implies the map as metaphor - a way of understanding, rather than as a perfect representation of that which is seen. Clough (2002:16) suggests that language "glances-off" reality, a phrase that I find hard to comprehend as a literal explanation of how language works, but which as a metaphor is full of thrilling possibilities. It speaks of research-writing which 'pings' the world like sonar; which catches glimpses of reality; which only really *sees* when the world is taken off-its-guard; an enigmatic world; a poetic one. Research looks more like a process of puzzling, than arriving at solutions. Solutions fix the world into Rolls Royce/Cortina-like models and get in the way of our beholding of it.

In a letter to Turgenev, Flaubert wrote "I wanted to live in an ivory tower, but a tide of shit is beating against the walls threatening to undermine it" (Gordimer 2002: 93). It would be arrogant of me to suggest that Superintendent X is a *superior person* occupying an ivory tower. Rather, I am arguing that I have to descend from my ivory tower and wade through shit to meet him. I *ought* to make *long visits*.

THE SECRET POLICEMAN'S BALL

On October 21st 2003 the BBC screened a documentary titled "The Secret Policeman". It followed an undercover reporter who joined Greater Manchester Police as a probationer constable and underwent the police initial training. His video diary and secret filming revealed the inability of police training to tackle the issue of racism in the police service. The sickening behaviour of some of the recruits who were filmed caused an uproar and led to public condemnation by people from all walks of life, including senior Government figures. Subsequent to its screening

three racist probationer officers resigned, and two police trainers were suspended whilst their behaviour was investigated. The documentary was another reminder of what has been clear since the Scarman Report (Scarman 1981) and the Stage 2 Review (Macdonald et al. 1987), namely that there is something fundamentally problematic about police training.

Police forces across the country responded by setting-up committees, with comical names like "The Secret Policeman Subcommittee", to look into what the service should do to stamp-out racism. The police service desperately wants to do the *right thing*, and this anxiety is turned into knee-jerk re-action rather than thoughtful action. The service takes itself too seriously. It cannot shrug its shoulders. Or puzzle. Or be imperfect. It rushes to find solutions to a problem as if problem and solution were logically separable - but performing a task always presumes an understanding of what the task is.

The "Secret Policeman" switched-on my 'sonar set', and I began to 'ping' reality with metaphors. A BBC reporter goes undercover and submerges (ping) into the culture. A culture where the hidden racist enemy (ping) was already waiting. My sonar detects what is concealed (ping) in an organisation which remains silent on difficult issues - a Silent Service (ping). Silence about the deceptions (ping), silence about one thing pretending to be another (ping), or the misalignment of saying and doing (ping).

The link between 'a deception' and the 'secret policeman' is culturally embedded in British humour, in the idea of the Secret Policeman's Ball - the names on the guest list giving away the cryptic purposes of the invitees. Thus the police guests to this particular 'Ball' might include *Superintendent Wright-Answer*, the senior manager whose favourite aphorism is "Don't bring me problems, bring me solutions". Or *Inspector Nayle-Biter* whose first name may be *Ernest* - but it may not; and in any case, if he were a PC then he'd just want to be 'PC'.

And what if this particular sonar is pointed at the policy makers?

In 2003 the Home Office established the Probationer Training Modernisation Project, its aim being to professionalise the system for the Twenty First Century. The project responded to HMIC criticisms (1999, 2002, 2003) about the lack of flexibility and cost of centralised training centres, and the siren calls from the Home Office for the application of rigorous skill and behavioural assessment against national standards. The Modernisation Project was split into two distinct parts and given to separate groups. The first group, managed by staff from within the service, is devising a *training delivery mechanism* to reduce the amount of time probationers spend in classrooms in favour of contextualised learning in the work place. However, as a 'mechanism' it concentrates on assessment as the means for quality assurance, and continues the police tradition of keeping the learning environment in its blind-spot.

The other part of the Project was contracted to a group of consultants, led by John Elliott (UEA) and Saville

Kushner (UWE), and whose task was to develop what the HMIC (2002) called the "Learning Requirement". The group issued preliminary findings in the Autumn (Elliott and Kushner 2003) and reported in November (Elliott et al. 2003). Their prescription - unsurprisingly - is an updated version of the Stage 2 Review (Macdonald et al. 1987); a philosophy which is in natural opposition to the rigidity of the assessment and verification technologies implied by the National Occupational Standards (NOS). By the time "The Secret Policeman" was screened in October 2003, Centrex and the Policing Skills Standards Organisation (PSSO) had succeeded in neutralising the threat from Elliott and Kushner's group. The latter attempted to minimise the damage by emphasising that the Learning Review and the NOS could be complementary, "Difference does not imply inconsistency - each represents a different resource" (Elliott and Kushner 2003: 4). But I think this argument was either disingenuous politicking or naivety which underestimated the inertia of police organisations.

However, "The Secret Policeman" shifted the balance and Government ministers were once more emphasising the importance of the Learning Requirement. But, I am reminded of Norris and Kushner's (1999) prophetic warning to the Home Affairs Committee that the real enemy to police reform was political expediency. So who would the Home Secretary send to the Ball? Well, probably his ministerial team of Con Saltem and Don Taskem, who will do a dazzling one-two with the co-opted illusionists from the PSSO, Messrs. Tick, Box and Le Mesurier.

This thesis is not just about teaching and learning in the police service, it is also about a way of doing research. The two are linked. And linked also in less obvious ways, since Universities, and the academy as a whole, is also a hierarchical organisation with an intrinsic need to protect its conception of knowledge and therefore its particular ways of relating. There are candidates here for the Secret Policeman's Ball.

In the early stages of this research project my approach was influenced by a humanistic psychology which caused me to focus more on individuals than on social groups. It is a tendency which is shared by police officers generally, and which would lead them to subscribe to Margaret Thatcher's famously quoted remark "There is no society; only individuals". Much of my personal learning has been recognising my constitutiveness in social outcomes. If I change in some respect then the social systems in which I participate change with me. There is an odd paradox here. The academy does not consider personal revelation to be sufficient to fulfil the Doctoral condition of a distinct and original contribution to knowledge. And yet any personal revelation must have implications for its social context. I have heard it said that the average number of readers of a PhD thesis is two. It is a bizarre distortion of the idea of knowledge that a distinct and original contribution might gather dust on the shelves of the British Library, but that arrival at a new, socially shared understanding might be ruled out-of-court: *void for idiosyncrasy*.

If research is to be concerned with the way that results and findings are used by practitioners then the academy

will have to change its relationship to knowledge in two distinct ways. Firstly, the accumulation of knowledge will give way to the valorisation of learning; and secondly, pure reason will give way to a practical rationality encompassing a situated ethics. Knowledge and reason are not unimportant, but valuing them differently will change the power relations within the academy.

Early on in the writing of this thesis my supervisors observed that one of my problems would be deciding *which* thesis to write. It was an enigmatic statement that struck a chord with me. I felt at the time there was so much I could write about that it was bemusing - an embarrassment of riches. Added to this I felt I had an equally confusing array of possibilities for representing it. The combination of choices seemed legion. I had to decide which thesis to write.

But I wonder now if I deceived myself. In a piece of research which is descriptive or exploratory, the connection between the research and the thesis is contingent in the sense that there may be a number of important and sufficiently different themes to write about. If several themes are each capable of forming an academic thesis then it is true to say that a choice has to be made about which thesis to write. In this sense I understand 'thesis' as the totality of what is set down. The thesis is the final product. However, 'thesis' can also be understood as a synonym for 'argument'. What is set down must make the argument; there must be a logical connection between what is written and the thesis. Understood in this way, the question *which thesis are you going to write?* is an exhortation to synthesise the chosen argument from the evidence.

I began with the belief that I had the intellectual ability to make which ever argument I chose, and the difficulty, as suggested above, was choosing which theme to write. I did not see any potential dissonance between the internal coherence of the theme and the logic of argument. I held this view until quite recently. I now believe I had got the problem the wrong way round. There was only ever one story, but that, what the story *made* was not necessarily an argument.

I have set out a paradigm for practical educational research. My account sits at a nexus connecting my biography with my practice as a teacher and a researcher. The lines connect at only one place, and therefore only tell one story (albeit a complex one). The story tells *the now* through the medium of the past, and in this sense *the present is in the past* (White 2003a). The present is always liable to be rewritten as the practitioner re-stories the past in the process of doing biographical work. Thus, the logic of the connection between the stories that are told and the argument that is made, will be contingent, experiential, conflicting and impressionistic. The conclusions one draws from the act of living do not necessarily *make* a thesis, but may nevertheless *comprise* one.

My claim is that the most significant outcomes of this research are the social situation that it produced and, as part of that, my person as a practitioner-researcher, capable of acting in particular ways within it. The work of changing that social context, and thereby re-storying myself, is ongoing.

I have played many roles during this research. If I were to attend the Secret Policeman's Ball, which of these masks should I wear? I could go as the participant observer, disguised as someone innocuous and forgettable. like the man in the street who watches the Bag Lady. But I am still drawn to the manipulative, but nonetheless appealing, educational bandit. Perhaps I need to be a solitary and dangerous creature, like the cat in Marianne Moore's *Silence* who makes only short visits. There is also a character, largely invisible in this thesis, who writes papers and performs to conference audiences; so perhaps I should go as someone flamboyant and artistic like Jenny Joseph's woman in purple. But what of the old rationalist who seeks philosophical certainty from his armchair? He needs to be represented by something warm and comfortable like an old jacket.

Or then again, do I need to go at all?

The final invitation to the Secret Policeman's Ball ought to be offered to you, the reader.

Will you go?

And if you do, what will be your deception?

Notes

¹Computer generated Single Image Random Dot Stereograms, based on the 'Salitsky Dot'. They have commercial names such as Magic Eye and STAR-E-O.

²Erwin Schrodinger (1887-1961) worked in quantum mechanics developing the mathematics that modelled atomic particles ('Schrodinger's equation'). He became dissatisfied with the counter-intuitiveness of a science which asserted the existence of matter that could not be known directly. It broke-down the fundamental, empiricist distinction between a physical world and the mind that experiences it. Human agency thus becomes a condition for the existence of atomic particles. He offered the following paradox: a cat is placed in a box with a radioactive isotope, a Geiger counter and a phial of cyanide gas. If the counter clicks once, indicating the release of an electron, the seal on the phial is broken and the cat dies. Both the fact of the cat's life and the electron have an equivalent ontological status dependent upon a human actor taking a reading from the Geiger counter. The cat is neither dead nor alive until the box is opened and the measurement made. One solution to the paradox is that the cat makes-up its own mind as the lid is removed.

Glossary

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers. Chief Constables are one of the 'tripartite' partners in the administration of the police service. As individuals they have considerable autonomy in directing their force's operations, and as a body have a powerful voice in setting national, operational policy.
APA	Association of Police Authorities. One of the 'tripartite' partners in the administration of the police service, representing local governance. They have little effective control over the service, either locally or nationally.
Bramshill	The National Police Training College. Part of Centrex and the home to several of its departments. Probationer training and the trainer development programme are run from Bramshill, but it is best known for the provision of police management training. The other main Centrex site is in Harrogate, where the majority of the organisation's training function is located.
CPU	Central Planning Unit. Became the Central Planning and Training Unit (CPTU) in 1989, and National Police Training (NPT) in 1996 (see NPT below). It was a Home Office department funded by a top-slicing arrangement from police force budgets. It is now known as Centrex (see below).
Centrex	The National Centre for Policing Excellence. A publicly funded, non-departmental public body that replaced NPT in 2002, when it was taken out of direct Home Office control. It provides a range of centrally pooled services including regional training centres for probationer training, and the trainer development programme (TDP) for trainers. It is staffed by civil servants and seconded police officers. It takes a political lead from the Home Office.
Cert.Ed.	Certificate in Education. An HE level 1 course carrying CATS points equivalent to the first year of an undergraduate degree. Before April 2002 it was provided only by HE institutions. Now that the educational standard is controlled through FENTO, any provider could offer an equivalent qualification (e.g. City and Guilds).
City and Guilds	A qualification provider. For example, it now provides a Cert.Ed level qualification. Also provides the 7307 qualification which, up to April 2002, was the minimum qualification standard for teachers in FE.
EMPNTO	Employment National Training Organisation. Responsible since 2002 for the training and development NVQ standards. These standards have been adopted by the PSSO for police trainers.
FENTO	Further Education National Training Organisation. Responsible for the Cert.Ed standards.
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary. External inspectorate ensuring that individual forces comply with the Home Office lead. The HMIC also performs wider scale 'thematic' inspections into important issues, or evaluation of centralised resources (e.g. Centrex).
Home Secretary	The Home Secretary has political responsibility for the police service, through the Home Office. Officially the Home Secretary is one of the 'tripartite' partners, but through increasing centralisation of control wields more authority than the other partners. The Home Secretary gives a lead to the service through the National Policing Plan which sets objectives and priorities, and through Home Office Circulars which set policy.
KUSAB	Knowledge, Understanding, Skills, Attitude, Behaviour. A mnemonic adopted by the Police Training Council in 1988. Police training should integrate all aspects of KUSAB. It has become a Centrex dogma.
NCF	National Competency Framework. Centrex began work on a framework for police occupational competencies in 1999. Progress was overtaken in 2002 by the creation of the PSSO with a remit to create national occupational standards (NOS). Additional work had to be done to 'map' the NCF against the NOS. The combination is now known as the Integrated competency Framework (ICF), but it is effectively the same thing as the NOS owned by PSSO.
NOS	National Occupational Standards. These are established for 'sectors' of the work force (e.g. PSSO for the police service) and form the basis of NVQ qualifications. Training providers can offer training accredited to these standards. The Government sees it as a way of providing vocational qualifications for sectors which have had little accreditation of standards in the past. There is a risk that such qualifications are seen by public-service employers as protection against litigation, rather than being valued by their staff as a transferable qualification.
NPT	National Police Training. A Home Office department that provided centrally pooled services to individual police forces (e.g. probationer training; trainer training). It was staffed by civil servants

and seconded police officers. It was formerly known as the Central Planning Unit, and in 2002 it became a publicly funded, non-departmental public body with the name Centrex.

- NVQ National Vocational Qualification. Level 3 is intended to represent the practitioner level of expertise. The state-of-the-art in behaviourist qualifications. A practice is divided into Units, which are subdivided into elements. Each element is composed of 'performance criteria', a detailed 'knowledge requirement', and a 'range' of situations across which competence must be shown. It requires a specialised form of assessment.
- Police Service The police service in England and Wales consists of 43 separate forces each representing a metropolitan area, a county or a group of counties. Each force has a separate chief constable and police authority. ACPO, APA and the Home Secretary share tripartite control of the service as a whole.
- Police Training Council Home Office appointed body responsible for overseeing police probationer training. It was abolished in 2002.
- Probationer constable New recruits to the service must complete a two-year probation. Their training is a mixture of classroom learning, work place tutoring and on the job learning. Most of the directed training takes place in the first 6 months, including 15 weeks at a regional training centre. Approximately 10 weeks of training is provided at in-force training colleges.
- PSSO Police Skills Standards Organisation. The national training organisation for the police service set up in 2002; it is an independent agency funded from the public purse. Its responsibility is to provide qualifications against national occupational standards, and to research the current and future skill requirements of the service. The standards and qualifications have an NVQ framework. In 2003 the PSSO adopted the EMPNTO standards as the level of qualification required for police trainers.
- Special constable Part-time, unpaid, volunteer police officers. They are poorly trained and less well equipped than regular officers, but generally perform their duties under supervision.
- Stage 2 Training The system of probationer training that existed between 1989 and 1996. It was a 'sandwich' style course, each layer known as a module. Modules 2 and 4 were provided centrally by NPT.
- TDLB Training and Development Lead Body. The national training organisation formerly responsible for the training and development NVQ standards. Replaced by EMPNTO in 2002.
- TDP Trainer Development Programme. The 'flagship' Centrex training course. It includes a 6-week intensive stay at Bramshill. On completion students are awarded a Police Trainer's Certificate, a necessary qualification for any person teaching at a Centrex establishment. The course is structured around the competences for a level 3 NVQ in training and development. Officers have to complete an NVQ portfolio to claim six unit credits, amounting to no more than half of the NVQ qualification.

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Researching Living and Living Research: an ethics for research that is educational

David White

I am a practitioner researcher working on a participative approach to the training and development of police trainers. I have discerned a problem with the relationship between collaborative research and the conventional codification of ethical values.

The notion of an ethical code seems to be based on a crude separation of fact from value which places the researcher as provider of facts and the practitioner as the provider of values. This problem is seen in the dual meanings given to the word "collaboration". It could denote "working together" or alternatively "working with the enemy". As a researcher I can define what I mean by the word, but as a practitioner I see that others can *experience* my collaborative efforts in different ways.

Dewey (1970a) alerted us to this problem when he argued that the theoretical divorce of ethics from its social context will persist "as long as there is a divorce between learning and doing." Thus for Dewey education becomes both ethical and *educational* when it is about living. What would a social research project look like that healed the divorce between researching and living? Would it then be both educational and ethical?

This paper will look at how, as a practitioner, I approached research ethically through working participatively, and how the fostering of participative relationships became an educational way of living. The ethics of participation resists a pedagogy of expert knowledge, thus the paper analyses individual experience through creative ways of knowing and representing knowledge.

The context

My colleagues and I run a City and Guilds *Further and Adult Education Teacher's Certificate* programme. Our problem was how to make the teaching for the Certificate more relevant to the work that our students do. There were two sources of worry that led us to believe it was an issue needing attention.

Firstly, there is a tendency for police officers to reduce complex real-world problems into a simplistic lawful/unlawful dualism. Ethics are seen as a personal matter rather than as part of a shared professional practice (Gregory 2000). Police trainers support this thinking by focusing on the legal elements of a situation; they teach "the law" and test recruits' ability to define social problems in legal terms (White 2000). Social and ethical issues are marginalised (HMIC 2002, Adlam 1998).

Secondly, we were concerned that our own teaching reinforced this. We had assumed that we could have a significant effect on trainers and were dismayed as we found that our teaching was discounted as "theoretical" if it did not fit their work place culture.

We drew two conclusions: firstly the theory that we were teaching was not empowering students to change their practice. We perceived ourselves as helping trainers to develop their skills, but they experienced us as imposing ideas which had little relevance for them. Secondly, our own teaching was self-contradictory since it role modelled just the same theory/practice divide that we professed to challenge. Our words were not always congruent with our deeds; imposing irrelevant ideas was implicitly sanctioning the trainers' use of that approach with their students.

A lot of teaching was going on that had little relationship to what was being learned. How could we teach a different lesson?

The action

We took action in two main ways. Firstly, we matched our teaching more closely to the students' practice so that theory was embedded in their own practical problems.

Secondly, we focused on ourselves as learners through a more careful assessment of what the students were really learning. We specifically asked, "What do the students learn from us as role models? What values do we communicate implicitly in our teaching?" By approaching our teaching task as learners, we could role model a learning orientation to the class.

Permeating these two changes was the aim to make our groups more participative. We challenged a master-apprentice relationship that set-up the teacher as the authority and warrant for knowledge. Most teachers would claim not to be the "fount of all knowledge"; but can the claim be sustained at the level of implicit communication? How can we live the message as well as professing it?

Stage 1 of the Certificate was a week-long course. We used a problem based learning approach by setting the task of preparing and running a two hour lesson. We knew from experience that this would be demanding and saw our role as helping the students to understand their difficulties.

The exploration of these anxieties took the form of 'review exercises' in which students reflected on what they were doing, how they were participating and how this affected what they were learning. The exercises enabled us to evaluate how the students were experiencing our teaching. Our role became that of learners receiving feedback about our practice whilst the students adopted leadership roles by articulating what was helpful or inhibiting for themselves.

The course was participative in the sense that, whilst teachers and students had different reasons for being present, the roles of teacher and learner were interchangeable (Losito et al. 1998). Our direct teaching interventions were less about the communication of knowledge and more to do with the exploration of progress within the group. The *implicit* teaching messages changed from "teaching" to "finding out"; or from "I want to help you" to "How can you help me?"

The theoretical background

In this section I look briefly at the intellectual origins of the ideas behind the redesign of the course.

Dewey

In his analysis of the ethical principles underlying education Dewey (1970a) sums up his argument:

There is no fact which throws light upon the constitution of society, there is no power whose training adds to social resourcefulness which is not ethical in its bearing.

p.58

This is still a significant comment since much of what passes as training within my context treats knowledge as value free. Dewey makes a distinction between the "how" of conduct (the means) and the "what" (the end) and suggests that education, when it purports to be value free, focuses only the former.

A student who has been taught mental arithmetic could calculate the product of 5×7 , but may not understand the value of knowing that the answer is 35. The falsehood of the statement " $5 \times 7 = 37$ " becomes unimportant and applying a truth value appears arbitrary; for all the difference it makes " $5 \times 7 = 37$ " could be true. It is not whether the statement is right or wrong that counts, but whether its being right or wrong is something that matters.

Dewey argued that many school rules were arbitrary because they had no application to life out of

school. They are self-justifying because they define order as compliance with those same rules. As with the arithmetic example, they lack a criterion for deciding their value because they are taught without reference to a socially desirable end. Educating the whole person implies teaching both the instrumental "form" of a subject as well as the "value content" - the "criterion for the selection of material and for the judgement of value" (44).

The implication of Dewey's argument is not merely that we *should not* split facts from values: but that they *cannot* be split. When teaching communicates facts as if they were independent and objective, our value system is imported through a moral back door. Dewey suggested for example, that it teaches individualism, fear of failure, emulation of others, rivalry, competitiveness and superiority.

When we lack a criterion of value ("social imagination" p.53) our actions are governed by "superstition and routine", "magic" and "empiricism and quackery" (Dewey 1970b, p.143). We are "... left at the mercy of tradition, impulse or the appeals of those who have special and class interests to serve." (p.54)

This imagery emphasises the deceptions by which we learn to live our lives. The divorce between the intellectual and the moral (fact/value) is premised on the divorce of learning from doing (theory/practice). Education is an inherently normative activity and one cannot remove the ethical element without, at best, making it irrelevant to living and at worst making it harmful.

This argument helped the understanding of our problem. We may teach the theoretical understanding that we think relevant to teaching practice; our students listen and apparently "learn", but later work without it, or with ideas which are inconsistent or even contradictory. The theory that we teach is not valued because it is "not-practical". When we teach theory at an explicit level, what are the values that we are teaching *implicitly*? Besides reinforcing a theory/value split, we may be role modelling the expert teacher position, in which authority gives the right to impose learning on others.

Stenhouse

Stenhouse (1983) argues that culture and knowledge are generated and reproduced in the communication between students and teacher and the medium of communication is the curriculum. He illustrates it with the analogy of a chess board and playing pieces which are just artefacts until the game of chess makes them meaningful. Curriculum is the spirit which breathes life into the "educational artefacts" of the classroom. Without this spirit they are:

Mr. Toad's curriculum of derelict skiffs and canary coloured caravan. Material objects cast aside because the teacher was not prepared to face the role of learner they forced upon him.

p.156

The curriculum is more than an instructional process or a statement of the learning content; it embodies the idea of teacher learning. "Curriculum is the medium through which the teacher can learn his art" (160). It expresses "a view of knowledge and a conception of the process of education" (157). A conception which is about shared values, the co-construction of meaning and challenging the idea of the teacher as the authority for knowledge.

Teacher and students are engaged in parallel learning activities. Their learning is different, but is jointly constructed and achieved cooperatively. Stenhouse calls this "research-based teaching". The teacher who researches her practice is an explorer in relation to her own teaching, and she uses the same methods as those that the students use to explore their subjects.

I linked Stenhouse's notion of "curriculum" with Dewey's ideas about "values". The curriculum connects the tasks that our students learn to perform with the values permeating our teaching. The way that we teach - the implicit values that we role model - form part of the curriculum. If our teaching is not self-aware, then we will not know how students value their learning.

Our course design focused less on what we taught and more on the values that we role-modelled. Fostering participation became our curriculum problem and the questions it raised were the property of the participants rather than the teacher. Our participative approach was better described as "research-based learning", than research-based teaching.

Teaching and researching thus became activities closely linked with the ethics of participation. Stenhouse noted that teaching is problematic because it is a way of representing knowledge to others. Social researchers may recognise this as an epistemological problem and look to philosophy for solutions. Stenhouse's response is that, if research is to be distinctly educational, then it is to teaching that we must turn for the answer.

Discovering how to teach a different lesson is the conundrum of designing teaching which shows leadership but which is not the warrant for knowledge. Representing knowledge to learners poses practical, ethical and educational problems that are *acted-out* through the medium of teacher-student relationships.

We redesigned our course with the view that "participation" was one way of doing this *acting-out*; it is a solution to the researcher's problem of representation *in the field of education*. Research that is educational, educates those who participate and the mode of participation is ethical and lived.

Participation and writing

One corollary of these arguments is that methodological rigour is defined by the need to be participative, educational and ethical. My research methods are justified by their consonance with my practice as a teacher and my teaching methods are the legitimate tools of the researcher.

As teacher-researcher I have sought to understand how my students experience the learning situation. The methods by which I come to understand that experience and represent it to myself and others determine the rigour of my research practice. There are other ways of coming to knowledge than through rational analysis and logic, and intuitive modes of apprehension seem to provide a more authentic access to others' experiences (Atkinson and Claxton 2000).

Intuitive knowledge challenges a fact/fiction dualism - all data are "fictional" in a sense because they are based on assumptions, prior theorization and interpretation. Creative forms of inquiry (the "investigative imagination" Winter et. al. 1999) represent the complexity of experience in ways that help practitioners to investigate and make sense of their worlds. The test of methodological rigour is the effectiveness of the heuristic. It is in this sense that writing could be said to be educational, whether or not it "happened" in a strict sense.

This argument has been criticised for reducing research to what, for example, Alvesson & Skoldberg (2000, p.19) call a "user's manual type of knowledge". Science, they claim, must be more than "systematised common sense", otherwise there would be no place for "high level theories". Presumably it is the researcher who operates at this high level and who hands down the theory to practitioners to apply. But is the practice of teaching capable of being reduced to a formula? Are practitioners no more than technicians?

The rift between theory and practice cannot be bridged by "application" because "application" is itself a problematic concept. It is this bridge - "application" or *doing* teaching - that is the proper subject of educational research. There is no one to one correspondence between intention and action or between language and meaning; research that is of practical utility can say profound things, and a more profound theorisation does not say only one thing.

My writing is thus important for its contribution to engendering participation. I shared it with other participants both in an effort to check my understanding of their experience and to contribute to the co-construction of new meaning. Thus, irrespective of whether or not it is factual (in a literal sense), the meaning expressed in my writing has shaped the research. Rigour is concerned with what the

writing does; the way that it aids participation. My writing cannot be abstracted from the context which supplies its purpose.

Research material

In this section I present some of the research material to show how the redesigned course was experienced from the perspectives of different participants. I show how we learned to teach a different lesson and how that learning was found in new relationships between participants. However, I also show how participative and emancipatory values can be experienced by others in different ways: sometimes as disorienting, other times as authoritarian and constraining. A new lesson can be taught, but it poses constant dilemmas for students, teachers and researcher.

Story 1

This story presents the perspective of a colleague, Keith, with whom I ran one course. It is assembled from his reflections and from discussions we had together. I present it in the form of an interview:

DW After running the course the first time you wrote in your reflections, "I have a belief that what happens between the members of the group - what they feel and how the things they bring are explored and allowed to evolve - are at the core of knowledge and understanding". What do you mean by this?

K It's hard to articulate. It's something which I feel is important; which seems to have potential for the future; but I can't give you an explicit theory.

DW You use the word "feel" and seem to contrast it with "explicit".

K Some knowledge is implicit. When you put it into words you convert it into something different. You lose something essential from the original knowledge.

DW Have you noticed how when you and I discuss things we go very quickly to an abstract level? So for the readers' interest, can we look more closely at the origin of your ideas - what they mean for you?

K When we were designing the course I could not visualize in detail what was going to happen, but I had an image of what the process would feel like. I had some anxiety about our plans; I was taking a big step outside of my comfort zone and I was seriously wondering whether I had the skills to carry it off. I was trusting in you a lot. I saw myself as just setting out on the road that you had travelled.

Then one afternoon you suggested using some new material ...

DW That was the learning about learning stuff [Watkins et al. 2000].

K ... whatever. But I reacted. Suddenly all my self assurance had gone; I think I started expressing all of this anxiety. I lost sight of that vision of it actually happening. The problems were looming large; there was so much I didn't know; the risks of it going wrong were just too great. How would I look after myself in the middle of the disaster?

I remember half-hearing you talking. I wasn't really listening - I was too busy trying to work out why my ship was about to capsize. I think I blamed you - at least for a while.

DW I was feeling guilty and trying to undo my suggestion. I guessed that you thought I was going to teach something very theoretical. I was worried that I had spoiled our collaboration.

K I remember I started writing the basics up on the white board; I was trying to remind myself why we were doing this. That helped - I even copied them into my note book afterwards. Life's complicated when you have to write down why you're doing something, in case you forget!

DW I recall you saying something about feeling as if there were two voices telling you what to do.

K Yes. One voice on this shoulder urging caution, and on the other shoulder a voice saying "take the risk". That's when I realised that the way I was feeling had nothing to do with the new material you'd introduced - my reaction to that was just a symptom. The real problem was with me. I think that in the past teaching for me has been about doing things in order to make me feel safe or comfortable.

There were a couple of times on the course when I did things because they were on my agenda, rather than being important to the students. And they didn't work.

[K searches through his notebook]

Look I wrote here,

"During the course the things that did not go so well were those which left me feeling uncomfortable. ... [by that I mean embarrassment in front of the class] ... I suspect that in the past my strategies for dealing with those feelings would have involved using my power to control the class and do things in a structured and trainer led way. ... [what you call putting on a good performance] ...

"I now recognise that doing those things in those ways are about my personal view of myself (ego) and not about the class. By concentrating on the relationships and the sort of things that fall out of them, I am no longer under the internal pressure to be the image I would like to hold of myself."

DW That's quite powerful stuff. What I'm hearing you say is that you became able to do different things as a teacher by trusting the class to accept you as you are.

Story 2

This second story is written from the point of view of a group member. It contrasts the feelings of confusion and disorientation experienced in the early part of the course with the feelings of success at the end. I felt that my character changed during the week - thus I write her as two persons.

Monday afternoon.

It's Monday. Here I am on this course. I've just come back from lunch and I'm wondering what's going on. I came here to learn and all we do is talk. I'm told that I have to decide what I want to do on the course. It feels slightly ridiculous. They should be telling me what to do. I want to look at the trainers and pull a face as if I think they are stupid. "You want what?"

Ronnie Barker and "Porridge" flashes through my mind. It's as if I'm in this prison where things don't make sense. You get told to go into your cell. You get told to come out. You get told to do this then you get told to do that. Except that ... except that they're not telling us to do anything. So why does it feel like I'm in a prison?

Friday morning

It's now Friday. I'd done very little teaching before I came on this course. But this morning I had a try at it. I was really nervous, but I had a kind of confidence. It went really well; I remember sitting in the group running a discussion and the learning going on around me.

At one stage I felt like Charlton Heston in the chariot race in Ben Hur; I felt as if I had the reins of those four wild stallions in my hands. I could move the reins gently and they obeyed. But the energy there was enormous. Why were they going where I wanted. It was scary. I felt that at any moment I could lose control and crash.

I wasn't sure what was happening, but I felt that the learning in the group was so strong.

It was intense. Exciting. It must also be addictive - because I want it to be like that again.

Who was the person doing porridge on Monday? Who was the person racing in the Colosseum today?

Story 3

In Story 3 I examine more closely the themes in the last excerpt. I imagined a situation where I was encouraging the character to explain what these metaphors meant for her. I continued referring to her as two characters, but her dialogue suggests that this was my interpretation rather than hers.

A third character intrudes - the analyst. This character is discussed later.

DW: You felt as if you were in a prison?

Prisoner: I don't know. It's just what was in my mind. I felt constrained to do something. I felt threatened. I felt in danger.

Analyst: You felt that you were in a prison when you arrived. The trainers were offering you a way out. But you are institutionalised. It was threatening to have to go out and face the world.

Prisoner: That's too facile. That's like doing a dream analysis. Yes, there was some safety in the cell. But what really hit me was how none of this made sense. It was as if I was in a world that I didn't understand. It was like an Alice in Wonderland world where normal rules didn't make sense. I don't know why I associated that with prison. Suppose two big guys came in here now grabbed your arms and threw you into that prison block. How are you going to feel? Disoriented? You say to yourself "this doesn't make sense - why is it happening to me?"

DW: And the chariot race does make sense?

Charioteer: No, it wasn't to do with *making sense* of it. I was on the edge of my seat. I was in touch with something ... almost - it was like I could feel it.

[She is holding her hands out as if holding the reins. Her fingers waver. She is on the edge of her seat]

Charioteer: It wasn't like something you think through; it's like something that you are there doing. The thing is at your finger tips. You're controlling it, but at the same time you know that you barely control it.

Analyst: In this situation you are in control; tenuous maybe, you can direct events. You have learned how to exercise that control; the techniques and skills of teaching one might suggest. This is what the trainers have given you.

Charioteer: No it's not like that. It's not a tenuous control over 4 wild horses. They just happen to be going my way! No, that's flippant. We all want to go that way. What scares me is that I'll make a mistake and want to go left when they want to go right. I'm not going to hurt myself - but I'm going to *lose that feeling*.

[She handles the reins again]

Charioteer: And it's not that different from the prison. Me and the prisoner are very alike. Neither of us knows what we are doing really. But now I've felt those horses. I'm changed. The prisoner couldn't want the horses. She'd not even imagined it. You have to have felt it to know it. You can't sit in your cell and think, "what would it be like to drive a chariot?" Well you could - but you wouldn't know what it was *like*. *Knowing* what it is like is different from thinking what it might be like. It's ... it's here.

[She shows the reins in her hands]

Story 4

This story consists of two fragments that predate this paper. 4a is an extract from my journal which was shared with immediate colleagues; and 4b was distributed to the training staff following a seminar discussion on our ideas. Both excerpts were used with the aim of developing participation with colleagues.

4a reflects on my experience of running the course; 4b explains some of the techniques that I used.

(a)

I cannot forget how on Friday afternoon I felt really pleased with what the students had achieved. I was aware how Phil and I had actually taught very little in the conventional sense. We had achieved more by actually teaching less. I felt awed by the feeling of "power for" the students. I had not realised that my actions (our actions) could be so powerful; but it is a power generated by holding back, by trusting, by relationship building, rather than a "power over" gained by teaching, or by imposing ideas on people.

(b)

... more and more of my work in class involves just listening to what students say and checking with them that I understand their meaning. I have found that such a process helps students to unravel their thoughts and identify the contradictions, assumptions and half thought-out ideas.

... I also rely on the technique of "reflecting back"; I explain it thus - "paraphrasing" is the sending-back of the words used, "reflecting back" is to do the same with a person's underlying feeling. So I look for the feeling in what a person says; the feeling represents the affective energy and I "follow the energy".

Peoples' feelings are often at variance with what they say or do ... A simple example: students experience a sense of confusion and loss when a trainer does not tell them what to do or what to learn. The student doesn't stand up and say "*I'm feeling a sense of loss and confusion*", but says instead "*We think that you're a bad trainer.*" The trainer feels defensive, discontent ensues and the trainer blames the class for being a bad group.

Instead, the trainer can respond by reflecting back the feelings behind the statement: "you sound really frustrated". This disallows any evaluative, judgemental or blaming statements by focusing on what was the student's experience.

Story 5

Story 5 destabilizes the comfortable picture of learner emancipation contained in the first stories. It is written from the point of view of a group member who resists the trainers' methods and who experiences "freedom" as being imposed.

I'm the one they left behind. I'm the casualty of their struggle to emancipate. I'm the one who didn't fit. I'm the dinosaur.

They invited me when I didn't want to come. They tried to mould me when I was happy with the way I was.

Their knowledge isn't the same as mine. They don't value what I know.

When I spoke out - they said nothing. Or they just nodded and looked as if they understood. Or they didn't understand and they said "so you mean that ...".

I'm not a quiet person me; I speak my mind. But I didn't want to say anything. I actually felt nervous about speaking! Me!

I could see the others accepting what they were saying. Or what they weren't saying -

'cos they didn't say much. The others don't know any better.

I think they are all against me now. Well most. When it started I thought *"I'll look around for support"*; I try a few people out in the tea break. At first they're unhappy too; but now I test it out and they seem to have swallowed it. Or else they're putting up with it 'cos they know they have to - they want the qualification.

If I speak out, I know one of the others will contradict me.

I felt okay with the group at first. But there's only a couple I can really talk to now. I get angry when I think about what they are teaching. But no one else sees why I am angry.

They don't share my knowledge - if they did they'd see why I was so angry.

Who's this?

"Hey! Come and help us with this!"

It's the planning task. I don't want to. "Okay, what can I do?"

"Have a look through that stuff there"

There's no way I'm doing this. "They haven't made it clear what they want us to do."

"I know what you mean."

I know - I'll explain why I don't think this can be done. "I've got a real problem with this task. I don't think it can be done like this ..."

They agree.

They are sympathetic.

Then they get on with it.

So I sit here and watch them working together. They don't understand it but they're still doing it.

But I'm the one who resists. I'm the one who got left behind. I don't fit. I'm the casualty.

Story 6

Story 6 takes the context of excerpt 4b, the staff seminar aimed at fostering debate about teaching and learning. I felt that colleagues rejected or discounted our approach and this story represents how the debate was closed-down.

Tom: I don't want to be critical but I didn't like the way they just abandoned the students to work it out for themselves.

Dick: I don't want to go quoting names but Malcom Knowles and androgical theory rings a bell here. We need to be asking how adults learn best.

Harry: I don't want to say it wasn't interesting but it wouldn't work on our courses. We have our subjects and we have to cover them.

Tom: Yes, but they didn't give the students the tools to work with before they gave them a real teaching task.

Dick: Yes, but I'm thinking about Marion Taylor and self-directed learning theory here. How do adults learn best?

Harry: Yes, but you couldn't keep asking our students "what's the learning like for you?" They wouldn't like it. You could maybe ask it once, but you wouldn't get away with it again.

Tom: Yes, but they should've begun with simple things before they gave difficult tasks.

Simple to complex.

Dick: Yes, but I think the Adult Learning Cycle is a good model to use here. Should we set out to disorientate our students? Is that how adults learn best?

Harry: Yes, but *their* students want to be there. Ours usually want to be back at work. So we've just got to tell them what they need to know.

Tom: Yes, but I think they're being unfair on the students to expect them to teach without being told how to do it.

Dick: Yes, but correct me if I'm wrong, theoretically Kolb's experiential learning cycle could apply here. Give the students the experience - that's how adults learn best.

Harry: Yes, but you haven't got the time to do facilitation. You've got to stand there and do a straight teach.

Tom: I don't want to be critical, but they are using students like guinea pigs.

Dick: I don't want to go quoting names but I've got some serious questions to ask about their theories.

Harry: I don't want to say it wasn't interesting but you do all this anyway.

Interpreting the stories

(I)

In Story one I collect fragments of my discussions with a real character in order to produce a cameo of that person. Our knowledge of each other grew as we shared our reflections and tested our interpretations. Choosing to re-present Keith in this way is an extension of that relationship.

The cameo highlights the ideas which changed Keith's approach to his teaching. His belief that relationships are key to learning is based on the revelation that he could achieve different things if he no longer had to be "the image I would like to hold of myself". He felt that some of his teaching was intended to maintain that image and that if student learning occurred then it was just a happy coincidence. His learning was tacit (or implicit), rather than explicit, propositional knowledge.

I suggest in my closing comment to the interview that the new relationship was one of trust in the class. Keith stopped playing Dewey's conjuror who deceives people with "the image I hold of myself" and risked being seen differently. The fear may be as basic as "if I drop this mask will they still like me?" The advantage, which Keith expresses, is that he could start making decisions based on what contributes best to peoples' learning rather than what best maintains the mask.

The story illustrates one of my important themes - the linking of a new way of relating to people (in this case increased trust), with a different way of finding meaning (tacitly) and new knowledge (different ways of teaching).

One might translate this into a truism about safe learning environments, but that assumes an unproblematic causal relationship between "safety" and "learning". The point here is that the elements entail each other in a non-causal way; accepting a more authentic image of himself was, for Keith, the same thing as being able to teach a new lesson.

(II)

Stories 2 and 3 were written quickly, in a single sitting and with little editing. Whilst writing them I was conscious of putting to one side my rational consciousness and appealing instead to a creative judgement. It is difficult to put this into words, since in English we lack the concepts. I can only describe it as being aware of suspending a rational, judgemental faculty, and engaging an experiential one.

At times I felt my rational side pushing me to explain and totalize, when I felt the situation to be more

complex. I responded by creating the analyst, a character who foregrounds the simplicity and dogma. It was a methodological device that coped with ideological bias by making it explicit and permitting the participants to challenge it.

The obvious theme of Story 2 is the contrast between dependent and independent learners, and the emphasis that the key to learning is the student's agency rather than the teacher's.

Story 2 introduces the prison metaphor and associates it with a popular TV character. I recall being surprised at this image and Story 3 was in part an effort to make sense of the metaphor. The experience of the prison is of "incomprehensibility"; not an inability to understand something cognitive but a struggle with an experience that does not make sense. It is not a difficulty with learning, but a difficulty with "living".

Reflecting on the story I was reminded of Kafka's "The Trial", because of the contradictions of being a prisoner but being free to go, and being compelled to do something yet being free to choose. I was struck by my description of "the two big guys" throwing the prisoner into a cell - they brought to mind a stage performance I had seen of Steven Berkoff's, very physical, version of "The Trial".

For Kafka one might argue that it was "mediocrity" that was on trial, because that was what enchained his character, Joseph K. We have the ability to choose not to be judged, but choosing entails action and by acting in the world we learn to relate to it differently. Joseph K had chosen mediocrity - to stop acting and to stop learning.

Closer examination of my metaphors reveals a similar relationship between the character and her environment. In the chariot race we discover the tangible excitement of the relationship between driver and horses, and in the prison what is lacking is any reference to an environment. The chariot race represents a changed relationship with others when compared with the prison, and knowledge of that relationship is through the medium of experience (or feel) rather than cognition. The metaphors thus present two strands of consciousness with contrasting social relationships and ways of experiencing the world.

This parallels Keith's experience in Story 1; our work with groups created new social relationships giving participants access to experiential forms of knowledge relevant to their practice.

(III)

The next Stories (4 and 5) take up the theme of "power". In the first of these I express my view of the learning situation as creating "power-for" the participants and distinguish this from occasions when learning was imposed on them ("power-over"). It expresses, in a different way, some of the ideas which Keith explained in Story 1.

I am wary about this account because the outcome - "how I made things better" - assumes an unproblematic definition of "better". Likewise, the facilitative tools explained in 4b have become formulas applied in a decontextualised or mechanical way. Taken together the stories have abstracted a rather romanticised vision of learning and an objective set of teaching techniques. This is the same uncritical view of action as expressed by the analyst in Story 3.

Story 5 is about the resistance to teacher power concealed behind my ideology and objective skills. My motive was to emancipate participants from learning dependency, but I still had power to make choices about the nature of the learning situation. In time, most members of the group cooperated and the growing social pressure to conform ensured that even a strong minded individual avoids expressing opposition and feels isolated (like the prisoner in Story 2?). The social relationships are different and the world is not experienced in the way that the charioteer did.

In order to write the story I put myself into the character's shoes by recalling a recent similar experience of my own; a workshop with a behaviourist theme that conflicted with my own beliefs. I transferred my experiences from that occasion to my fictional character, and used them to explore the position of a resistor in one of my own groups. I learned about this person through a process of creative

investigation.

As an outcast I spend time rationalising my resistance - "Their knowledge is not the same as mine" - but the salient feature is how I feel about the situation. On paying attention to the feelings I discover that the causation is turned on its head; I don't decide to feel bad for *this* reason - I look for the rationalisation because I feel bad. The verbalised resistance is a symptom of not wanting to participate.

In the leadership role, if I try to persuade the resistor to participate by defeating her rationalisation with my logic, then I am attempting to change her *experience* by accepting my *perception*. But she does not merely disagree with me; she *feels* unable to participate. To change her experience is to use another of Dewey's conjuring tricks; it is an unethical manipulation of a person that teaches the old lessons about power and hierarchy.

(IV)

Story 6 was written much more carefully and deliberately, and with frequent editing. I had an idea about the form this story should take and I used my research material to construct the characters' arguments.

I conceived the characters as rationalising their experience in a similar way to my own experience described above. Their feelings of incomprehension, disempowerment and threat became rationalised as criticism, theorisation and pessimism. The three characters might have been called "critic", "theorist" and "pessimist" since these are the themes that they represent. Returning once more to Dewey's metaphor of the conjuror, their 'magic' rationalisations are self-deceptions concealing their feelings.

My three characters are not holding a conversation, because they are not listening to each other - just as I feel that they did not listen to us. When one speaks the others are occupied working out what they will say next; their responses are a function of how they feel more than they are responses to the others' arguments.

This highlights another point - that the rationalisation of experience often contains an element of blame. Thus in Story 1 Keith wanted to blame me for upsetting his balance; the prisoner in Story 2 wants to blame someone for her disorientation; the resistor wants to blame the trainers for her isolation; and in Story 6 the characters blame through the way that they criticise, discount or don't hear what others say.

It would be easy for a teacher to accept the blame as a criticism of her teaching and to be drawn into persuading others that her position was "correct". This again is attempting to change the other's experience by imposing a different perception. The blame can be seen as a symptom of the person's feelings rather than the expression of a cognitive position. "Teaching" my ideas is pointless because, no matter how *hard* I teach it, Harry will say afterwards "We do all this anyway".

Conclusion

The themes I have identified show my personal struggle with the problem of teacher power and its relationship to learning. After I had written Story 5 I was struck by the harm that I could inflict on people who resisted my approach. It showed that there is no simple relationship between my actions and their effects. Whilst I could justify my practice according to principles like "emancipation", in practice it often had little relevance for group members.

How can teaching decisions be justified when any choice can be disempowering to someone? Perhaps all that can be done is to be self-conscious about the use of power; to make decisions about action from moment to moment, rather than expecting some guiding principle to provide the answers. Decisions are not derived from a general ethics of empowerment, just consonant with it (Glen 2000).

The concern to regulate classroom relationships, whether done for altruistic reasons or not, assumes that this is the teacher's responsibility; but that is not a participative approach. The participant seeks to learn about his/her effect on the learning of others. Participants have to be responsible for their own

learning - hence their own relationships.

In some of my stories the characters experience this as the teacher abrogating the responsibility to lead, whilst in others they experience substantial learning. Some of my characters found this approach threatening. Others, like Keith in Story 1, accepted the risks of being a charioteer and taught a different lesson by being a different (more authentic) person. The effects are unpredictable, unquantifiable and uncontrollable.

As I write this I feel my own values showing through. I believe that it is good to be a charioteer, and that resting content with any other knowledge is to be a less good teacher. Any action in the social world has effects on other people. A teacher cannot not-act. Denying one's effect is unrealistic. Trying to calculate and predict it is equally unattainable. It is like a magnet touched to the underside of a paper sprinkled with iron filings.

When I first set out to write this paper my aim was philosophical - an assessment of the ethical principles behind research work. I had many false starts. I took to writing sections of it rather than tackling the paper as a whole. These efforts did not help me solve the problem of writing my "philosophical" paper. It was perplexing because I felt that I had much to say.

Looking back at the process of developing the paper I can see why I experienced a problem. The argument I have presented here is that there is no *philosophical* solution to the problem of research ethics; it is the context of the research (education in our case) that provides the answer. I could not abstract my research ethics from the context I was researching. My philosophical paper would not appear because it was inherently self contradictory.

I found that an ethical approach to research was embodied within the participative relationship. The roles of learner, teacher and researcher are shared between the participants. The notions of what is educational, what is learning and what is ethical are not separate elements that can be abstracted and investigated objectively; they are all aspects of the participative relationship.

Yet participation is not easily achieved - perhaps because it requires the practitioner to constantly balance those aspects. It is not a mechanical process or one achieved by following a recipe. My experience is that it demands engagement of the whole person in trying to live the process. Participation is a research methodology *and* a curriculum problem.

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Expert Knowledge, Personal Knowing: using a 'writing story' to understand resistance

David White

"The problems of education ... are problems of acting educationally in social situations"

(Carr & Kemmis 1986, p 180)

I like this quotation. To me it is enigmatic; it is one of those lines that, when you read it you think, *yes that's important*, but you are not sure why exactly. It stays with you - like a stone in your shoe - until you understand why it is speaking to you. I want to share with you the metaphorical emptying of my shoe; the understanding that, as a researcher, I need to find ways of *being* educational rather than ... rather than what?

I am concerned with the constitutiveness of the researcher in what is claimed to be known. My argument is that research that does not account for one's constitutiveness is one of those things that is done rather than acting educationally.

1. "Expert Knowledge: writing Government policy"

Last year I made an analysis of Government policy on police training and its translation into management strategy. This paper is not a presentation of that research but of two writing stories (Richardson 2000) that I could tell about how I did it. In this first story, I write about the deconstruction of the dualism that channelled my thinking.

Relationships, knowledge and ways of knowing

I decided to write a paper on police training policy last spring. I recall thinking about it in terms of two conceptions of professionalism, one based on the competent technician and the other based on the autonomous professional. During the summer I even came up with an idea for the title. This last point was revealing - I often find that the title of a piece of writing is the last thing I decide on; how can you think up a title until you know what you have written?

The fact is that I had wanted to criticise the governance of police training, and over time I was collecting the evidence with which to do it. The argument is a familiar one; converting professional practice into observable competencies institutionalises the practitioner's values by simplifying complex decision making into a series of rules. The means and ends of training are formalised but the value of learning is overlooked.

I remember being motivated by two feelings. The first was the desire to write a paper for publication; it was the sort of topic that would appeal to some journals publishing research into police management issues. The second was that the paper would be a 'quick job'. I knew the existing research in the police context and guessed that such a critique would fit with much work currently being done in the USA. The task would be to apply some current educational thinking on 'the professional' to a field that was largely unaware of this dimension.

This idea of the 'quick job' needs some unpicking. I have a strong logical-positivist side to my thinking; it contrasts with a research practice based on collaborative and teacher-researcher philosophies. I

have struggled against the desire to play the role of expert researcher, practising on others and producing theory and generalisable knowledge. I saw the 'quick job' as a return to my old ways - the opportunity to synthesise documentary evidence in proof of the theoretical proposition that the competent technician would not deliver the aim of a modern police service.

Compared with my research practice I called this approach 'traditional'. It is not just a traditional methodology, it is also a traditional epistemology; I never used the word 'real' in my writing, but I think that underlying my belief that I could do this quickly was the idea that there was something 'real' out there for me to criticise. I knew that reality well and I had the knowledge to describe it in rigorous ways. The job would be quick and simple because I had a confidence in that incontestable reality. A clear target to which I would render a swift *coup*, sweeping-away the politicians and police managers in a blinding attack of reason. That would show them just how wrong they were!

In my practice as teacher and researcher I have found a 3-way link between relationships, knowledge and ways of knowing. Collaborative action implies democratic relationships, practitioner knowledge and experiential forms of knowing. A return to my 'traditional' approach meant recovering the expert power relationship over others, theoretical knowledge and logical-rational ways of knowing; these were the elements of an expert practice that I had been struggling to change for two years. It appeals to the strand of my identity that believes in my power and right to change other peoples' minds; this swift *coup* speaks of a violation or an assault on others from a position of superior knowledge.

I have learned that others can experience intellectual authority as the imposition of unwanted ideas. I have understood this influence as I came to understand the relationship on which it was based. Learning to be collaborative entailed preferring local knowledge over expert knowledge and recognising that resistance to my rational argument was often rooted in an emotional response to dominance. Collaboration entailed finding non-rationalist ways of presenting my ideas and of understanding others'. I have come to feel that rationality is an authority that can manipulate others - and that it is wrong to do so because it lacks respect for their humanity. Research gained an ethical aspect through participation, and my teaching practice learned one through curriculum.

Switching back to a logical-rational research method was thus not as straight forward as I had expected. I had approached the task of writing my paper with the old ideas of knowledge and ways of knowing, but little appreciating that because I had changed my relationship with the world and other people, the old knowledge was no longer going to be of any use.

What's really happening?

My approach to the paper depended on posing and answering the question, *what's really happening?* I planned to answer this by showing that the police service that we *really* want is not the one that is *actually* being produced through our current methods of training. Our society demands a service that can cope with the needs of diverse communities, crime reduction through problem solving and a focus on customer satisfaction. This creates a role for police officers that is not going to be filled by the competent technician; you cannot teach interpersonal skills and reflective practice in a painting-by-numbers sort of way. It calls for the education of police officers.

I began the research by establishing the authority for that modern policing function and I sought it in the recommendations of two influential reports - The Scarman Report (1981) and the Macpherson Report (1999). These reports are critical of police attitudes to communities, and make extensive prescriptions for police training. My opening line went something like "From a certain point of view these represent two defining moments in modern policing"; I had thought of calling them "book ends" but did not.

However, I was already compromising; I had to insert the phrase *from a certain point of view* because I realised that they were only book ends from my perspective. The policy makers see them as important, but not defining moments. The last two decades are littered with other 'defining moments' - the miners' strike, the Birmingham six and the Guildford four, the Police and Criminal Evidence Act

1986, the Crime and Disorder Act 1997, and various movements like community policing, problem solving policing, zero tolerance policing and so on. Many people would disagree with my epithet 'defining moments'; it was shaky ground on which to build an argument.

Neither report is mentioned in the White Paper to the Police Reform Act 2002 (Home Office 2001); and whilst they figure in the Inspectorate of Constabulary's thinking (HMIC 2002, 2003), the conclusion is that we need more technical-rationality, not less! Since the mid 1990's the policy focus has been on police accountability, national occupational standards and more recently, value for money. The 'competent technician' fits well with these influences and thus damages the argument I had been constructing.

My evidence from Scarman and Macpherson was helpful, showing that, despite a 20 year gap, things had changed very little. It was a promising start but I was still aware of the partiality of my book ends; I needed to undermine the 'national standards' argument and this entailed tracing its historical roots. It was disconcerting because the task no longer looked like the 'quick job' I had envisaged.

A new idea emerged from my reading - I called it 'policy dissonance'. I had expected the policy documents to establish an unambiguous position that I could undermine. I analysed David Blunkett's preface to the White Paper (Home Office 2001) and found at least four distinct themes, including my two. It was clear that Blunkett sought both the autonomous professional and the competent technician and saw no inconsistency between them. There was a dissonance between the two policies and no deliberation over their compatibility.

It was a thesis that fitted with evidence from both management and practitioner levels in police training; for example, I had found the same unexplored contradiction in HMIC thinking (HMIC 2002), and in a recent National Police Training¹ evaluation (Flood and Sutton 2002). If this same unresolved incompatibility existed at all levels of police training, I could argue that the ambiguity in policy thinking created confusion right down to classroom level. I would need to take a longitudinal view, tracing the development of policy back over the last ten years to show that the necessary deliberation had never occurred. Perhaps I could deliver my *coup* after all.

Clean shots and stationary targets

I traced the recent legislation back to a Home Affairs Committee Report (1999a). I found that, whilst the committee published all of the evidence received (1999b), opinions that contradicted the prevailing 'new public management' were misrepresented or ignored in the main report. The Government responded by agreeing with the committee's views but noting that, in any case, policy had already been decided! (Home Affairs Committee 1999c).

Phrases like 'common minimum service', 'national standards', 'professionalism' and 'competence framework' had become common currency, but they were taken as being self-evidently good things that did not call for debate. Who would want to question them? The argument is that we need national standards in order to ensure a common minimum service, and that a competence framework will improve police officer professionalism. However, the minimum service is itself explained in terms of the national standards, and professionalism is defined in terms of the achievement of those same competencies. There is a circularity in these arguments that makes the terms they use almost tautologous.

This was looking good for my thesis, though I began to sense an embarrassment of riches. As I studied the way that policy was interpreted at management level I found that the richness of themes present in Blunkett's preface (Home Office 2001) was not being repeated. Whilst the dualistic presentations of the professional were still present, there was a hardening of the competent technician line. I felt that police managers were conveying different messages in their processes to those intended by Government policy.

Management processes were focused on assessment and evaluation against competencies and national standards (e.g. Centrex 2002a; Centrex 2002b; Centrex, ACPO, APA 2002). The

standards define precisely what officers should achieve; a training needs analysis measures officers against that standard, thus identifying the 'training gap'; training is designed around objectives worded precisely to address the gap; the training is then 'delivered' to officers and the whole process rounded off by checking results against the standard.

I was reminded of Onora O'Neill's (2002) argument that such approaches do not question, *what will this actually deliver?* This is another way of putting my complaint that there is no deliberation over the fit between the problem and the prescription. I was astounded at the faith in the checking mechanisms; they are all paper processes whose implications for real people have not been thought through. Managers can verify the existence of the protocols but there is no way of checking whether they are subverted in practice.

A straw man?

The focus on checking mechanisms was problematical for my thesis. Police managers evidently have their own reasons for preferring the competent technician approach. I wanted to explain this as being due to the ambiguity of Government policy, but it looked instead as if police managers were working from a different agenda to Home Office ministers. They can be seen to be broadly following Government policy, whilst pursuing quite different rationalities (Adlam 2002). Evidently there was only a tenuous link between action at policy and management levels. My interest in the policy dissonance argument cooled; even if deliberation had taken place at policy level there is no guarantee that police managers would have stopped pursuing their own rationalities.

A second problem was related to how management thinking is transformed into action by training practitioners. Practitioner action is often dependent on a relative lack of experience and skill, such that there is a tendency to make teaching decisions based on the need to preserve personal credibility (White 2000). Thus, the factors contributing to what happens in classrooms may have no connection with either Government policy or management processes.

There are at least three separate things happening at different levels that are not necessarily connected and which, in any case, have little connection with either my Scarman and Macpherson book ends, or my notion of policy dissonance. I was experiencing difficulty in pinning-down the thing that I wanted to attack.

I was surprised at this outcome because I knew that, despite the difficulties, there was a time when I would have presented my 'policy dissonance' case. I would have made it look acceptable; I would have minimised the problems by being selective about the evidence I used. A rational sleight of hand would have created a convincing case. Doing this would not have lacked rigour, or have been unscientific; but it would have been following a different set of rules. The same set of rules in fact that the Home Office followed when devising national policy. They are rules based on the creation of dualistic representations of reality, and polemical styles of writing and arguing.

I was conscious of looking at my material with different eyes, and frustrated that, because of this new perspective, I could not make my old methods work. Something which in the past would have been setup as knowledge was now a horrible oversimplification.

I made three attempts at starting the paper, but each was foiled by the need for a straw man to knock down. In Draft One I began by laying out "the two main influences" on police training (the autonomous professional and the competent technician); but quickly realised that this did not do justice to what happened in police classrooms. Police culture was surely a third influence.

So Draft Two introduced the *three* main influences on police training; I had a target to knock down, but the trade-off was that it was now obscured. To ignore the additional complexity would be to lack reflexivity; but being reflexive frustrated my attack. I began Draft Three by avoiding setting up a real situation using the question, *what is really happening in police training?* The question was ironic and intended to establish my reflexive *bona fides* by arguing that there was no *real* situation. However, I was quickly back into the game of enumerating the main influences - still three of them and still

palpably real.

I persisted with Draft Three on the premise that clarity often appears during the writing process. While explaining the cultural influences at the practitioner level I realised that it was my own values and beliefs that were constituting the description. Thus, one of my *three main influences* seemed, in its turn, to be mainly influenced by me. These influences were not 'real' in any sense, but dependent on my purposes, and at that point my purpose was to setup the straw man to be knocked down by my arguments. I was an important element in what I claimed to know; my person as a teacher and researcher was the main influence on the 'quick traditional paper' that I wanted to write.

I stopped working on the paper. My material and my proposed technique were incompatible. I felt mixed emotions; I felt guilty that I had not achieved the task and wanted to be self critical for not working hard enough. I harboured a feeling that, if I tried again, I would be able to 'find' the paper.

On the other hand I felt that this result - the inability to write the paper in that way - was important in itself. It illustrated the difficulties that the autonomous professional faces in trying to construct a practice in a world dominated by the rational, competent technician. My practice as a researcher and teacher throws light on police training from the position of conflict on the boundary between two competing paradigms. Can the 'professional' be better understood from this position? (Stronach et al 2002).

2. "*Personal Knowing: writing my practice*"

This second story begins with the new problem, *why was I unable to write the paper on police training policy?* I was inspired to continue thinking and writing about it because I felt there was the chance of new insight in the writing story process. My extrinsic motive was that I wanted something to present at the DPR 2 conference, and the methodology of the writing story seemed promising.

The thinking behind these stories comes from two main sources. The first is the postmodernist view of dualisms as ways of controlling meaning (Stronach and Maclure 1997) or ways of constructing reality (Stronach et al 2002). To paraphrase the argument from these writers; a stasis/movement dualism underlies thinking about what constitutes 'the professional'. There is a tension in the dualistic pairing that can be conceived as one word leaning against the other, so that new meanings depend on the leaningness. Re-conceptualisations of 'the professional' can be found in ironic or paradoxical expressions of that leaningness.

The second source began in a discussion with my friend Professor Mike Golby, concerning the idea that one could not understand 'practice' outside of a social and historical context. Mike had played with the word 'prologue' ("the past is prologue" from *The Tempest*) and had drawn an analogy with Frankie Howard in *Up Pompeii*². Frankie Howard played the character of Lurcio, a roman slave in an affluent, but dysfunctional household. Part of the programme's joke was that each week Lurcio would settle down to tell the audience a story of something that had happened to him. He always began with the words "The prologue ..." but before he could tell more than a few lines of the story, serendipity would intervene. Each episode was punctuated by Lurcio's attempts to restart his story - "The prologue ...".

Several days later Lurcio came to my mind once more; actually it took me some time to remember where it had come from. I am interested in the idea that professionals are engaged in a continual process of writing and rewriting their biographies (Plummer 2001). We rewrite our past so that it makes a coherent story justifying our current practice. There was a link here with Stronach et al - our pasts are in movement rather than stasis.

The natural dualistic pairing to the past is the present; I wondered, *is the present in stasis?* The present certainly hits you in a much more concrete way; it is unalterable where the past is not. This is what made me think of Lurcio once more. He is trying to tell his story but is constantly interrupted by those things in the present that he has to attend to. I tried to re-frame past and present in a way that was paradoxical

and Lurcio's situation seemed a good model for this; he is engaged in telling the past and it is the present that interrupts him. Can the present be seen as an interruption to the past?

Professionals are engaged in the rewriting of their biographies, but they are constantly interrupted by the present. The present is *in* the past, not the other way around.

I continued developing the analogy. One can imagine that this week's episode of *Up Pompeii* will provide the material for the story that Lurcio will attempt to tell next week: "The prologue ... I was telling the story about *so and so* to some friends ... when you'd never guess what happened ... and each time I came back to my friends ... something else would happen". The story would be changed and embellished; perhaps a moral would be found that connected the part-told story with the interrupting events; ways would be found to give meaning to the combination of story and interruptions.

Without that interaction of past and present (stasis and movement) Lurcio would not have the material for next week's story. A story without a past, or without a present does not enable us to move on and tell new stories. Our stories become frozen in time and place. Our learning stops.

Other ideas came from this analogy. What about the audience? What is the story they are seeing? They get a comedy that is the interaction of the past and the present. They don't share in Lurcio's biography, because he never gets the chance to tell that; thus, the meaning of the interruptions is different for the audience. Lurcio has to get on with being a slave, but the story for the audience is to do with the interplay of freedom to tell a story and being slave to circumstance. The audience position is something different from either Lurcio's past or present - it may have more to do with the story that Lurcio tells next week; but it may not of course.

The 'audience position' as I called it seemed to be an important concept - perhaps a reflexive position akin to the writing story. I had difficulty in understanding it as a metaphor.

I began to think about my problem using a combination of movement/stasis and Lurcio the slave; I wanted to suggest them as a means of deconstruction. I wrote an abstract for the DPR 2 conference based on this. However, I found increasing difficulty in linking the methodology of Stronach with the metaphor of Lurcio.

I was looking for a rational synthesis of the two ideas. I think there were two emotional needs behind this. Firstly, the authority of Stronach's ideas would provide me with security - after all he was to be a main speaker at the conference. Secondly, I was gripped by the rationality of 'making an argument'; if two things were related then that relationship had to be capable of logical expression. Again and again I was reverting back to my positivist tool kit. I would not be safe in saying anything unless I could synthesise the two sets of ideas.

The synthesis would not appear because that was not how the ideas were related. I liked the idea of two words leaning against each other, and of movement and stasis; and they undoubtedly helped me in coming to some new insight. However, there was something about the Lurcio analogy that seemed to be more important; it connected with my researcher-constitutiveness problem. My knowledge seems to be local and personal to me. In Stronach et al there is no sense of this particularity of knowledge; I could deconstruct the dualism in my thinking about police training policy, but without ever having to mention myself.

This worried me. I believe that I lacked the confidence to write in a way that preferred my own, local knowledge over the expert knowledge. By synthesising my ideas with Stronach's I not only gave mine more credibility, I made myself feel safer - I could more safely express myself. Once more I recognised that my thinking was being directed by personal needs and motives; I feared not having that objectivity of something-outside-of-me.

Local knowledge was not as good as expert knowledge. As a practitioner I happily operate under my local knowledge, but as soon as I am asked to explain myself to another authority I feel vulnerable

and begin looking for other ways of justifying it. However, as my experience above shows, those other ways of knowing do not support local knowledge.

My thinking and writing had brought me to the person of the researcher/practitioner as constitutive of his/her local knowledge. I want to say that it had 'brought me back' because I think that my broader story was taking me in that direction. I noticed one more fit with the Lurcio analogy: I had overlooked Lurcio himself. He was a third element that contributed to the 'audience position'. Lurcio is a story teller, but he is also a slave (and other things besides); the stories that he tells bring together the social and historical elements that constitute him. The person of the writer is the locus of that biography. I am a learner, a teacher and a researcher - the stories I tell bind those aspects.

This led me into thinking about my practice as a teacher and the way I distinguish between roles and activities (Losito et al 1998). Teacher and students do not change their roles - their reasons for attending class. However, the activities of teaching and learning, leading and following, speaking and listening, and so forth should be interchangeable. Thus my biography represents my reason for being here, and it should support me in moving between the activities of teacher and researcher.

These principles are contained within the curriculum that I teach. As I cast my mind back over the last few years I realise that what I have been teaching is the valuing of the self and of personal/local knowledge. My teaching practice is about valuing the individual's right to generate knowledge.

As a teacher I can comfortably move between the activities of learning and teaching, but in my persona of researcher I still feel compelled to identify my role with the expert activities. I feel the need to describe, criticise and prescribe. That is the positivist way. I have tried as a teacher to be less judgemental, to allow people room to make their own sense of things, to value their right to create knowledge. Can I apply that same approach to being a researcher? What would the researcher look like who approached his/her audience in this way?

Certainly research would have to be more *educational* and less prescriptive. Criticising politicians for their policy would be parallel to criticising a student for not understanding what is taught. To be educational, research would have to give permission to the audience to make their own sense of a situation. Being judgemental would be counter productive in that respect.

Action which is educational is thus linked to action that is ethical; the relationship between researcher and audience becomes an educational one and therefore has an ethical dimension. I have found that by acting towards people in a way that respects their right to create meaning, I feel a sense of responsibility and humility about what I am doing. I become more in touch with the humanity of the people I work with. I know them differently. I have moved from feeling that respecting their rights is something I *should* do, to feeling that it is something I *ought* to do. I feel that it is wrong to impose an expert knowledge.

Thus, not only is it the case that expert knowledge is *known* personally, but that in the translation from extrinsic knowledge to intrinsic knowing, it acquires a moral dimension.

I discussed above the 3-way link between relationships, knowledge and ways of knowing, and I use this once more to understand the facets of educational action as I am describing it. Reviewing what I have written in this 'writing story' I can see how my relationship with the world (professional relationships with myself and my students; personal relationships with self, family and friends) have changed as I have found new ways of knowing and new forms of knowledge; and one important aspect of the way that I have storied my practice has been to write-in an ethical responsibility.

It is a reassuring thought that, in my research practice, I have moved beyond the achievement of outcomes and found value in living through a collaborative process. Being a learner, a teacher, a researcher, having an ethical approach to people, and being concerned to live my life, have all become very closely connected.

Engaging politicians or police managers in rational debate will not change the way that they see their

practices. If I resist others in this way I will not be acting consonantly with my values as a teacher. If I play the role of expert I will be experienced by those others as criticising, challenging and resisting. However, what I can do is to respond to the people with whom I relate - my students and the readers of my writing - and my problem is to find ways of doing this educationally.

Writing a paper on police training policy now feels like self aggrandisement. To return to my opening quotation, it seems that the question of the nature of police training policy is not an *educational* problem - because it is not a problem about *how to act educationally in a social situation*.

Notes

¹National Police Training (NPT) was a Home Office department responsible for the management of centralised training functions. It ceased to exist in April 2002, when it became a non-governmental authority and was renamed Centrex (the Central Police Training and Development Authority). Its functions are unchanged.

²*Up Pompeii* was a 1960's-70's TV comedy, starring Frankie Howard.

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Opposing a Rationalist Discourse: four practitioner stories

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I am a practitioner-researcher. I work in a police training college with three colleagues and our role is the education and development of more than twenty training staff. I see two problems with teaching and learning in the police service:

- (i) Relationships within the organisation are hierarchical and this is reflected in a transmission-model of teaching;
- (ii) The trainers are police officers rather than professional educators. Their short secondments militate against collegiality and the growth of a shared social practice.

My Doctoral research project aimed to address these two issues by engaging the trainers as participants in researching and developing their own practice. The initial stage of the project was to form a core group with my three colleagues. This paper is about the first three months in the life of that core group.

I present it in the form of four stories written from different perspectives - realist, critical, destabilising and reflexive. This is based on ideas by Lather (1991) but developed through the use of just one voice - my own. I use the narratives as positions from which to observe the contrasting and often contradictory themes in my thinking, feeling and action. I did not set out to write stories on different levels, rather I discovered the levels within my writing. I use the word 'position' to indicate how the stories grew out of my writing, rather than out of a classification of my data. I found myself comparing the stories rather than analysing the data (Clough 2001).

Brown and Jones (2001) suggest this approach to narrative in their idea of a chain of stories. The meaning of a narrative is dependent on its place within a temporal sequence, in an analogous way to the relationship between a word and a sentence. Thus my four stories are independent narratives but gain much of their meaning from their interdependence.

I am the narrator. My voice is heard both as reflector in the present and commentator in the past. Other voices are present as echoes, mediated through my field notes and in the way I now choose excerpts to fit the theme I want. The stories are my constructed meanings and interpretations and produce my particular version of events (Chambers 2001). I am the organising consciousness (Clough 2001) and my engagement is both political and moral.

A realist approach: background

I wrote a research report summarising the first three months of the project intended to meet my need to account for what happened. It was written as a factual record based on the assumption of a common level of shared experience. As my writing progressed, the idea of a stable factual foundation became

increasingly problematical. I explained the complexity by arguing that the research report was only what *appeared* to happen; the surface appearances concealed something different beneath. The dualisms - appearance/reality and revelation/concealment - are symptomatic of a realist epistemology (Stronach and Maclure 1997).

The realist story is based on my research report.

A realist story: 'I think we're making a mistake'

I designed the project around our work; we would form a core group with the aim of researching our practice as teacher-educators and then engage with the trainers who would research theirs. I envisaged a symbiosis in which two groups researching different things could collaborate to make the other's task possible. The core group would be formed first and would plan how to collaborate with the trainers in what came to be called the 'big group'.

I approached the core group meetings both as chair and facilitator. I anticipated that although a consensus was unlikely, we could hope for agreement on a basis for cooperation. I felt it was important to create an atmosphere where doubts and fears could be expressed, and in particular I recognised that my agenda should be supplemented by my colleagues' concerns.

Five meetings were held following the same pattern:

1. My agenda was written up on a white-board and after meetings I added a summary of the debate on each item. I used the board to focus the meetings and as a permanent reminder of progress.
2. I concentrated on a facilitative role, listening carefully and using techniques such as paraphrasing to enable the free expression of views. I gave my opinion when asked, but refrained from advocacy.
3. Each meeting lasted about 1½ hours and field notes were written-up afterwards. A copy of the field notes was left in the office with an invitation to the others to read and comment.
4. My dual roles of chair and researcher were repeatedly discussed. I encouraged this since it was evidently important to them and curtailing debate would inhibit sharing and agreement.

The fourth meeting was squeezed into a busy lunch time. Participation was further disrupted by a suggestion that an independent facilitator would be needed to run the big group - it caused some shock and I sensed it was seen as problematical for my research. The meeting ended before the issue was resolved. I considered the possibility that my colleagues were unconsciously resisting progress, but trusted that my facilitative skills would enable concerns to be expressed.

For the fifth meeting I used the white board to highlight the only remaining agenda item - forming the big group. I wrote up anything pertinent from previous meetings, including aim, ideas for action, and anticipated problems. However, my determination to progress was subverted when my colleagues backtracked on the whole idea of a collaborative group. Their consensus was that we should continue to coach trainers individually, though they conceded that relationships could be less hierarchical.

I had encountered a resistance to collaborative working from colleagues who had a personal investment in their role as experts imparting learning to others. I had expected resistance, but neither so soon nor from this quarter. I thought that I had discovered something important about learning in police cultures.

Comment

It is tempting to discuss what this narrative is *about*: but, I prefer to ask, *what does it do?*

The realist construction permitted me to explain what happened by blaming the other participants for standing in the way of progress. I used the first person to foreground my role and to minimise the importance of the other characters. Passive constructions were used to refer to events, and pronouns

to classify other people. The observer's perspective legitimated objective standards against which notions of 'better' and 'right' could be measured.

I warned my colleagues after the *denouement* 'I think we're making a mistake'; this is no mere rubric. The realist story was complicit in blaming them - 'you are making the mistake'.

A critical approach: background

My project aimed to counter the organisational hegemony by fostering participation and non-exploitative relationships. It is a focus on emancipation from oppression.

In an early draft I described it as *a peep behind the scenes of the realist story*, reflecting once more the belief that a liberatory narrative explained what was 'really' going on, where the realist story saw only symptoms. This dualism contains the assumption that our conception of what is 'better' can be objectively defined; the two approaches may be antagonistic, but they are both within the discourse of grand narratives (Brown and Jones 2001).

The story is a fictionalisation (Clough 2001), recreating the feel of the final meeting by synthesising material from them all.

A critical story: The board people

The meeting was set for 2.00 pm, but as usual we were procrastinating about starting. We find other things to do before sitting, and once we are sitting we find other things to talk about. I sensed a reluctance to start, as if they were saying 'You want it to start? Then you do it'. I felt my energy drain away.

I had redrawn the white board - setting a new agenda in different coloured pens. I introduced it and invited contributions, but there were none. In fact no one said anything. It felt like my agenda. *Am I the only person interested in this?* I began to feel lonely.

When I'd planned the meeting I had felt so optimistic - at last nothing stands in the way of deciding some action.

Luke's voice intruded into my thoughts '... what stands in the way is the leadership role ...' and my apparent assumption that there would have to be some leadership '... the aim should be to empower others to be leaders ...' my position is at best the initiator.

I see myself as chair and facilitator, but he's separating these '... the facilitator helps the group with finding solutions whereas the chair is a power figure guiding the group ...'

He was arguing that a group must have the freedom to do what it wants, even if we feel it is wrong. But doesn't this argument just beg the question? We cannot deny our leadership role. The conundrum of leadership is balancing liberation against oppression.

Had we been over these things before? It seemed that we rehearsed them at every meeting.

'... the power structure is in our minds and we respond to it subconsciously ...' Luke again.

I wondered if subconsciously it was the leadership role that I needed. Do I want to run the big group because I will be in charge, leading it, chairing it? Do I enjoy too much being the focus of attention?

When my thoughts turn outwards to the group once more I find the subject has changed. Luke is describing how he has moved on from the 'old' style of coaching, swapping assessment for co-facilitation.

'... a new precedent will be created ...'

'... so do we need to form a group?'

Concern sweeps over me. I want to argue ... *but we agreed ... this sets us up as experts ... we*

agreed we'd be more democratic ... we agreed on a group. But I can't enter the debate; I can't oppose him. I have to chair and facilitate. So I paraphrase him and look to the others.

Stephen. 'Our agenda and our language create power for us - we need to have a new process ...'

Where is this leading? I'm scared. *Our* agenda, he said. But it's clearly my agenda because they wouldn't contribute to it. Are they talking about me? All this talk of power, are they referring to *me*?

'... it shouldn't rest on a power structure of formal processes like meetings ... we must avoid imposing a structure on our plans ... this implies *not having the group meetings* ...'

There - he's said it. He doesn't want a group. I tuned out of the meeting. I think I had been expecting it, but it was still a shock. I felt drawn into a confrontation - I want to argue back but the researcher in me is still saying 'hold back'.

My pencil is above the page but I can't move it. Muzac voices. I must do something. I can avoid *arguing* by just giving information. Point out facts - I know I can persuade them. The day can still be saved!

I can't tell you what I said, only what I fantasised later.

Graham was conciliatory. He pointed out that in their suggestion, we could still move towards a group, it would just take longer.

In *their* suggestion? What had I missed? Are they all in this together?

The meeting blurs - then me my research *this isn't going to help you* I'm not in control of my feelings why is it so hard to handle *how do you feel about that* they're concerned for me this is intense I need a winning argument Graham chokes a piece of fruit someone laughs

And I come to my senses.

I remember feeling resentment. Who are they to question me? I wanted to pretend that it didn't matter so I proposed a cup of tea and then showed my nonchalance by leading the way to the canteen. But everyone knew that it did matter.

I remember once when I was aged five or six being caught disobeying a school rule. I was returned to my class by the head. I was embarrassed and all the other kids at the table wanted to know what I'd done. I didn't want to talk about it. I just wanted them to forget.

That's how I felt at the tea table that afternoon.

Some days later Stephen shared his reflections with me:

David calls the meeting, sets the agenda and waits/hopes/expects arrangements to be made for a meeting of a wider group ... We always start with systems and proposals set out on the white board ... the language *of* the board shows that we, the board people, have not yet moved away from power, it's language and it's trappings.

Reading this renews my feelings of frustration and anger that my actions were so misinterpreted. I wanted a democratic process that was inclusive and enabling. I had acted facilitatively, never imposing anything on my them. How could they say these things? Even now I want to argue back. I want to set out my side of the argument to prove they had got it wrong. I want to do it and I feel I could win it. I could change their minds, *Look you've got this wrong. You don't understand what I'm doing. I don't want to experiment on you. I want to work with you. Why don't you want to participate?*

But I can't deny that what they experienced was something quite different. It was no mere disagreement over policy; it was a deeply felt reaction to being railroaded into an idea they did not share. And I am still trying to change their experience by getting them to accept my perception.

Comment

The critical story conceives of power as tangible - possessed by the mighty and inflicted on the

oppressed. I was the powerful character and I used my position to impose an idea. It reverses the result of the realist story by blaming me; I am the one who stands in the way of progress by rejecting the 'right' way of working.

But the story acknowledges the voices of the other participants, and in doing so it has to show humility. The privileged status of researcher is given up for a new and more equal position; but with this loss comes a feeling of vulnerability - I am saying to the others, *I am vulnerable too*. Part of the story's meaning is in the action of *being* vulnerable.

A destabilising approach: background

My first two stories have in common the creation of them-and-us roles where 'we' are virtuous and 'they' are to blame. In this approach I challenge the construction of a power/resistance dualism. I use the word 'destabilising' in the sense that it undermines such assumptions (Lather 1991, Brown and Jones 2001).

The realist story deals with events rather than people and the 'I' in the narrative has the feel of an evaluator. In the critical story the characters played the parts of oppressor and oppressed in a liberatory drama (Freire 1993). In this story I locate myself in both camps; I am at the in-between, on the boundary between power and resistance (Stronach and Maclure 1997).

The story mixes extracts from my journal with contemporary reflection.

A destabilizing story: Who pays the bills?

I had been troubled by Bruner's (1990) account of the situated and distributed nature of meaning. It troubled me because whilst I understood the idea of the situatedness of knowledge, I had found it difficult to conceive of distributedness as anything more than an expansion of the statement that it was shared. It was like saying *widely* situated; but 'widely situated' did not square with the 'cultural nature of knowledge acquisition' (Bruner 1990: p106). So being 'distributed' had to be something to do with the act of acquisition.

I cannot be the sole source of the meaning of something, other people have to share that meaning. However, 'sharing' does not imply that I can just distribute my meaning as if it were the contents of a leaflet. It is in the process of becoming distributed that meaning is shared; in other words meaning is created through distribution rather than being created and then shared by distributing it.

A destabilising story might problematize my other accounts by showing how action was constructed through participation in a social context, rather than through individually reasoned decision making. The rationality of action is questioned. I did not reason and then act, but acted and then rationalised.

In my early journal entries I saw the rational 'me' attempting to make sense of researching in a non-positivist paradigm:

I guess that I want to look like the professional researcher. Starting a participative research group is not what I thought professional research would look like.

I want strokes as a thinker and a researcher. Doing the PhD is partly connected to the maintenance of my self esteem. The trouble is that seeing research in a rational-instrumental mode requires me to be the expert possessing special skills and knowledge, and my research subjects as lesser mortals. I want to research them and then go away with my data to produce my conclusions.

What makes this so hypocritical is that I want to criticise the organisation for being rational-instrumental! I want to research those aspects of the organisation which get in the way of learning and development - and I'm going to set about it using the same methods as I am criticising.

It was a roller-coaster ride; one day I seemed to have the solution and the next day I had lost it. I spent one weekend producing a version of the proposal, abandoned it on Sunday realising that it was

completely wrong, only to readopt it on Tuesday night with just minor changes. Evidently the methodology in the proposal was not the source of the problem; the common denominator was me and how I felt about what I was doing.

Whilst I acknowledged my emotional state I saw it as a separate issue to the design of a methodology; they were related only in as much as one often interfered with the effective pursuit of the other. I had created a person/product dualism and I intended to keep their problems separate. My approach was reinforced by three planning breakthroughs that appeared to work on both levels. I use the word 'breakthrough' because it conveys the sense of an emotional impact as well as a methodological advance. However, dualisms have their own cost of living.

(i) The liberatory motive

In my early writing I shunned the idea of action research because it was not *real* research. Instead I warmed to the related idea of emancipatory research. I was able to distance myself from the former by embracing the latter. This was a self deception. I made myself feel better about doing action research by calling it 'emancipatory' but in liberating participants from the organisation's oppression, I subjected them to my own.

(ii) The research symbiosis

The second breakthrough was recognising the significance of different levels of involvement in the research: myself as researcher, the core group as facilitators and the trainers as practitioners. We have different responsibilities but we achieve democracy through symbiotic interdependence.

However, my application of the idea was flawed because it conflated two separate aspects. Participants come together with different interests in the research - their roles as researcher/practitioner etc - but these are distinct from the activities in which they engage - planning/working/facilitating. Whilst participants' interests in the research are constant, their activities will be interchangeable (Losito *et al* 1998).

I protected my status by retaining control of the expert activities. It relieved the emotional discomfort, but the trade-off was that others' activities were neither democratically allocated nor equal to mine.

(iii) The core group

It was impractical to begin a collaborative group without including my colleagues as equals in the decision making process. I could only develop new practice through their collaboration, and yet I had no real conception of how to share responsibilities with them.

I was able to unload my emotional stresses through the core group whilst maintaining my superiority by assuming that they had more to learn than me - I was still the expert. The drawback was that their cooperation could last only for as long as they were willing to bear the strain.

I had never resolved my own contradictions about doing collaborative research. I wanted to be both a collaborator and an expert. Each of my breakthroughs was a defensible methodological decision that was subverted to serve my emotional needs; emotionally I was still tied to a positivist paradigm.

Comment

The in-between position at the boundary of a dualism is experienced as a painful contradiction. I wanted to be a detached, powerful observer and simultaneously an equal, suffering liberator. The two roles acted reflexively upon each other and produced a third identity, the boundary dweller riven by anxiety (Stronach and Maclure 1997).

The oppositional pairings of word/deed, and knowing/feeling are implicated in the story; whatever action is taken its pair comes back to haunt the actor. I like the metaphor of the drama, although the characters now seem much less like actors. (Are they more like real people?) But I want to ask *where are they between performances?* The boundary-dweller seems to have household bills to pay.

A reflexive approach: background

In this approach I reflect-on and move between the other narratives. I pay attention to each and avoid allowing any to dominate (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000). It is the most contemporary of the approaches and the most optimistic - it contains ideas that contributed to my later attempts at collaborative working.

In an early draft I adopted the title 'My Story', but later added 'No, they're all my stories!' as a reminder to find a better one. I mention this because it revealed an urge to distance myself from the other narratives - particularly the realist story. It was as if I wanted to set aside the uncomfortable and embarrassing parts; to deny that they were really part of me and to portray myself as someone more rational. 'My Story' was to disown the other things that happened.

From the outset I have tried to write from within a non-positivist paradigm, but I still find myself searching for a closure. My stories began to take shape when I stopped trying to *explain* the research, and instead sought to *evoke* it (Lather 1991). Meaning is not discovered in the narrative, but achieved through dialogue with it. Thus, I had to feel that I possessed all the stories - that they were all parts of me. I began to emphasise action and the question, *what do the stories do?* rather than, *what are they about?*

This repossession of my experience is painful because it involves showing you, the reader, my many faults; I seek to evoke what happened through making myself vulnerable. I take the position of learner rather than teacher; of collaborator rather than researcher (Ellis and Bochner 2000).

My last two narratives develop these emerging themes. In the first I search for an elusive new paradigm and in the second I question my drive to explain that experience.

A first reflexive story: The L-shaped room

I share an L-shaped office with my colleagues; the door is on one of the long sides and the windows overlooking the grounds are along the base. My desk and personal space are at the end of the short arm; it is the best position, with more space and privacy than is afforded to the others. I am aware of the status this gives me, in a taken-for-granted sort of way.

An incident one day caused me to reflect on how I actively use this status symbol rather than just passively benefiting from it. Moving from there would mean more than losing the favoured position, I would have to learn to behave differently. The loss was hard to contemplate because it was linked to my self image.

What surprised me however, was that considering giving up my desk made me much more sensitive to the notion of power in the research relationship. I saw what it would mean, and therefore how important it was, to avoid any sense of power over the other participants. For a tantalising moment I understood what it would feel like to work collaboratively with others, and each time the idea began to drift beyond comprehension I called it back by imagining myself giving up my desk.

It reminded me of Lather's question 'What would a sociological project look like that was not a technology of regulation and surveillance?' (1991 p15). I knew then what it would *feel* like. I would feel challenged to give up some beliefs I have about myself, and dared to give up comfortable ways of acting. This was a different way of understanding 'collaboration'; I understand the word conceptually, and the deed experientially (Palshaugen 2001).

But did I give up my desk? When I reflected on the incident in my journal I was reminded of the notion of a 'sensitising concept' and rather pompously called this way of comprehension a *sensitising action* - an action which sensitises you to new ways of understanding. However, the following day I backtracked and wrote 'I think it would be better called a sensitising *perspective*'. I rationalised not giving up my status by converting the experience into something conceptual.

It was a step that I was not ready to take.

A second reflexive story: The Xmas lights

I made three formal analyses of this phase of my project: the first was the research report; the second was for a research seminar; and the third was for this paper. At each stage I encountered a similar problem and my metaphor for this is *putting the Xmas tree lights back in the box*.

Have you tried it? There's a cardboard notch in the packaging for each of the lights; but you need three hands because after you've slotted a few into place they start popping out randomly. I've found that I can just about manage it - using arms and feet, and then holding the box lid in place with a rubber band. It's not that the lights won't go in - it's that the wires won't let them; or at least, only certain combinations of lights will 'fit' at any one time. The wiring wants to hold the shape of the Xmas tree; and it won't go back into the box without losing it.

One of my peers at the research seminar reported with a practical joviality that he just stuffs the lights into a plastic bag. If the plastic bag were a research metaphor, what would it represent? As a researcher, dare I use a plastic bag for my data?

When I had completed the research report I remember having an uneasy feeling. I had used only a fraction of my material and I sensed there were important things which remained unsaid (or *concealed* - Stronach and Maclure 1997). In the conclusion I wrote:

This account is personal and idiosyncratic. The outcome was affected by the interaction of four peoples' personalities within a specific work context. In putting it into words I have made choices about the selection and rejection of material and themes; I have simplified, reduced and re-presented.

I think that I wrote this because I felt inept about leaving so much hidden. I could justify 'simplifying, reducing and re-presenting' by confessing what I had done - and that made it feel all right.

For the research seminar I wrote and rejected two plans over a three-month period. Each time the material defied my best efforts to synthesise a concise account that *said it all*. I remember knocking my head with frustration and urging 'Come on! If you just work hard enough you'll find *the order* there'. In time, I began to comprehend that discovering the perfect formulation was not really the problem; it was that presenting it to my peers as such would be to *act* inconsistently with the collaborative ideal that had motivated me. I felt that there was something fundamentally ethical about *doing* research in collaborative ways. Thus in the final plan I decided not to 'present my findings' but rather to use a number of short excerpts to evoke discussion.

I wrote this story during my third phase of analysis. I discussed it with Luke and following one such conversation I reflected:

I've just realised that my current piece of writing is creating in me the same struggles with positivism as I have experienced in other ways. I want to be seen as logical and analytical; as I have just said to Luke, *I want to be seen as a guy who can really put a piece of writing together*. It seems to both take a self-awareness and an effort of will to resist the urge to rationalise an account.

I found that learning to write and act within a different discourse entailed the emotional difficulty of discovering new sources of self-affirmation - understanding how to live a collaborative relationship. I could read something and understand it on a conceptual level, but knowing it at the level of action was to experience it as a way of living. There was an ethical dimension to the lived experience that was opaque to my armchair logic.

So where are my lights now? Are they back in the box anyway? I invite you to share my anxiety!

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