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Studies in Supervisory Practice:

The Effectiveness of the Practicum in Teacher Education in the Northern Territory

Volume 2

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PART 5

STORIES FROM THE BUSH PRACTICUM

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

PHASE TWO

STUDENT- TEACHER	FIELD SUPERVISOR	LIAISON LECTURER
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AT BURARRA

June Muir Tracy Ashburton	Ben Cruikshank Martina Vavlas	Robert Scales Robert Scales
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AT JIKILIJIPA

Wayne Cavallero	Leo Crisp	Robert Scales
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AT MIYAPUNU

Beverley Hodges Penny Alsop	Angela McCabe Dale Buttress/ Simone Sutcliff	Rose Dawson Rose Dawson
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AT PIAPIA

Grace Heaton Jennifer Holt Sheila Cunningham	Colleen Newton Jo Anne Sylvester Monique Daniels	Owen Field Owen Field Owen Field
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AT WAMPAKA

Penny Alsop Tracy Ashburton	Jim Braithwaite Carol Schwartz	Maralyn Nunn Maralyn Nunn
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CHAPTER 22

THE CONTEXT-OF-SITE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PLACE

The term context-of-site refers to the way in which the practicum is contextualised. It encompasses the ecology of the site and embraces not only physical aspects such as classroom design and school architecture, but spatio-temporal considerations, demographic features, and socio-economic factors. It manifests itself in school climate and personality, and the overall ethos of the school (Henderson and Osborne, 1987; Kremer-Hayon, 1987; Lutz and Lutz 1988; Maxwell and Thomas, 1991, Tye, 1987; Tyler, 1988; Zeichner, 1987).

I argue that the subjective ways in which time and place are constructed and interiorised have a considerable effect on the outcome of the practicum. Because spatial and temporal considerations are not *systematically* addressed by supervisory staff with respect to the subjectivities of the participants, the practicum conference is not particularly effective at achieving change or imparting agency, and, that whilst providing opportunities for creating a greater awareness of the issues involved and for challenging entrenched beliefs and attitudes, little in the nature of transformative or emancipatory action results.

I begin by looking briefly at the meaning of place and the way the Territory as a whole has been constructed from 'down south', and then consider the relationship of place with the past, before examining the schools and their communities, and the role of the principal. The background and previous experience of the student-teachers and their Field Supervisors, and their beliefs, attitudes and values, are examined in the next chapter.

The meaning of place

Feelings and attitudes towards community are heavily influenced by beliefs associated with place (Edgerton, 1991). Place can come to dominate the individual and restrict or promote opportunity and development (Agnew and Duncan, 1989). When we move away from the broad sweeps of topographical and geo-political place such as the 'Top End' to consider location, we become embroiled in the complex interaction of the particular and general, the local and universal. As Kincheloe and Pinar (1991:4) have put it:

[P]lace is that which brings the particularistic into focus: a sense of place sharpens our understanding of the individual and the psychological and social forces that direct her or him.

Place, in other words, grounds our way of seeing by providing the contextualisation of the particular, and whilst it may be true that from a postmodernist perspective, we are in the process of 'denaturing context' (Hayles, 1990:270), if we dispense with the notion of context, we deny the possibility of identification and belongingness. The notion of different sites implies that such sites are underlaid by common ground. However sites are not laminar or interchangeable and there will be rifts and fissures apparent in the multiple strata. Particular texts and cultural sites resist assimilation into the generalisations of universal theory and student-teachers are caught up in the resulting turbulence (Ley, 1989). Meaning cannot be separated from the particular organisation of signs that characterise a given site (*ibid*:212).

How has the Territory been constructed?

This question has been investigated by Stratton (1989). His conclusion is worth quoting at length, because it reveals some of the tropes of the practicum text with which student-

teachers have to contend.

The Northern Territory, the least part of the discourse of Australia, has historically provided the site for the repressed Other of the real Australia. In this sense the Territory has been constituted binarily in relation to the rest of Australia. It is constructed as *isolated* compared to the rest of Australia which is viewed as internally cohesive. It is a place of *failure* to set against the rest of Australia. It is a place that *lacks* population and economic *development* to set against the populated, developed rest of Australia. It is climatically *alien* as against the acceptable southern climate, and it is the frontier, the limit of civilisation to set against the civilised south of the country. Underpinning all these the Northern Territory is the site of *appearance, the place of the unreal* against which the rest of Australia has remained remarkably static ... Historically the Territory has been the manifestation of the repressed for the *real* 'Australia'. It has been the weakest moment in the discourse (*ibid*:54, emphasis added).

One other feature discussed by Stratton requires mention and that is the feeling of transience engendered by this sense of failure, isolation and unreality. Constructing the Territory as transient creates particular expectations amongst student-teachers which raises questions of commitment, sincerity, and endurance. Transience also brings into focus the opportunistic, the propitious, and the adventitious which lead student-teachers to attach a lack of planning, direction and coherence to bush schools. It is not surprising therefore that the predominant discourse is one of privation, impoverishment and despair as revealed in Chapter 30.

The presence and circulation of this representation which originates from outside the Territory tells us nothing about the degree to which it is accepted by its users within the Territory (de Certeau, 1988:xiii). Place needs to be seen through the eyes of those who populate it and have prior claim to it. Although isolated communities are marginalised by the allocation of resources, marginality provides them with a viewpoint from which the centre (the 'normal') can be critiqued. (Harvey, 1994:57-8). The predominant representation can be reversed so that it is the University and its agents which are out of touch and become marginalised as Carol Schwartz attempts to do at Wampaka.

Historical influences

The power exerted by place emanates from its incorporation of history. Because the past is forgotten it directs without resistance and all too often we are not aware of the significance, the emotional 'pull', of place (Jacoby, cited in Kincheloe, 1991:181). In such circumstances the past interferes without us being aware of it, deforms our understandings rather than transforms them, calls into question the validity of our theoretical interpretations, encourages us to seize upon the momentary event without considering its origins, and allows us to proceed without attending to the explanatory force of personal and folk memory. For this reason we forget the importance of general educational histories.

Historical antecedents can be considered as both immediate and more long-term and indwelling. In their case study of the mentor program at Yirrkala Community Education Centre, Ngurruwutthun and Stewart (in press), address the long-term historical effects on their work:

[I]n spite of the rhetoric of Government policies ... the relationships between Yolngu [Aboriginal people] and Balanda ['white fellas'] established in the early days of colonisation, still contextualise education today and affected the reality of our daily practice.

In her journal, Stewart comments on the difficulties non-Aboriginal teachers experience in winning acceptance from the local people. Yolngu people are 'not used to having a Balanda who is genuine about doing the right thing and therefore I am inheriting this suspicion.' Student-teachers also experience this suspicion, sometimes without being aware of its cause. Long-term effects often contribute to initial encounters in indeterminate ways.

Kincheloe (1991) argues that as critical educators we are the bearers of dangerous memories and that as such we need to preserve the memory of human suffering and assist our students to identify the relationship of past suffering to present form of oppression. All too often this 'suffering remains unaddressed and thus insidiously tolerated' (Kincheloe, 1991:183), and this is particularly true of the bush practicum with its toleration of subjugated knowledges, avoidance of dangerous memories, and the failures to expose the concrete mechanisms of exclusion and domination, engage in a commitment to Aboriginalisation and re-affirm the centrality of place and the rights of ownership and possession.

Each of the former missions in this investigation saw it as their function to protect Aboriginal people from being exploited, demoralised and killed. Rose (1991) has recorded some of the 'hidden histories' which continue in the folk memory of Aboriginal people. Mission influence varied according to the particular site or community (Harris, 1990:699-700). Some, for example, required a commitment to the 'gospel of work', a commitment still predominant amongst those who succeeded them at Kikilijipa. Those sites that emerged as trading stations or welfare settlements adopted different approaches.

The schools and their communities

There is regrettably an unevenness in the accounts of the five schools involved due to considerations of anonymity and confidentiality, and shortage of time spent in the communities. The accounts concentrate on progress towards Aboriginalisation and the degree of empowerment achieved by each community.

Wampaka

In spite of the fact that in 1979 the local people had won back their own land, Wampaka would have to be classified as the least empowered of all the communities involved in the research. This was certainly the view of a number of Aboriginal informants I spoke to who pointed to instances of lack of consultation, discrimination, petty racism, harassment and intimidation.

Wampaka provided a textbook example of the importance that historical and geographical location exerts. Because the school remained on crown land some five kilometres from the main Aboriginal settlement, this had the unintended effect of permitting a form of separation. The Aboriginal community became effectively excluded by virtue of its geographical location. The non-Aboriginal teachers generally thought this arrangement beneficial because as one of them told me, they were not so pressured by the local people.

In the event, my visit to Wampaka demonstrated the importance of knowing in advance the immediate historical circumstances influencing the site. Unbeknown to me the school had several years before been the centre of conflict after a probationary teacher from the community had been denied permanency and threatened with dismissal after only thirteen weeks of teaching on the grounds that she had a chip on her shoulder and would not conform to the overall pattern for the school laid down by the non-Aboriginal principal. This information was supplied by the former teacher herself. The local people boycotted the school and forced its closure on two occasions. Non-Aboriginal teachers were threatened and told to leave. Eventually it was arranged for the teacher concerned to complete her probation, successfully as it turned out, elsewhere. The details of this localised conflict need not detain us further although they involve allegations of racially motivated obstruction and interference in the Aboriginalisation process.

My arrival at the school coincided with Anzac Day and in between attending the memorial service to Australian and New Zealand soldiers killed in action, and playing cricket for the locals, I took the opportunity to talk to the student-teachers and take notes. This served to convince the local populace and the teachers that I had been sent to the community *incognito* to investigate the earlier incidents. Following my return to Darwin, I received a telephone call from one of the student-teachers advising me that a return visit would not be appreciated by the school. In the words of a class teacher: 'Socialising is for socialising and work is for work'.

Piapia

This former mission school had made some tentative steps towards increased Aboriginalisation but the School Council was still dominated by the principal, and was not fully associated with or involved in the workings of the school. There was considerable frustrations at the slow progress of Aboriginalisation. A former Batchelor College and D-BATE student, (D-BATE stands for Deakin-Batchelor Teacher Education program), lamented the fact that little had ever been written down about procedures to be followed: 'For example, we thought we had a mentor system ... we thought we had that but it has never been written down.'¹

There was a widespread belief that the principal was able to manipulate the School Council, and that divisions within the community were exploited as in the demise of the bilingual program. The previous principal had been openly hostile to Aboriginal

¹ Such a system has since been introduced and provides for Associateships to prepare Aboriginal staff to take over senior positions. Nevertheless the system has recently been criticised by Nicholls (1995) who claims that some mentors are not properly qualified or sufficiently experienced as teachers themselves.

languages, actively discouraging the use of local languages within the school, and insisting that vernacular literacy materials be removed from the school library.

There was also concern amongst Aboriginal staff members that the School Council constitution had been imposed on the school community without discussion. As at other schools, the Council tended to be used as an adjunct disciplinary body to assist non-Aboriginal staff to manage particularly difficult students through the setting up of special 'Behaviour Committees'. An Aboriginal Action Group had been formed in 1989 and a five year plan devised. Nevertheless, unlike Wampaka, some attempt had been made to break down the barriers separating the school and the community. Access was very open with Aboriginal people moving in and out of the grounds, and attempts had been made, however contrived, to engage the local people in community projects such as canoe building.

Prior to the arrival of the incumbent principal, the school had experienced a form of guerrilla warfare directed against the previous principal who, according to the surviving staff, had acted in a peremptory manner on a number of occasions. This continual agitation eventually led to his transfer. War stories abounded: of how the school office had been closed off to staff to allow preferential treatment for a family member doing a correspondence course; of how individual teachers had been recalled to Darwin to lodge depositions and statutory declarations; and of how staff had been arbitrarily relocated. Although, as we have seen, there were instances in the urban situation of student-teachers getting caught up in the factionalism of the school, only in the rural situation did they obtain insights into the workings of disruption, contestation and struggle in the face of the blatant misuse of power. The struggle at Piapia continues to this day.

Burarra

Burarra began as an Aboriginal settlement soon after the passing of the *Welfare Ordinance* of 1953 by the Northern Territory Legislative Council. The policy adopted was 'aggressively assimilationist' and concerned with the social acceptability of Aboriginal people. 'Aborigines became subject to the Act as wards of state, not because of their racial origins, but because of their special needs' (Parry and Wells, in preparation:21-22). The architects of the policy did not imagine that social acceptability would be achieved in their own time, but that it would take generations, a view still encountered amongst some staff at the school

The school was under the control of a paternalist Principal and suffered from a debilitating colonialist hangover (Welsh, 1988). Direct Aboriginal input into the school curriculum was severely limited. All the children at Burarra were baptised into the Roman Catholic church but one informant thought Christianity had been forced upon the people and hence was largely superficial and cosmetic. In his view, the Church had not taken a leading role in Aboriginalisation and had not offered sufficient support.

A colonial mentality could also be detected in the criticisms of Batchelor College, and the desire amongst some to erect hoops through which the local people had to jump. From the moment that Robert Scales and I arrived together at Burarra, the Principal insisted on the need for mainstream education for Aboriginal people, by which he meant common assessment devices. Claiming that first-year entry at Batchelor was at Year 1 or Year 2 achievement, he cited the case of the D-BATE graduate who could not fill in a form as evidence of poor literacy skills. Whether he knew of the past association of Robert and myself with Batchelor was not clear. However, no constructive suggestions to improve Aboriginal representation in schools were forthcoming in subsequent discussion, and a blame the victim mentality predominated.

A colonialist hangover was manifest in the yearning for the earlier welfare days when there were said to be over forty non-Aboriginal people in administrative and professional positions at Burarra. 'Now,' lamented a visitor to the community, 'you cannot get properly qualified staff and have to rely on untrained book keepers.' The wife of the Principal, who ran the Adult Education Centre, spoke in similar terms, calling into question the level of self-sufficiency and self-determination of the local people. She considered the local people not yet ready to manage their own affairs and believed they could not take on the organisation and the running and coordination of the Adult Education Centre and the museum. She saw Europeans as playing the role of buffer, standing between the demands of individual family members for money and assistance, and the need to develop the centre. Consequently she maintained that when she went on leave there was no one keen enough to stand in and take over.

Jikilijipa

This was the only non-Government mission school involved in this phase of the investigation. Hesitant moves were being made towards Aboriginalisation in both the Church and the school, a fact which came as a surprise to the student-teacher who was unaware of these developments, but the school tended to live in the shadow of the neighbouring girls' school which had embarked on more radical policies. Nevertheless Jikilijipa sent three students to Batchelor College and the recent formation of an Action Group was a significant step forward.

The Christian missions are said to have usurped the power and authority of the local people amongst whom they worked and some informants believed this process continues, albeit in a more subtle and covert manner. One way in which this appeared to be done is through the ubiquitous club. In all the communities, the institution of the club exercised a

subtle control over the lives of the people and affected the interaction of student-teachers with the local community. The club at Jikilijipa, for instance, where the principal sometimes acted as disc jockey, was employed by the Christian Brothers to exercise some control over drinking whilst offering a form of surveillance.

Miyapunu

This was the most empowered of all the communities and was the community to which I was refused entry by the Council earlier in the year on the grounds that too many whites (*kardya*) were going into the community. This was a long-standing complaint which was voiced very strongly at a staff meeting attended by one of the student-teachers and which is analysed later on in terms of the reality shock and displacement. Not all Councils feel they can exercise their power in this way. Some appear to issue permits to enter Aboriginal land simply on the request of the principal.

The influence of the principal

The principal decrees the expected behaviour of the student-teacher in Aboriginal communities, interprets the local norms for the student-teacher, governs access to the community, has the power to exclude potential troublemakers from the school, in some cases runs the school like a personal fiefdom, and retains control over progress towards Aboriginalisation and the performance of the School Council where such a body existed.

It is true that in the smaller rural school, the principal is more highly visible and that Principals of larger urban schools also engage in many of these activities. The point is that in the rural context, student-teachers are more exposed to the workings of power and more susceptible to its effects.

CHAPTER 23

THE STUDENT-TEACHERS AND THEIR FIELD SUPERVISORS

This chapter introduces the student-teachers and their Field Supervisors and examines their beliefs, values and attitudes with regard to Aboriginal education.

The student-teachers

Penny Alsop. Penny had considerable experience of Aboriginal life as a child. The family had lived on a succession of mission stations in the Northern Territory where her father worked as a pastoralist. Penny occurs twice in this investigation. She was part of the trial investigation at Wampaka and re-appears later at Miyapunu. Penny knew something of the people and the history of the area around Wampaka. She had worked as a journalist before entering Teacher Education and demonstrated considerable sympathy with Aboriginal aims and aspirations. The realisation that Aboriginal people are highly sensitive to discrimination and insult meant that she was usually able to gain entry into the Aboriginal community. At Miyapunu it was not long before she discovered someone who knew her and the importance of this sense of connection can be seen in the reaction she recorded in her journal for 10 September.

I've discovered one of the kids in my class knows me, met me in Darwin once. He remembered me and everything (fantastic recall, I can't even remember the occasion) and I was so annoyed he didn't say on my first day, *as I would have felt heaps better.* (Emphasis added)

Tracy Butcher. Tracy's formative years were spent in a small, rural business centre where her acquaintance with Aboriginal people began. The small town where she lived was, she says, 'socialised to the white man's world'. She was pleasantly surprised by the

community around Wampaka which she describes as much more 'traditional' than the one in her home town. She could walk down to the phone in the evenings which she could never have done in her home town for fear of harassment. She attributed this to the fact that Wampaka was, (and is), a 'dry' community. Aboriginal people needed a permit to bring in grog and permits could be taken away. She had expected disciplinary problems but these didn't materialise and 'you only have to ask once'. Her attitudes towards Aboriginal people as a whole were very different from those of Penny. Tracy tended to blame the victim. Parents who obtained money for their children to use in the canteen system were seen as 'bludging off their rellies'. Tracy also appears twice in this investigation. The next time we meet with her is at Burarra.

June Muir was at Burarra with Tracy. June was a recent school leaver and worked as a checker at one of the local supermarkets in Darwin where she had a reputation for efficiency and reliability. She had no previous experience of life in Aboriginal communities.

Wayne Cavallero. Wayne originally came to the Territory from Greece and enrolled in Casuarina Secondary College to strengthen his knowledge of English before commencing his Diploma of Teaching. He had worked assiduously on his pronunciation which at times was distinctly 'received'. Wayne demonstrated a serious commitment to Aboriginal Education, arranging and financing this posting himself. Although Wayne represented a particularly western, eurocentric, rationalist tradition, he had begun to question the role of the non-Aboriginal teachers in Aboriginal schools.

Wayne's generally serious and considered manner concealed the fact that he had not had to look after himself on his own before. The early sections of his journal are taken up with his physical survival and his planning for his stay. He carefully divided up his stock

of food. While I was staying with him it became apparent that he could not use the electric oven. He complained of being tired and exhausted before teaching had even commenced and was continually working up to 3.15 in the morning. Normally Wayne would not drink, but in order to get into the community he allowed himself to be pushed to have some beer at the club.

Sheila Cunningham. Sheila was a mature-age student, raised and educated in the Northern Territory. She was a single parent with a child at secondary school. Although Sheila was very communicative in the interview situation, I did not feel it appropriate to inquire more closely into her personal life. As will become clear in a subsequent chapter, Sheila is best described as a woman 'with attitude'. She could be very outspoken and definite in her beliefs and made it quite clear she would not be pushed around.

Beverley Hodges. Beverley Hodges was a Graduate Diploma student. She possessed a degree in Sociology and Anthropology with a major in the Sociology of Education, and was dedicated to Aboriginal advancement. Beverley was not originally included in the students to be interviewed but after hearing her story I decided to include her.

The Field Supervisors and their roles

Penny's supervisor at her first school, Wampaka, was the Acting Principal, *Jim Braithwaite*. Jim had been teaching for six years and supervising students from Bendigo, Armidale and the Northern Territory University since 1988. In the case of Armidale he had a third year student but 'the College did not send the lecturer'.

Neither of Penny Alsop's two teachers at her second school, Miyapunu, had extensive experience with supervision. *Dale Buttress* possessed a Diploma in Aboriginal Education

from Flinders University. Penny was her first NTU student although she had experience working with Remote Area Teacher Education (RATE) students from Batchelor College. Dale concentrated on 'comfortability', making the student-teacher feel comfortable, and giving her 'space to evolve in'. As a result she held up on any criticism and did not apply any pressure. This appeared to work well for she found that the things she was going to pick up had been sorted out by the end of the first week by the student-teacher herself. *Simone Sutcliff* had trained five years previously - 'Home Economics, with a crash course in Primary' as she put it. Penny was her first student-teacher, and like Dale, Simone had got by on the practicum booklet and talking to Penny about the course. Simone commented on the reciprocal learning experience that the practicum provided.

Tracy's supervisor at her first school was *Carol Schwartz*. Carol had a Diploma of Education (Upper Primary) from Britain and had been teaching in the Northern Territory for about seven years in one- and two-teacher schools. Tracy was her first student and Carol was completely ignorant as to her supervisory role. The practicum booklets had arrived late and she saw herself as a helper or adviser giving guidance and providing a model. Carol was operating under a number of constraints. She carried a heavy teaching load, the irregular pupil attendance meant there was a continuous problem of who and what to plan for, the Teaching Assistant in the pre-school section had been away, and thus Carol claimed she was 'only vaguely aware of Tracy being around'. Carol had only recently returned from living overseas and was anxious about her son's progress in the school, spending a considerable amount of time with him in class. All along Carol felt that she didn't know what she should have been doing with regard to practicum supervision. She just tried to point Tracy in the right direction, and allowed her to work out her methodology and approach for herself.

Martina Vavlas was Tracy's Field Supervisor at her second school. Martina had been at Burarra for just over a year having taught at Muputi for three and a half years previous to this. She had qualified in South Australia in the early 1980s and remembers having done one unit of Aboriginal Studies, but no English as a Second Language. In spite of the fact that she went to school with Aboriginal people and had Aboriginal friends nothing prepared her for the sort of culture shock she experienced at Muputi. Except for helping out unofficially at a neighbouring school with a Graduate Diploma student from Flinders, Martina had had no previous experience at supervising a student-teacher. She saw her role as much more of an adviser than a critic, allowing Tracy to 'explore the kids' minds', very conscious of trying to step back, rather than 'butting in'. Martina's whole approach was enthused with an ethic of care: 'That's the biggest value, moral, whatever, I have and Tracy is caring.'

Leo Crisp was Wayne's supervisor at Jikilijipa. Leo had graduated from Warnambool and had been at Jikilijipa since 1987 with a short spell teaching in the East End of London. He could not remember covering any Aboriginal Education in his course. Wayne was the first NTU student Leo had supervised, although he had worked with Batchelor College students completing the Third Year RATE program. Like Carol he had no idea of what to expect and admitted to being 'a bit frightened' and going back to the way that he himself was supervised, and relying on Wayne to tell him what he should be doing.

LEO: Yes, well, I mean like when I went into it I didn't have any idea what I was supposed to do, I mean I remember ... just when ... all I could think of was I better remember what it was like when I went to college and think of the lecturer and think what the teachers did. And those are sort of give advice, I mean especially for the third year students where they got to take, you know, the whole class all day, type of thing, advice when they need it, help them out. I really didn't know. Wayne sort of said just ... I can be sort of more like an aide and he sort of told me what to do and I was a bit frightened I wasn't doing enough for him but you know what I've been doing is like an aide really and which he seems quite happy but I was a bit ... I asked him whether I was doing enough and he said, yeah, more than enough, you know. But you know, I wasn't ... I mean ...

Leo was disarmingly unaware of the main focus of the practicum.

LEO: But I supposed this is a chance to see how the students would go in the community or bush school, just to give them a chance to look what it's like and see whether they'll like it.

INT: Programming hasn't become a sort of hassle, a sort of stress factor, I mean, it hasn't dominated everything ...

LEO: Programming, no. Wayne works hard. He works, I mean he probably works too hard, that's the only complaint that I'll have.

In fact Leo thinks the focus of the practicum is irrelevant as Wayne quickly discovered.

WAYNE: He had a look at the programme and he said 'Oh, yes, uhmmm, that's a programme, yeah, reminds me of the hard work that I was doing at the university' and he was having a look at the programme as if it is something fallen out of the sky, yes.

Indeed, as Wayne says earlier, the kind of programming he was introduced to in his Principles and Practice unit was biased towards urban schools. It is not surprising that Leo cannot get enthusiastic about the declared focus of the practicum because from his point of view it is misguided.

June Muir's teacher, *Ben Cruikshank*, was an experienced teacher who had only been in the Territory for three years, having taught in Western Australia for most of his life. Conservative in outlook, Ben spent much of his spare time fishing and looking forward to his retirement. He had supervised one Graduate Diploma student from the NTU in the past and one from Bendigo. Ben was very diffident about being interviewed and was concerned that his use of corporal punishment in the classroom would count against him.

Angela McCabe was Beverly Hodge's Field Supervisor at Miyapunu. By the time I got to Miyapanu she had only vague memories of the trauma which surrounded Beverley's stay and could not comment with any insight.

Beliefs, values, and attitudes

This section focuses on the ethnocentric and racially-motivated beliefs, values and attitudes held by a number of student-teachers and Field Supervisors. I concentrate in particular on their views of community and difference, their attitudes to Aboriginalisation, and their treatment of Aboriginal staff. An understanding of these views is essential to an understanding of the effectiveness of the bush practicum. Not all the student-teachers and their Field Supervisors are represented in this section.

The presence of ethnocentrism

Student-teachers and their supervising teachers demonstrated varying degrees of ethnocentrism. Some students could not comprehend of community as anything outside of their immediate cultural group. For example, for Tracy at Wampaka, community meant the behaviour of the 'white fellas'. On arrival at the school, Tracy attended a staff meeting and was shown the community and the bar. 'It was really nice of them to do it. They didn't have to. It broke down the boundaries.'

Her attitudes to the Other, the wider community that sustained her presence, are apparent in her dismissive comments on the indigenous language. Tracy did not have any Kriol, the local language used by the community. Speaking in short, sharp, no nonsense utterances, redolent with scorn, she said:

Never needed it and don't believe that any white person should use an Aboriginal language. They make too many mistakes. I was watching the Minister the other day getting annoyed because the kids were not reading properly. He was trying to use the language. Pathetic.

Tracy's Field Supervisor, Carol, also saw no value in learning an Aboriginal language. She saw no point in Aboriginalising the curriculum or adjusting teaching methods to suit Aboriginal learning styles or cultural expression, and took offence at the question which she saw as racist, although she did not use that word. In her view, all children are the same and teachers don't need to make allowances. Cultural patterns are shared by all. This denial of difference and cultural pluralism can be indicative of an assimilationist approach.²

Leo, Wayne's teacher at Jikilijipa, did not pay too much attention to Aboriginal learning styles and confessed to a sneaking sympathy for 'the good old nuns' days when there was a stick'. Several participants referred to the high noise levels tolerated by Aboriginal groups, but Leo maintained that in spite of this 'people [i.e. non-Aboriginal Australians] probably wouldn't put up with it even though, you know, we are in a different culture'. Cultural difference is acknowledged but then just as easily disregarded as Burbules (1997) observes.

Ethnocentric attitudes are accompanied by ambivalent feelings towards other cultures and communities. In most Aboriginal schools, provision is made for Aboriginal people to enter the school to promote Aboriginal culture. But this is not the liberating, emancipating venture that might be imagined. We are really dealing with cultural maintenance. There is no consideration of how the curriculum might be Aboriginalised so that it is shaped and owned by Aboriginal people. Tracy's reaction epitomises the feelings of many non-Aboriginal teachers when confronted with Culture Time in schools. The whole proceedings were a 'shambles', the lack of discipline appeared irksome, there was

²But see Nicholls, Crowley, and Watt (1996) who object to the reductionist essentialism of much theorising concerning Aboriginal world views and cultural learning styles.

no apparent 'learning' and the time, like video time and swimming, could have been better used.

Once again there is an implication Aboriginal people are bludging off the system and not taking things seriously. No thought appears to have been given to consultation with the Aboriginal people about how the situation could have been improved. Although only a student-teacher, Tracy clearly identified with the powerful group controlling the curriculum, applying non-Aboriginal, bourgeois, normative values to Aboriginal cultural expression. In subsequent chapters, we will see how the ethnocentric interpretations of non-Aboriginal teachers can be challenged and the basis for their judgements interrogated.

TRACY: So, and they are involved, ... Aboriginal people come in and take them for culture which is a shambles, it's ... we're trying ... well, perhaps the staff is thinking of trying to get it cut out because if we go there, we have to discipline them. The two people that come to do the culture, which is dancing, that's it, they get paid for about an hour, they're there for about 20 minutes, the children run wild ... riot, they don't control them, there's no ... the kids will all go home, if it wasn't for us being there and they did try it without having the teachers there, just didn't work. And they [some of the non-Aboriginal teaching staff] are trying to think of getting it cut out because the children just aren't doing anything. They're just all being silly and mucking around ... but you can ... we went to a funeral, the school shut, we shut, between smoko and lunch one day because Peter, one of the white guys who used to be involved with housing, he died and he was married to Mary and we all went down to the funeral and all the men were dancing down there and they were all being stupid, so ... I mean the children will have picked up on that and they were just being stupid in their dancing and so you ... you can't really blame them for not taking it seriously because the adults aren't taking it seriously ... I don't know whether they don't wanna be involved with their culture, I think they do, a lot do, but they just don't see it as being really serious and sort of saying "Ah, we'll learn that, uhhm" and like Gerry [the Principal of the second school to which Tracy went] was saying to me when a couple of old men die, the cultures... a lot of the cultures gonna die with them because there's only ... they are not really trad ... the people aren't very traditional, they are in some ways, a lot of ways than not, so I don't know ...

Another example of the way non-Aboriginal student-teachers associate themselves with decisions affecting the lives of Aboriginal people can be seen in the peremptory dismissal of felt Aboriginal needs. The local people at Wampaka had been stopped from bringing

their children to the pre-school on the ostensible grounds of a shortage of staff. However, it was the fact that the parents wanted to use the school for child-minding and showed no interest in the educational aspects which really tipped the balance. Tracy associated herself quite firmly with that decision, seeing the behaviour of the people as yet another attempt to bludge off the system.

Attitudes towards Aboriginalisation

Progress towards Aboriginalisation in Northern Territory schools has been fitful and limited. None of the schools involved in the bush practicum had attempted to Aboriginalise the curriculum in the manner of Yirrkala or Nuggkur, two of the most empowered communities in the Northern Territory.

In a recent article written some five years after the research began Christine Nicholls (1995), a former Principal of a large community school in the Tanimi desert, has penetrated the rhetoric surrounding Aboriginalisation and Aboriginal control in the Territory. In her view, 'a chasm of meaning separates the notion of "Aboriginal involvement" from that of "Aboriginal control"'. She points out that 'involvement' in staffing matters and in Curriculum Development projects such as ASCMP (The Aboriginal Schools Curriculum Materials Project) is essentially a device to assuage the critics of Aboriginal education whilst accomplishing very little in real terms.

In an unpublished M.Ed research paper, Wearne (1986) draws attention to the barriers set up by non-Aboriginal administrators.

Much of our practice as educators, the attitudes we hold and the organisational structures, reveals that we obstruct the effective democratisation of Aboriginal education. In this way we create and maintain barriers to Aboriginal aspirations. We effectively resist their continuing desire to manage and control their own pace and style of development.

In Nicholls' view, until local control is instituted, 'teachers in NT Aboriginal schools ... will go on being mere time-servers' (Nicholls, 1995:35).

Wayne Cavallero was fairly representative of those student-teachers who had given thought to the issue. Wayne was prepared to entertain the idea of Aboriginalisation but this was conditional on the Aboriginal people learning 'the western system'. His Eurocentrism prevented him from identifying totally with Aboriginal aspirations, and he remained very suspicious of the Aboriginalisation process for three main reasons.

Firstly he contended that the School Council members were being forced to make decisions before they are *properly trained* for them. 'Aboriginals do not know what is going on around them.' This should not be construed as a racial comment. A Darwin Principal during research into the School Planning process told me that community members of the School Council in his school were 'not backgrounded' in educational concepts (Grenfell, 1994A).

Secondly Wayne believed a degree of manipulation was therefore inevitable and his initial impression was that Aboriginal people went into meetings saying things they had heard in discussion with non-Aboriginals outside of the classroom 'because that's what they know. I doubt whether they understand it'. Wayne therefore saw the workings of the indigenous Action Group as compromised. Moreover he felt shut out from the first Action Group meeting he attended where 'nothing was explained accurately about what was happening'.

Thirdly, Wayne lacked sufficient empathy with, and understanding of, Aboriginal aspirations, and tended to disregard Aboriginal experience. For Wayne, 'properly trained,' for example, meant being trained to operate a school in a particularly western way,

employing a European world view. He had not yet realised that his own emancipation depended upon the liberation of the Aboriginal community.

In spite of these reservations, the practicum was successful in getting Wayne to consider the advantages of Aboriginalisation and to question the role that non-Aboriginal teachers could play.

WAYNE: And again what's our role there then, then we have to shift from having Europeans in the Aboriginal schools, to having purely Aboriginal teachers there which is not a bad idea, but as long as we let them learn more about the western system that they are teaching, because that's what they are teaching, the western system. So they've got to get a good understanding of that before they teach.

These views were widely shared amongst non-Aboriginal student-teachers. Only Penny Alsop and Beverley Hodges actively supported a view of Aboriginalisation which took into account the existence of incommensurable world views and acted as advocates for Aboriginal people.

Views of community and community views

Student-teachers tended to adopt the view of community and the Other embraced by the Principal, not always out of commitment or agreement, but more out of convenience and a desire not to offend. A revealing example of this can be found by comparing the reactions of Tracy to her first and second placements. In her first school, Wampaka, social life for the majority of teachers revolved around the local club. The Council, by effectively preventing local Aboriginal people, except for those married to Europeans, from going to the club bar, limited opportunities for interaction and played into hands of racist elements in the community who were thus able to maintain a subtle form of discrimination.

The non-Aboriginal community had been highly successful in getting the local people to acquiesce in their own disempowerment and Tracy spoke of the Aboriginal people in unflattering terms:

They like to think they have the power but really they haven't a clue about how things are done. You just have to put an idea to them and make it seem it comes from them. The whites are still on a pedestal with 'Yes, Sir. No, Sir,' and it's better that way ... All the youngsters from xxxxxxxx end up in gaol - ratbags, scallyways.

This view was fiercely rejected by the other student-teacher, Penny Alsop, who believed that political events which had gained national media attention had knocked the whites firmly off their pedestal.

There are no doubt more subtle forms of discrimination in urban contexts (Harris and Malin, 1992) in which 'the Aboriginal presence is assimilated into the white urban experience' (Dewar, 1996:17) and which often pass undetected. Owen Fields confirmed this when I was exploring the differences between bush and urban placements:

That right. They're there but people don't wanna talk about them. People don't wanna think about them, let alone talk about them. So we pretend that the Aboriginal kids in the class aren't there ... because they don't look Aboriginal enough so we pretend they are like everybody else.

The Principal at Tracy's second school, Burarra, also interpreted the local norms for the student-teacher and went as far as to decree the expected behaviour which happened to sit well with Tracy's bourgeois expectations:

TRACY: Gerry expects a lot from his staff, you're expected... outside of school you're expected to stay in the same role. You're a teacher, you're place is to teach the children, therefore you act as a teacher outside of school. Not to the extent of teaching them, but you've got to keep your appearance and everything very high. You don't walk around in bathers and a t-shirt, or wear mini-shorts around the community. You don't do it. So you're still in a role of being a teacher. The curriculum that they are teaching is very high, *they try to bring standards up*. (Emphasis added)

This view is consistent with Tracy's reaction to community life at Wampaka where

... the white kids go to the bar with the parents. I couldn't believe it. People getting pissed with their kids around, yet it's considered acceptable. I was worried about respect, but that's not an issue. Everything is on a first name basis which I find hard to take. The kids move in and out of the two roles: teacher role and community role.

In many Aboriginal schools, the Principals appear to take it upon themselves to preserve the culture of their own group. Some saw themselves as protecting the school community against infiltration by left-wing academics.

Tracy was still pre-occupied with maintaining the distinction between the personal and the professional at Burarra. The blurring of the roles still continued to cause her anxiety as in this extract where she tells how one of the pupils discovers that she phones her boyfriend in the evenings, just as she had done in Wampaka, and how this discovery carries over into the classroom.

... Like the situation other day, when Robby joined me. Every time I walk up to the phone, he comes up, "Who are you ringing, who are you ringing?" and of course I made a mistake of saying "Ah, my boyfriend, Peter", "Ha, let's get out, let's get out". Every time I walked down the street, he'll go "You gonna ring Peter?" I get that all the time and Robby tended to try and play on that in class.

... And see, if you wanna know anything, you ask Robby. Robby knows... I mean he knows more than Mary [the Teaching Assistant]. He is ahhh ... he is nosey, he knows everything and he decided he just wanted to play on that. And he started to get me really sort of, when we're in class and I had to pull him along ... outside in smoko time ... and say "Look, Robby, even though you talk to me out of school, and he often comes around to the house, and Amelia [the teacher she was living with] doesn't mind. It's fine ...

I do not wish to imply that similar incidents to this do not arise in the urban school where they are also considered as an invasion of privacy. However, in this situation the social and cultural context is different. Tracy is beginning to discover that Aboriginal society is very public and open. Moreover, rather than regarding student-teachers as of higher status and therefore to be respected, Aboriginal children consider them to be of equal status. Student-teachers have not gained the children's consent to exercise authority over them (Partington, 1996:4).

Because of the close interrelationship between the private and the public, Tracy is also now being forced to consider the moral, ethical, and humanitarian issues. 'We are here to educate the children,' she says, but remains uncertain about whether individual staff members should be involved in feeding the children. At the same time Tracy has not yet arrived at an understanding of the social obligations which adoption into an Aboriginal skin group entails.

I don't know whether I agree on that ... I don't know the children well enough, my ... I think it's the parent's responsibility to feed them but I won't see a child be that hungry. A couple of days before pension day, children were very hungry, but *I don't agree with feeding every child in the community. That's not our role here We're here to educate them.* But I also think to educate them, the children can't be hungry and so they not gonna be thinking about learning. They gonna be thinking about eating and being hungry. And Amelia tends to pick the children she's gonna feed. When I first got there, oh no, feeding the children, oh gosh, you'll have the house full of them, oh no, and I was really dead against it, the more time I spend with Amelia and see it, there's only a few children she will feed, two or three children out of her class, the rest will come around and she might give them a glass of water and so I tend to sort of see that is being okay. She knows, just through, I suppose, not so much her TA, but the other TA's in school, other children, can tell she knows who gets food, who doesn't. So that's just, I suppose the community filling, ... other people in the community filling her in on who does get food, who lives with who, who lives with an aunty, an uncle or grandparents, who doesn't get fed.

In the rural situation the student-teacher's entry to the community is controlled by and dependent upon their Field Supervisor and the Principal unless they have particular local knowledge and contacts of their own, or deliberately go about building these up. The difference from an urban practicum lies in the face-to-face contact and the immediacy of the bush situation. In the bush practicum students are forced to confront what is happening. In the urban situation it is much easier to maintain a separation between the public and the private, between the teacher's role and the community role.³

³ Adoption and naming ceremonies are measures devised to enable non-Aboriginal people to fit into the community. However at Piapia, one Field Supervisor remained very sceptical of such measures, finding them 'pseudo and shallow' and seeing no need to reject her own culture, a view echoed by her student-teacher.

Attitudes towards Aboriginal Teaching Assistants

The way in which Aboriginal Teaching Assistants are treated in the schools is a rough indicator of the acceptance of Aboriginalisation. In general, Aboriginal Teaching Assistants continued to be treated as the Teachers Aides whom they replaced. As Robert Scales explained, 'You know, it seems to me that these Aboriginal people are not treated as assistant teachers, they're teacher-aides.'

Although they were sometimes involved in the writing up of school policy, the Teaching Assistants, known colloquially as TAs, were generally disregarded. 'They treat us like we dumb or something,' intoned Emma, who was attached to the pre-school at Wampaka, and had been away in Sadadeen for two terms in Year 11. The TAs were often referred to as illiterate, and interaction with student-teachers was either limited or non-existent. Student-teachers were not shown how to work with the TAs and rarely knew how to talk with them. According to Emma, Penny was an exception and was appreciated because 'she really talked to us as if we were people'.

At Wampaka the TAs generally didn't enter the staffroom. This was hardly surprising. On a previous visit to Wampaka, the medical problems of one of the TAs were bandied about without any apparent concern or compassion, and one of the non-Aboriginal teachers confided that the

bitching about Teachers Aides goes on all the time. It's very derogatory. 'You can't expect anything more. It's just about her level.'

Tracy found it easier to do things herself rather than ask Mavis, the Teaching Assistant, to do it.

For example, warming up the plasticine and putting ten lumps out for the children. Mavis can't read or write and wouldn't know what to do.

Tracy has already been socialised as a member of the dominant group. She is not concerned for Mavis as a person and there is no attempt to ensure she knows what to do. Tracy tells us that Carol, Tracy's teacher, 'thought of [Mavis] as illiterate, without any initiative and suitable for only menial jobs'.

A former Aboriginal teacher saw the TAs as the lynch pin of the successful practicum and suggested that the practicum curriculum be negotiated through them. The TAs would ensure entry into the wider, 'open', community, plan visits and provide progressive exposure. It was clear that Aboriginal people wished to teach student-teachers cultural awareness in the original conception of 'two-way'.⁴

The conference with June Muir which is examined in detail in Chapter 28 reveals the lack of readiness with which some student-teachers approached Aboriginal staff, although June remained open-minded and did not take up any fixed position or attitude, and avoided blaming the victim. She simply had not thought of the possibilities.

At Jikilijipa, Aboriginal staff were said to get involved in the overall planning sessions in the afternoons, but involvement was in fact very limited. They appeared to be told what the teacher was planning to cover and what they were expected to do with the pupils, rather than being invited to contribute their knowledge and understanding. Leo tells us that although he personally didn't do anything to involve them, 'Wayne sees them usually individually or something, when he wants to teach a particular topic and stuff like that.'

⁴According to Nicholls (1995) the concept of '*two-way education*' was originally coined and conceived in 1974 by Pincher Nyurrrimiyarri in Dagaragu. As originally conceived, two-way schooling envisaged a reciprocal, two-way exchange between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal teachers and students, but the original concept has been selectively reworked and diluted and has been appropriated by the Territory apparatus for the purpose of maintaining control (Nicholls, 1995:35). Harris (1990) examines the implications of two-way schooling in more detail.

Wayne himself observed that the Aboriginal staff

haven't any opinions on any matters that have to do with ... what is happening in the classroom ... they stay outside. As I said Petros is doing something, he's doing some good work in his way, but again they are not very much into discussing things and analysing why things happen, saying you know, what is good and what is not good for kids ... they see what we can do to keep them happy or busy ... *and that's not the way it should be, I think, if we really want them to learn something.*

The us-them distinction between the powerful and the powerless, the coloniser and the colonised, is present in this extract. Wayne's attitude to working with Aboriginal staff was generally supportive but, unlike June Muir, he realises the unsatisfactory nature of the existing state of affairs. However there is nothing he can do to change this: he is not shown how to interact with the Teaching Assistants and his attention is not drawn to the crucial knowledge that he needs to obtain from them. Co-operation appears to be a one-way process in Wayne's mind. The TAs have to cooperate with him.

What we have here is evidence of the soundness of Said's thesis in *Orientalism*.

Orientalism, which implies 'a fascination with the culture of the colonised along with a suppression of their capacity to speak or truly know it' (Said, cited in Hodge and Mishra, 1990:27). The Other is reduced to silence and the suppressed are not allowed to represent themselves.

Attitudes towards spatio-temporal differences

Cherryholmes (1988) reminds us that space and time are cultural constructions saying that the "'truths" of a time and place are politically produced and that the constructs used for their measurement are tools of production'. We therefore need to take account of the way that time and space are valued in different communities.

There may be serious misunderstandings concerning the subjective dimensions of temporality or the lived experience of time which Flaherty (1992), sees as 'an erotics of time'. In the bush practicum this eroticism is heightened by different cultural perceptions of temporality. The multiplicity of approaches to the conceptualisation of time only adds to the complexity of the supervision process, the level of 'feeling states' being dramatically altered through the influence of time.

Several non-Aboriginal student-teachers held a pejorative view of leisure time activities in Aboriginal communities. They found the unhurried, relaxed, unpressured attitude towards time difficult to cope with and describe the way of life as laid-back or 'deficient' in some way. They insisted on defining time in the same way that they defined the Other, from their own totalising views of the dominance of clock time. Television, videos, and visits to swimming holes were considered to be uneducational activities and merely an excuse for not undertaking any real teaching.

Student-teachers were often profoundly disturbed when their ideas of public time were put under threat. They arrived from the university with their time-dominated programmes only to find that these were quite unsuitable and that notions of planning related to western concepts of the stability of time and place, expectancies of regularity, and ethnocentric assumptions about knowledge and cognitive development, were totally unworkable.

Snyder's analysis of objectivist and subjectivist views on time is valuable in helping us understand the practicum experience. Participants tended to see the past as 'the predominant dimension in its deterministic influence over forthcoming events' (Snyder, 1982:366). This is a particularly objectivist stance, and rules out the possibility of retelling and redefining the past in terms of a different development of experience.

Moreover the supervision visit is situated in an objectivist view of time as 'separated, isolated and identical instants'. An objectivist view of time makes it increasingly difficult to incorporate other events that may be happening simultaneously which may affect subjectivity such as the preparations for the school fête at Burarra.

Similarly Aboriginal concepts of space can be equally as disturbing for student-teachers, particularly the way in which private space is defined and occupied. The socially induced separation of the knower from the known and the ways in which the private and public are held apart which are so much part of the lived experience of non-Aboriginal student-teachers, operate very differently in Aboriginal contexts.

Unfamiliar living arrangements and the importance of location and proximity are also features of the spatial context with which student-teachers on the bush practicum have to come to terms. For instance, many student-teachers find they are accommodated with their class teacher or with the Principal, bringing them into much more immediate, open and regular contact with their supervisors. The way that they are actually physically positioned within the community, and the barriers which divide them, are very different to the urban situation where retreat, avoidance and privacy are more possible. In some cases student-teachers are literally provided with a vantage point from which they can look out on the mysterious and alluring Other in comparative safety. Such spatial arrangements affect the way a community defines, characterises, and circumscribes or frees the lives of its participants (Atkins, 1988:441, drawing on Bruphee).

To close this section, some commentators, notably Gilbert (1992:39), object with some justification, to an exclusive reliance on participants' individual characteristics such as perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and intentions, and remain suspicious of conclusions drawn from concrete interactions and the words, descriptions and explanations people use.

However, an understanding of the power of place and the influence of context-of-site helps us to understand how complex meaning systems are produced historically and continue to exert powerful pressures on student-teachers without them necessarily being aware of them.

CHAPTER 24

HOW LIAISON LECTURERS SAW THEIR ROLES IN THE SECOND PHASE

This section looks at the way in which the Liaison Lecturers saw their role and looks at their views on whether context-of-site can be said to matter. Neither the two Liaison Lecturers shadowed during this investigation, nor the third lecturer whom I interviewed later, found it easy to talk about their role. None had had any training in supervision and all spoke very diffidently about their work. All were comparatively new to the bush practicum. All three lectured in socio-cultural foundations and Aboriginal Education, including the History of Aboriginal Education in the Northern Territory.

Owen Field

For Owen Field, this was only the second time he had undertaken the supervision of students on the bush. Although frequently called on to give second opinions in the urban situation, often at the request of student-teachers themselves, he agrees that he has learned about supervision 'on the job' and remains 'not at all convinced that I've learned well on the job. What I know I just picked up'. Owen's views on his role were obtained after the conference with Grace. It is possible that the conduct of that conference, dealt with in Chapter 26, may have influenced some of Owen's responses and enabled him to justify his position.

Owen is essentially pragmatic about his role, taking things as they come, not wishing to be restricted by predetermined requirements or checklists.

Well, I have to confess that I've never really thought about what my role is. I've just gone out there and done it and I guess I just see myself essentially going out and hoping that the people have the skills to be satisfactory teachers or if they don't try to find them out and help them develop them if it's possible to do so and it usually is. Again, I confess that I don't look at the prac[ticum] handbooks to see what specific things I am supposed to be doing on prac. I've contemplated doing

so, well, and I guess I browse through them, one or two of them, from time to time and not found them to be useful from my point of view but it's probably because it requires me to compartmentalise things in my mind too much. My mind isn't happy with that sort of rigour, so I get out there and play it as it comes ... but I really haven't thought through in a concrete way what my role is ...

This essential pragmatism also characterises the way he sees himself undertaking liaison work. Nevertheless, there appears to be some conflict between an 'ideal' view of liaison which is based on non-interference in the work of the Field Supervisor and the reality of the classroom situation, as revealed in this exchange.

INT: Do you find yourself ... have you found yourself involved in much liaison, sorting things out with teachers, asking teachers may be to allow students more room to move, changing the classrooms around.

OWEN: No. I make ... have always made a point of ... not quite always, usually made a point of going along with the way teachers do things, very often I don't approve of what I see but I don't see it as my role to interfere in any way with what's going ... with what's the teacher's demands are in the classroom and only in a very very minor way with what a teacher might be demanding of our students. If I don't go along with what's happening, I might make, and I did this recently this last week with one of the secondaries where I saw some pretty appalling things happening, our student was doing it because that's what the expectation was, so I made a lot of quite pointed statements with the teacher sitting in the background listening in. My comments were directed to him more than to our student. But beyond that, no ... in written comments too. Frequently my written comments are directed at the teacher rather than at the student.

Owen describes his approach as non-confrontational, proceeding 'by innuendo' rather than tackling concerns head-on. This approach to his work becomes critically important when examining his communicative interaction with student-teachers.

An understanding of the history of relations between the Faculty of Education and the schools is also important here. Until the accreditation of the new Diploma of Teaching in 1986, considerable tension existed between the schools and the Faculty. Much of this can be attributed to the political climate of the time and the lack of credibility which staff then enjoyed.

INT: So you're not afraid in a sense to take on a teacher where necessary?

OWEN: Yes, but always in a *non-confrontationist* way, it is always *by innuendo* rather than saying, 'Look, I reckon you should be letting the student do such and such'. Because I think the relationship between the Faculty and the schools is a such a delicate one. There is a significant number of people out there who feel threatened by us and I'm not in the business of, you know, ...

INT: Yeah...

OWEN: ... making things unpleasant between the Faculty and the school. I guess it grows out of the fact that really the education faculty, DIT, was regarded very very badly by the Department of Education when I went there. A lot has been done to improve it so I tend to ... perhaps ... to be oversensitive in that area.

It is ironic therefore that Owen's attempts at supervision at Piapia are seen as to be directly challenging by the class teacher who believes that he does not take into account the particular features of the situation.

Like many outstanding educators who enjoy a reputation for quality teaching, Owen appears diffident and self-deprecating about his work. Owen has no evident liking for supervision, but is resigned to the work which he sees as 'part of the job', and you just get on and do it.

INT: You always tend to take on a pretty full load when it comes to supervision, ... you've got a pretty sincere commitment to supervision, I believe, is that right?

OWEN: No, I don't think so. I just see it as part of the job. I would prefer to be doing other things. I don't enjoy doing supervision because I don't feel competent to do it. I don't feel competent to do anything I do in the education faculty when it comes to that, but ... prac supervision is one of them and I just ... it's just a matter of being fair, everybody has got to do his or her fair share. As simple as that with me.

But supervision is not something he undertakes hurriedly or cavalierly

OWEN: No, I don't think I do it in a cavalier manner. I don't doubt that I don't always do it as assiduously as I could, sometimes I could spend more time with the students than I do.

When asked to identify in broad brush terms the main differences between supervising an urban practicum and the bush practicum, Owen identified a number of features which

relate to the context-of-site including local political differences causing dissention in the community which are often reflected in indeterminate ways in the staff-room; the amount of outside interference and the effect of this on limiting self-determination of Aboriginal communities; and cultural teaching and learning styles which require an extensive knowledge of the Aboriginal world view. Very often, he points out, the student concerned may not realise the existence of these problems, let alone their significance.

Robert Scales

Robert Scales' experience in supervising the practicum was also comparatively limited. Like many academics, Robert had never actually taught in the classroom, except for some work in vernacular literacy carried out in Papua New Guinea. Prior to coming to the NTU, his work at Batchelor College had taken him into Aboriginal communities where he paid a number of visits to student-teachers 'to help out with the labour'. At no time does he describe these visits as supervisory. Like Owen, Robert has taken no principled stand against supervision. Like Owen, he feels diffident about undertaking the work but he has 'no ideological problems' with it, and like Owen he also views the need for supervision in pragmatic terms, also seeing it as coming with the job as these extracts reveal:

ROBERT: I think the supervising has to happen. Just *a sheer pragmatic view* would say, that we have to have some form of accountability, some form of assessment, some form of gate-keeping, I think we would lose all credibility with the Education Department, the school system, if we didn't.

I feel a little awkward doing it. But that's purely for personal reasons, that's because I'm not an experienced classroom teacher and in fact I've never taught formally in full classroom ... So, I'm sometimes inadequate in terms of helping students out with their problems. I'm very good in some areas and very weak in others.

Whereas Owen, as we have seen, does direct his comments both spoken and written, to the teacher if the need arises, Robert would not take a stand on an issue if he was a guest

in a school. He sees the student as in a vulnerable learning situation and believes that *'the diplomatic, pragmatic view is to go along with the teachers in the school'*. This becomes apparent in his description of how he worked with one-year Graduate Diploma student at a previous school in the supervision round.

Robert ... Two teachers, very good teachers, team teaching the post primary. One man, one woman, different sorts of approaches but they work very well together and they get on well with each other socially and professionally so there's a good atmosphere to walk into. But very early on the male member of the team thought that the student had turned up unprepared and very early only he couldn't work out whether she was lazy or didn't ... simply didn't know how to go about it and he was racking his brains after one week. Now, from the student's point of view, she quite perceptively came back and said, 'Look, they are asking too much of me. They are asking me to programme everything and teach, and teach, whereas really, my understanding was that I wasn't supposed to programme for everything until the last prac, the last two weeks at the end of the year.' And they are treating this prac as if it was the last prac. So I then I had to try to persuade her if she was going to have a good prac then she has to go along with what they were asking her, otherwise the atmosphere will just become negative and it wouldn't be a good overall prac, I said what they are asking you is a lot of work but it's good for you and you can do it and what's more they're not leaving you on your own. Both of them are willing to spend lots of time with her basically teaching her how to programme and how to prepare and to do it. Now, whether the man was really prepared to put that much time, I'm not sure but I'm sure, the woman member of the teaching team was. So I said to myself here, we're in a slightly unorthodox situation here, legally the student is right, but in practical real terms and in terms of their attitude to her, I should have advised her to go along with them and actually, I checked with [the practicum Coordinator] later on what they were asking her to do in the second week into the prac wasn't unreasonable. So I hope she's got enough PR sense to adapt, seek them out.... My advice to her and I've said it in 10 different ways through tears and quite a bit of upset to her, listen, invade their privacy, use them as your major resource. They can show you how to teach according to their views of teaching. They can show you how to programme, they can show you how to lesson prepare. It doesn't matter if it is a bit different than how you perceived or what you learned at college. Absorb what they've got to offer for this month and then when you finished, make your own judgment. Do your own thing when you're eventually in a classroom. I was basically urging her to conform for the purposes of the prac because of the.... both for *pragmatic* reasons and for learning.

I asked Robert if he always approached situations in this way or whether there were times when he would 'actually zero in on the teacher and try and get the teacher to change'.

ROBERT: Well, in this case, I did point out to both teachers that there was a sense that she came unprepared for legitimate reasons because she was not told that she would have to programme. I did defend her legally to them and you

know, try to make them aware they shouldn't be too hard on her. On the ... but this is how ... I mean, I can only react to that student, the way ... survival technique that I have developed, *I would not take a stand on an issue if I was a guest in a school, and a student, and in a vulnerable learning situation, I think the diplomatic, pragmatic view is to go along with them.* If it is tolerable, if you can bear it, go along with them that eventually you will be in your own classroom and you can express yourself and assert yourself in your own way. It is not a huge and an unreasonable thing to ask to do a bit of conforming while being a student. Otherwise, I could see that a situation could actually blow up where the prac would go down the drain.

This account emphasises the liaison function of the supervisor's role and gives us a glimpse of how relations between the schools and the university are constituted. Although the procedural requirements of the current practicum appear to dominate, the moral, ethical and pedagogical issues are not far away. Nevertheless, diplomatic approaches based on non-confrontationist, non-interventionist principles risk reinforcing stasis and preventing transformation (Menter, 1989; Etheridge, 1989). Such a response may help the student survive the practicum in the short-term but may restrict her opportunity to contest and engage in social action in the long term.

Rose Dawson

Rose had only recently joined the Faculty after completing her PhD and possessed no experience in practicum supervision. Although a skilled ethnographer and interviewer, Rose found it difficult to talk at length about her role. She saw herself primarily as providing emotional support to student-teachers on the bush practicum and easing their transition from one culture to another. One characteristic that one of the teachers at Miyapunu commented on however, was her ability 'to turn the negatives into positives' so that the student-teacher's self-esteem was enhanced and not diminished.

Does context-of-site matter to Liaison Lecturers, and if so, how?

Context-of-site did not matter a great deal to the Liaison Lecturers as far as Owen Fields and Robert Scales were concerned. They saw teaching competence, skills and knowledge as portable and reproducible, no matter what the context. Owen, as will be seen in the chapter on agency and positioning, despite his concerns as to the suitability of the student-teacher, believed Sheila should just continue as she is, as if she were in an urban class, making adjustments as she went along. Robert says much the same thing about Wayne Cavallero, believing the skills were going to be the same, no matter what the situation. Difference was acknowledged but the implications were not pursued. Things like preparation, building confidence and stimulating motivation were thought of as universal requirements, assisting survival. For Robert it did not matter how well-tuned the student was to Aboriginal culture. The components of the student's value system which formed the basis of her philosophy were not considered critical at this stage in the student's development although the bulk of his discussion with student-teachers concerned Aboriginal issues.

Both lecturers believed that there was very little the university could do to prepare students to understand Aboriginal culture. Understanding was acquired over time, *through the pores of your skin*, and in reflection on the practicum experience some time afterwards. Robert Scales was very explicit about this:

One of the things I'm noticing about the rural pracs is what matters is how well-prepared you are, not how well-tuned you are into the Aboriginal culture. I think you have to pick that up over the time *through the pores of your skin* and the sort of intellectual foundations we try to give the students would help them analyse what has gone wrong or what was going on but I don't think, actually arms them to survive in the prac ... surviving in the prac is having teaching skills and doing a darned lot of hard work in preparation. Now, you still have to have a philosophy and a value system to back all that up or you'd feel pretty much like a robot. But ... I ... in just looking at the students, you know, what gets them through the prac, I don't mean just get through in sort of a cheap way, is ... are the same sort of skills

that will get them through the prac in a town school, where there's good preparation, confidence in front of the students, thinking up ideas that will catch kids' interests and those sorts of ... those sorts of things.

Robert Scales maintained a distinct separation between academic knowledge or intellectual capital, and practical knowledge, *the nuts and the bolts*. Substantial reflection on moral, political, and pedagogical injustices is deferred until the first years of teaching.

Right, well, I've been thinking about say, the value of the units we teach in the Faculty on about Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal awareness, Aboriginal history and these sorts of things, my view is that we are giving students exposure to philosophies, attitudes, knowledge that will stand them... that will become really important to them over time, in a school, I don't see that we are actually giving them the nuts and bolts that will help them get through prac, I hope it will help them make ... it will save them from making major blunders socially and they will fit in ... naturally fit in better because they are more comfortable because they had some exposure, I'm sure that's happening. Now I think the sorts of attitudes and ideas and notions that I ... at least expose the students in our Ab[original] Ed[ucation], are the sorts of background ideas, knowledge that will help them work out over time whether they are getting anywhere, whether they are heading in the wrong direction, sort out the priorities they should have in relation to Aboriginal staff and so on. I think the scope they got you in prac is actually evaluate their total contribution and to contribute anything to the school in any realistic ways is just too short. Their time there is too short to actually to do anything about that. That's why I'm saying it's the practical skills of classroom survival that help you survive in the bush is the same way they help you survive at ... in town, that ... I don't think ... it's lip service because they're the values that you'd use over time.

The personality dispositions of supervisors and their effect on school improvement have recently been demonstrated by Smith, Kleine, Prunty and Dwyer (1992) who identified three major groups: innovators, reformers and utopians. These personality types were further distinguished according to where individuals stood along a change dimension: individualist, gradualist, revolutionary, or communitarian. A communitarian position supports a collective approach to improvement and is opposed to a revolutionary approach, whilst at the same time becoming impatient with gradualism. Whilst recognising the limitations of such categorisation, it appears that Robert Scales is more gradualist than communitarian in his approach, although he does urge student-teachers to seek the views of the community. Owen Fields on the other hand appears to be more

individualist and gradualist. Both would claim in their own way that they are reformist, but neither is radical or revolutionary.

Robert did not seek to impose his views or in any way to intervene, although he was alert to and continually seeking any potential for change.

For example, Wayne. I think what Wayne is doing because of his personality, his approach to teaching, he's got to keep doing that for the rest of his prac. He can't change horses in midstream. The confusion will come into his life and the students would not know where they were. However, I would expect that if he is back here teaching next year, he would establish himself in a formal teacher centred way that he has now and then I would expect the sorts of exposure he's had in our Ab. Ed. units to start niggling at him about whether he was really heading in the right direction. He would start to look at his long-term goals. What is he really here for? What did he really want to achieve. How could he really achieve it? Should he be putting more effort into the Aboriginal staff, should he be altering their roles and those sorts of bigger issues. I think he would start working on those after he was established in the classroom. I don't think he can work on them now. But I can see in the few things he has written in his write up that he has been affected by our teaching. He sees that ... he's caught onto this notion that the two-way schooling might mean that the way to retain Aboriginal identity is to see western culture as a huge role play and that the kids have to learn those roles, learn those bodies of knowledge, that they haven't got to believe in them in terms of absorbing them into their own value system. In order to use them he has taken that on board and I think that will be a philosophy that is already surrounding his approach.

We are now in a position to examine the supervisory practice of Liaison Lecturers in much closer detail. In particular, we will observe how Liaison Lecturers deal with the racist and ethnocentric attitudes adopted by student-teachers and their Field Supervisors; how they go about assisting student-teachers to resist the effects of a prolonged colonialist hangover; how they assist them to confront the myths of Aboriginal Education which have sustained non-Aboriginal teachers for so long; and how they go about promoting a greater acceptance of Aboriginal people and demonstrating a greater commitment to Aboriginalisation.

CHAPTER 25

POSITIONING AND AGENCY

This chapter addresses the question of individual agency and re-examines the subjective nature of the interactional process in an attempt to discover how individuals penetrate the intentions of others, disrupt and displace the imposition of dominant oppressive knowledges, and resist attempts at positioning.

Building on the work of Davies (1990) and Davies and Harré (1990) which established the central importance of positioning and agency in the classroom, it addresses the part played by discursive practices, socialisation, and subjectification, and what it means to be agentic. In doing so, I reject any exclusive reliance on social, linguistic or cultural determinism, and examine the relational effects of power in the social construction of knowledge and the part that different forms of subjectivity play in this, call for the rehabilitation of the subject, expand on the significance of moral praxis, re-establish the importance of emotionality and affectivity, and argue for a link between positioning and constructivism. The exemplar story chosen demonstrates how attempts at positioning and the restriction or conferring of agency have an important formative influence on the outcome of the practicum.

Discursive practices

The notion of discursive practices is particularly helpful in analysing how subject positions are constructed. Following Hollway in Henriques *et al* (cited in Gavey, 1989:463-4) discourse is taken to refer to 'an interrelated system of statements which cohere around common meanings and values... [that] are a product of social factors, of

powers and practices, rather than an individual's set of ideas'. Particular discourses colonise other forms of discourse. A discursive practice forms part of what Foucault termed a 'moral technology' or 'generalizable model of functioning', the aim of which is to 'supervise, correct, inform, improve' through a process of perpetual assessment (cited in Burgess and Carter, 1992:349-350).

Certain discourses such as the 'mother-made-conscious' or 'Mumsy' discourse (Burgess and Carter, 1992) become institutionalised as was seen in Chapter 20, and assume positions of importance which come to shape and materially affect the lives of individuals. Supervisors become protagonists and advocates of a particular discourse and student-teachers find that they are *literally* unable to speak their own words. As a result their discourse is continually populated with the intentions of others.

Positioning, socialisation, and subjectification.

Early attempts to explain what occurs in the practicum relied on theories of socialisation. However, functionalist theories of socialisation are inadequate to explain the construction of subjectivity. As Britzman (1991:56) argues,

[U]nfortunately, the normative discourse in teacher education reduces the complexity of competing chronologies by authorizing a functionalist version of socialisation that is incapable of attending to the site of socialisation as a contested terrain, and the ways in which the individual becomes the site of struggle. The problem is that traditional theories of socialisation cannot account for the ways individuals refashion, resist, or even take up dominant meanings as if they were their authors.

Nevertheless, the according and restricting of agency which accompany this positioning can be viewed as forms of socialisation practices which attempt to perpetuate particular power/knowledge relationships.

Positioning plays an important part in the process of subjectification through which the individual becomes subject, and can be understood following Haug and co-workers (1987:34-35) as 'the process by which individuals work themselves into social structures they themselves do not consciously determine, but to which they subordinate themselves'. These researchers speak of 'the way individuals construct themselves into existing relations, thereby themselves reproducing a social formation', whilst Britzman (1991:1) asks 'how do we construct ourselves as we are being constructed by others in the process of learning to teach?' Subjectification allows for the active participation of individuals in heteronomy. 'It is the fact of our participation that gives social structures their solidarity; they are more solid than prison walls'. (Haug and co-workers, 1987:57)

What it means to be agentic

As Davies (1990:346) observes, in any interaction, individuals can accept or reject discursively constituted notions of agency, power, and gender.

Agency is thus a matter of position or location within or in relation to particular discourses. How that agency is taken up depends on the way in which one has discursively constituted oneself as a moral being, the degree of commitment to the construction, the alternative discursive structures available to one, as well as one's own subjective history - informing one's emotions and attitudes to agentic and non-agentic positionings.

At the same time, Davies warns us, 'it is not a necessary element of human nature to be agentic, ... agency is merely a contingent element in interaction' (*ibid*), hence not all teachers consider themselves to be change agents. Similarly, nothing is being said about the longevity of the knowledge socially and jointly constructed.

Rejecting determinism

The approach to the discursive production of agency adopted by Davies (1990) is significant because it rejects any reliance on social, linguistic or cultural determinism.⁵ It emphasises the individual's responsibility as a moral being and accepts the role played by emotions and attitudes. Any theory seeking to elucidate agency in the social construction of knowledge, must be able to take into account the strategic and creative ways in which individuals can remain outside of the collective (Davies, 1990:360), notwithstanding the fact that it is not always clear what this ubiquitous 'collective' comprises, nor how representative a particular collective may be.

Positioning need not be limiting or threatening. It can also be empowering and offer opportunities for the transformation of knowledge rather than its reconstruction, through encouraging the process of self-reflexivity and revealing the establishment of our own complicity. To achieve this, the student-teacher has sometimes to be positioned or position themselves outside of the practicum text, rather than remain inside it.

Rediscovering the subject

Recent moves to decentre the cognitive subject risk losing sight of the subject altogether. Weedon (1987) speaks of decentering 'the rational, self-present subject of humanism', and Gavey (1989) argues that there is 'no unique, essential, coherent and unified nature that is

⁵The ultimate absurdity of reductionist, deterministic approaches to the construction of subjectivity is well expressed in this quotation which can be found in Bowers (1987). It is by E. P. Thompson and is included in Michael Harrington's *The politics at God's funeral*:

We are *structured* by social relations, *spoken* by pre-given linguistic structures, *thought* by ideologies, *dreamed* by myths, *gendered* by patriarchal sex, *bonded* by affective obligations, *cultured* by mentalities and *acted* by history's script.

the originator and guarantor of meaning'. There can, therefore, be no unified, unitary, rational self. On this view, the unitary subject is replaced by a fragmentary, inconsistent and contradictory subject and the authenticity of individual experience is denied because it is constituted and mediated by language.

By contrast, whilst resisting the view of the individual as 'an atomistic, self-directing, self-determining, autonomous' being, Bowers (1987:54, quoting Schutz) acknowledges

the unique aspects of a person's individuality in terms of the function that imagination and intentionality play in relating the world to ones 'own context of experience'.

Bowers uses the analogy of the spatial grammar of architecture to illustrate how the individual is forced into an acceptance of pattern and structure. It is what occurs during this 'forcing', and the way that individuals are implicated and positioned, that should occupy the attention of researchers. Individual and community action suggests that, in questions of architecture at least, the rejection of patterns and structures which impinge upon our lives can be accomplished.

Subjectivity should be seen as a powerful force for change rather than domination. In her review of Cherryholmes' *Power and criticism*, Lather (1991:130-1) maintains that

[W]hile the subject of contemporary feminism is not single, unified or static, neither is she utterly determined... All feminisms appeal to the powers of agency and subjectivity as necessary components of socially transformative struggle... Feminism is the cultural site most effectively disruptive of the alleged impotence of the subject in the face of social/political forces and situations.

She goes on to draw attention to 'the passive, dispersed subject of deconstruction on the one hand' and 'the transcendent subject of most emancipatory discourse' on the other. At the same time, neither is there any fully autonomous, self-determining subject, fully conscious and fully rational. What emerges is 'a provisional, contingent, strategic,

constructed subject which, while not essentialised, must be engaged in the process of meaning-making' (Lather, 1991:120).

Fairclough (1989:9) rejects a view of action as originating in individual intention and will, a view which leads researchers to underestimate the extent to which people are 'caught up in, constrained by, and indeed derive their individual identities from social conventions'. However, Fairclough acknowledges that 'the individual is an active but not sovereign protagonist' (Weedon, 1987) in the battle and maintains that we need a theory of social action and practice 'which accounts for both the determining effects of conventions and the *strategic creativity* of individual speakers, without reducing *practice* to one or the other' (Fairclough, 1989:9 emphasis added).

In order to undertake such an analysis, a distinction has to be made between a number of different types of subjectivity each of which interacts with the other to affect the outcome of any attempt to accord or restrict agency.

Aspects of subjectivity

There has been considerable interest in the construction of subjectivity, since Giddens asserted in 1979 that 'the characteristics of the actor as a subject remain unexplored or implicit in much research on [social] action'. Indeed, although there has been a move away from abstracting agency 'from its location in time', there remains some concern that 'the temporality of day-to-day conduct' and 'the lack of continuity and stability demonstrated in acts, intentions and purposes have not been fully recognised as a result' (*ibid*:55).

The notion of subjectivity is highly complex and contradictory. Grenfell and Crebbin (1992) identify three major aspects of subjectivity which continually interact, and create 'felicitous ambiguities' (Fairclough, 1989). These are subjectivity in the sense of 'subject to' or 'subjected to' which is predicated upon the belief that individuals do not choose their subjectivities (Bazerman, 1990; Usher, 1989); subjectivity as individuality and particularity which relates to motive, desire, will, and how these manifest themselves in the expression of personal values, or what Kitwood, (1990:7-8) refers to as 'expressivity' or 'the degree of inhibition or openness which arises during the free expression of desires, feelings and emotions' ; and the subjective-objective dimension which influences the way the individuals construct or represent reality, organise experience, and put their own imprint on them (Sigel, 1978).

These three aspects of subjectivity are present in the points of departure adopted by Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn and Walkerdine (1984:2-3) who use the terms 'subject' and 'subjectivity' as follows:

The 'subject' is the generic term used in philosophy for what in lay terms would be 'the person', 'individual' or 'human being' and what in psychology is referred to as the 'individual'.

We use 'subjectivity' to refer to individuality and self-awareness - the condition of being a subject - but understand in this usage that subjects are dynamic and multiple, always positioned in relation to particular discourses and practices and produced by these - the condition of being 'subject'.

The individual therefore, is seen 'as always the site of conflicting forms of subjectivity' (Weedon, 1987:33). Moreover, the 'ways of thinking which constitute our consciousness, ... and the positions with which we identify, structure our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity' (*ibid*).

The partial and contradictory way in which knowledge is socially constructed involves a continual shunting between the three aspects of subjectivity, 'a subjectivity which is precarious, contradictory and in process', (Weedon, 1987:33). However, this subjectivity is not 'illusory' as Weedon (*ibid*:41) suggests. It is very much a force to be reckoned with and student-teachers find the ambiguity anything but 'felicitous'.

Refocussing on the individual is not without its dangers: narcissism, solipsism and selfish privatism, and an overwhelming preoccupation with the self can prevent a consideration of the pluralism which characterises a recognition of the needs and existence of the Other.

Agency and positioning as part of a relational view of power

The approach to agency adopted by Davies (1990) fits well with a relational, circulatory, reciprocal view of power in which subject positions are continually accepted, challenged or contested (Burbules, 1986). The attraction of a relational theory of power is that it can be used to reject a more overly deterministic view of the social construction of knowledge by focussing more closely on the role of the individual as a sentient being whose beliefs, intentions, motives, attitudes, emotions and personality are capable of resisting, deflecting and subverting particular discursive practices thus enabling participants to reposition themselves and others.

When treated in conjunction with the social construction of knowledge, a capillary view of power, in which power is seen as a mode of action permeating the micro-politics of everyday life (Ball, 1987: Marshall, 1990), helps in the illumination of the stories.

However, although we cannot understand how knowledge is constructed if we treat power simply as a commodity to be owned, it appears erroneous to suggest that power is always exercised unintentionally as Marshall (1990) and Lacan (above) imply. A view of power

in which agents are unaware of its relational and situational effects takes us back to outmoded theories of false-consciousness and self-delusion.

Nevertheless, the roles of liaison lecturer and field supervisor are imbued with professional power. As Cherryholmes (1989) writes,

[W]e are who we are as educators because of professional norms and their enforcement. Professional power, then, is exercised through our speech and actions. Many educators (most?) seem to desire a professional subjectivity that allows power to operate through them with greatest efficiency and effectiveness, that is, how they can be a conduit of professional power that offers least resistance. (*ibid*:205-6)

Generally speaking, powerful participants control the contributions of non-powerful participants by imposing constraints on the content of what is said or done, the social relations of those entering the discourse, and the 'subject positions' that people can occupy. It may be difficult to detect direct controls because power operates both from within discourse and behind discourse. Moreover, 'powerful participants... may allow or disallow varying degrees of latitude to less powerful participants' (Fairclough, 1989:47). Supervisors, for example, as we have seen, may make provision for treating a student-teacher as a junior colleague.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that student-teachers and supervisors in this investigation are immersed in 'a continuous web of relationships that catches up persons in a series of effects which are only partly intended' (Burbules, 1986:96). The diffidence which is apparent in the reluctant handling of power demonstrates that it 'is a relation which is not simply chosen, (or avoided), but made more or less necessary by the circumstances in which persons come together' (*ibid*:97). Some supervisors give the appearance of being very diffident and unsure about exercising professional power. Some Liaison Lecturers, for example are very contradictory in their exercise of power because of their awareness of its effects on individual lives and their uncertainties about their own

competence. This, together with agonistic forms of speech and action can engender the very resistance Cherryholmes claims educators wish to avoid.

Agency as moral praxis

In this study, agency is seen as a form of moral praxis (Tom, 1984; Kitwood, 1990; Freeman, 1991) involving emotionality and affectivity, whilst positioning is seen as important to the way that agency is achieved. Kitwood adopts a view of the agent as a sentient being, respecting the uniqueness of others.

Moral development does not consist essentially of a movement towards possession of sound, universalistic moral principles, and then living by them with great consistency; rather it consists in cultivating that skill of seeing, meeting and respecting the being of each unique other, in treating his or her subjectivity as of equal value with one's own; and from beginning with real known persons, going forward to a broader concern. (Kitwood, 1990:4-5)

Using the concepts of free attention and moral space, Kitwood provides us with a new way of viewing the social construction of knowledge within the practicum. Free attention involves

being close to another with a kind of caring objectivity, in which those distortions of understanding, critical judgements, projections and distractions that so often get in the way of real meeting are minimised ... Persons with little free attention tend to reframe experience so that it reflects and extends their own (*ibid*),

and it is possible to see this at work in the practicum conference. Moral space, (or interactional space), results when both participants demonstrate free attention. Moral space implies being 'able to take the other's subjectivity seriously, with feeling and understanding, while also being very much in contact [with one's own]' (*ibid*:5). It 'produces a kind of closeness without loss of individuality' (*ibid*:6).

Kitwood emphasises that this form of moral praxis involves a complete acceptance of particularism by which a person is not made into any other instance of anything else; is aprescriptive in that no-one is subject to a moral ought, and hence emphasises being, relating and discovery; and is non-propositional in that it accepts that quality of experience cannot be captured through categorisation (*ibid*).

A major problem, of course, is that in the practicum, the student-teacher is learning to fill moral space in a tutelage or novice situation. Here the participants learn to construct moral space with certain principles of morality expressed as professional behaviour or pedagogical knowledge. However, student-teachers believe they need, and will therefore demand, 'propositions' from experienced players which will enable them to operate functionally, at least in the early stages, and Kitwood himself speaks of 'minimising distractions and critical judgements', not removing them altogether. He stresses the need for 'people to talk openly about their felt needs, their past injuries, and their present interests and desires', pointing out the problems arise with 'those who have learned not to trust and live in a state of psychological alienation' (*ibid*:11).

Emotionality and affectivity

Emotionality appears to be critical in both the establishing and the maintenance of subjectivity. We acquire our embodied knowledge emotionally as lived and blooded beings (Johnson, 1989). Emotional intensity, anguish and suffering disturb our passivity and often accompany transformations in peoples' attitudes and beliefs, allowing access to 'the sub-threshold of consciousness'. It is not surprising, therefore, to find emotion playing a central part in the construction of knowledge when positioning is attempted and agency called into question. Anxiety states during the practicum, for example, can prevent engagement and may accord Liaison Lecturers the 'right', through default, to

determine the experiences and the meaning of those experiences for student-teachers. Gear (1987) has developed an interactive learning model which relates attention, perception, memory and arousal (APM-A) and gives overdue recognition to the part played by emotion in learning

We are not here dealing simply with feeling or feeling-states. Walkerdine (1985:210-211) has drawn attention to the way that passion and desire are transposed into feelings as part of the covert regulations which exist in schools today. Whilst feelings are undoubtedly important in empathising with the student-teachers' experiences, and accessing such feelings can contribute to reflectivity in the practicum conference, feelings may be temporary, transient, and sentimentalised. In acknowledging the sentient being, we are more concerned with the conflicts and contradictions which result from emotionality. At the same time we must reject any reliance on voluntarism 'which assumes that change can follow from subjects' recognising and choosing to stand outside the condition of their own regulation' (Walkerdine, 1985:219).

Much of the work on private experience has been carried out in terms of 'dispositional self-consciousness', or the degree to which some people are disposed to reflect upon the private and public self. For example, some people filter out or avoid information about the public self which would be of diagnostic value to them. The role of the supervisor in providing for the growth of self-consciousness is crucial. The way that supervisors frequently ask student-teachers to talk about their feelings suggests that cognitive and attitudinal change can be brought about by attending to those feelings. The problem is however that accessible information about the self 'may be mood-state dependent rather than stable or unchanging' (Singer and Killigian, 1987:559).

Positioning and constructivism

As discussed in Chapter 4, constructivism cannot be viewed as an essentially cognitive process carried out in isolation from the social construction of knowledge. Our understanding of reality is influenced by the perspective we obtain from the position we occupy. Student-teachers and their supervisors have to be able to position and reposition themselves in particular ways if a constructivist approach is to be successful. Once these positions are taken up, constructivists assumes that the individual will process knowledge in his or her own way in dialogue with self and others, thus generating associative links that are enriched by the discovery of subjective meaning. *His or her own way* must be taken as implying a unique, personal style, bearing recognisable marks of identity. In this way constructivism offers us an explanation of how our early beliefs and subjectivities change and allows us to contest past readings.

This discussion has revealed the importance of considering positioning and agency in during the practicum. In particular, it has demonstrated the need to take the following into account:

the discursive and rhetorical practices employed by Liaison Lecturers to position student-teachers;

the ways that Liaison Lecturers permit, extend, restrict or control agency as a result of these attempts at positioning;

the degree to which supervisors adopt a constructivist approach to supervisory practice;

the interactional strategies employed by student-teachers to frustrate attempts at positioning and how these relate to subjectivity, emotionality and affectivity; and

the student-teacher's *developing* subjectivities as a sentient being.

It is not proposed to examine each one of these contributing factors separately but to identify them as they occur in the sub-text of the practicum story and show how they combine to influence the effectiveness of the practicum.

Positioning and repositioning within a practicum conference

The following account is taken from the practicum conference between Owen Field and Sheila Cunningham at Piapia. As has already been observed, Owen is particularly self-deprecating and diffident about his work. He claims to have picked up what he knows about supervision as he has gone along and 'plays it as it comes'. He does not want to be restricted by the requirements for the practicum laid down in the practicum booklets, preferring to react to situations as he finds them. For someone who resists compartmentalisation and whose mind '*is not happy with that type of rigour*', he nevertheless insists on careful and detailed planning in order to keep the student-teacher on '*the right tracks*'.

Prior to the post-lesson conference, Sheila clearly displayed signs of agitation when I met her just after lunch in the school yard in the company of Colleen Newton, Grace Heaton's Field Supervisor, a D.I.T. (Darwin Institute of Technology) graduate. Choking with anger, resentment and annoyance Sheila informed me:

Grace is at home bawling her eyes out ... one and a half pages of negatives...the pupils are hard to relate to at the best of times ... you're dealing with adolescent girls ... (with) two males in the classroom.

Under these circumstances, it was not surprising that Sheila refused to allow the conference to be tape-recorded. The account which follows was therefore recreated from my field notes. The recreation of the dialogue reads as if it were scripted (McLaren, 1986). The metaphor of the play runs through a number of practicum conferences in which the Liaison Lecturer 'produces' the student and offers suggestions about how the lines should be uttered.

It is clear from the outset that Sheila was prepared to resist any attempts at positioning by Owen. Sympathetic to the plight of her colleague, Sheila is determined that she is not going to be placed in the same position and has already alerted me to the fact that she will actively resist when the time comes. As far as Owen is concerned the opening stages of the conference contained no hint of what was to come, although he was fully aware of the attitudinal and ideological differences between them.

As can be seen in the first extract, Owen begins by positioning the student as the one who is to do the talking, sanctioned by his authority, a classic instance of interpellation. The student is not accorded any ownership over the conference. The Liaison Lecturer simply wants to get it underway. This is the communicative significance of the word '*anyway*'. By placing the onus to talk on the student-teacher in this way, the lecturer places the student at a considerable disadvantage. Knowing that the Liaison Lecturer is getting ready to '*come in*' (for the kill?), it could be that she feels open to attack, and that there is a risk to the self in anything that she might say. And that is exactly what occurs when she introduces her concern with the take-up of concepts on the part of the pupils. Unwittingly, she assists the lecturer in his later attempts at positioning, a good example of 'the

lynching law of ordinary conversation' at work (Lecercle, 1987:29). Although asked to comment on *'the good parts'*, she begins with a series of potential negatives.

OWEN: Well, you do the talking. Start anyway until I can come in. [Said very brusquely. Short, sharp, stabbing utterances are characteristic of those in a position of power]

SHEILA: Well, as I said some ups and downs.

OWEN: Well, tell me about the good parts. [Accompanied by well-meaning laughter in which the student does not join which makes it sound hollow and also threatening.]

SHEILA: The kids were initially enthusiastic. I'd expected problems with the concepts ... I had the feeling that I'd lost them in the last fifteen minutes and I wasn't sure what to do. I should have switched to another aspect. There are a couple of personalities which I still don't know. Vincent behaves as if he's top dog and I snapped at him. Monique [the Field Supervisor] panders to him. I don't. Something to do with his family status. His father is an important person in the camp ... I've got mixed feelings.

This exchange reveals a great deal about Sheila's stance towards Aboriginal people and the way to deal with them (note the us/them mentality). She is quite uncompromising and the discourse could be interpreted as racist, rather than egalitarian. Teachers do not pander to pupils. Individual Aboriginal pupils are not accorded any special rights and there is no need to make allowances. Other teachers in the school, including the Deputy Principal, also spoke of elitist groups of land-owners as exerting undue influence, resulting in fewer children attending school, and causing tensions which were reflected in the staff room.

For Sheila, Aboriginal pupils are expected to kow-tow, no matter what social, cultural and historical influences shape their individual behaviour. Building improved community relationships is of no concern to Sheila. Like Tracy, she sees Aboriginal people as bludging off the system. In conversation the previous day she made it clear that she resented the fact that Aboriginal Teaching Assistants could turn up irregularly at school,

leave, ('off playing cards if there's money to be won' according to another supervising teacher), and be 'paid for doing virtually nothing'. The possible reasons for such behaviour on the part of Aboriginal community members are not explored in terms of the local history of school and community as they are in the conference between Robert Scales and Tracy in Chapter 26.

Why does Sheila introduce such remarks which she knows will be viewed antagonistically? It appears that she is signalling early on that she is going to resist what she sees as the Liaison Lecturer's socially critical agenda which she knows since they have worked together previously. At the same time she is intent on maintaining her own sense of individual agency and autonomy. She is not going to be treated as Grace has been. She is throwing out a challenge by letting the lecturer know where she is coming from, and seeks to interrupt his attempts at positioning her in relation to Aboriginal people. The illocutionary force of what she intends is conveyed by the paralinguistic and non-linguistic features. Her own utterances are delivered in a brusque, no nonsense, no room for discussion manner, that parallels that of her Liaison Lecturer. The '*I don't*' is particularly firmly emphasised, inviting confrontation. The intonation contour suggests that there is no hint that she could be wrong nor that she has any difficulty with her position. These utterances are not spoken in any conciliatory manner. There is no regret for having snapped at the pupil, none of the soul-searching which accompanied Beverley Hodges' encounter with a troublesome student at Miyapunu, and her uncompromising attitude towards her supervising teacher must make the Liaison Lecturer call into question her professionalism and her suitability to work with Aboriginal people. Her 'mixed feelings' are about the lesson as a whole - the ups and the downs, not about her views on dealing with Aboriginal children.

At the same time it appears that Sheila may be adopting the discourse of mother-made-conscious. Such a position is not incompatible with the adoption of a tough-minded, no-nonsense attitude. Sheila's Field Supervisor, Monique Daniels, believes that Sheila had not taken advice

because she has children of her own, they are older and because [she thinks] she knows better. Sometimes I have to step back and say who's the student and who's the teacher around here! She's got confidence in herself and doesn't need all that [Owen's advice].

Her reaction is much the same as that of Mary Motherwell's teacher in the first phase of the investigation when age-related effects were examined. But Sheila is not interested in developing or moulding individual personalities. She wants to know more about them in order to control the class better.

Sheila's strategy so far is apparently successful. Owen is not prepared to confront her with the implications of what she is saying, and the deeper issue of racism does not surface. Sheila's attitudes and beliefs are those which belong to a wider section of the community and in one sense she has already been discursively produced before undertaking the practicum. As a result, the issues are not joined. No advice is proffered on inter-cultural communication, or the need to empathise or decenter. As Owen says in an interview later in the day, *'we've only sort of scouted around the edges with her'*. 'We' means the university and includes the interviewer. The military metaphor of reconnaissance and guerrilla warfare associated with this comment only serve to emphasise the subjectivity of the individual as a site of struggle.

Indeterminacy, indirection, and diffidence

Owen harbours a number of concerns which are never explicitly dealt with concerning Sheila's suitability to teach in an Aboriginal situation. Nevertheless, encouraged possibly by the way in which I introduce the questions, he believes that he has been successful in getting Sheila to think about her attitudes to Aboriginal people.

INT: Can we go back to what happened with Sheila this afternoon. From the point of view of the research ... I found this a particularly valuable session and I think the reason why is that you are getting on to some deeper moral, social and political issues that rarely often happens in these interactions with students. Did that just emerge because of the way the student tended to lead the conference or did you ... or were you going in deliberately with those issues in the back of your mind?

OWEN: Both, I think.

INT: Right.

OWEN: Because she led the conversation that way that gave me the opportunity to talk about some worries that I had before I came on prac about *her attitudes to Aboriginal people*, why I'm ... it was good from my point of view too because it disabused me of some notions that I have about her from a fairly fleeting encounter several years ago when *she came across to me as a real old hardliner* and I've reviewed my thinking quite a bit as a consequence of that discussion but it was, you know, a matter of taking the opportunity of trying to give somebody an opportunity to think about some pretty important things in this situation. [INT: Right. She certainly is thinking about them]. She is thinking about them, you're right ... and I guess I found myself trying to do two things with her, one was to ... say, well keep thinking, because there's some deeper thinking you've got to do yet about the way [ten second pause, carefully weighs words] ... or.... the way you're attributing behavior to people, to teacher aides specifically, and at the same time saying ... I am not trying to frighten her off teaching in a community situation because she may well be a very good teacher. I like the way she talks to kids for example, I didn't see much, it's early days yet, but she had a nice relaxed down-to-earth way of talking to the kids and that's something to grab hold of, let's not let her get disillusioned too quickly. *We've just sort of scouted around the edges with her.*

This extract reveals Owen in the role of gatekeeper, not simply controlling entry to the profession, but more specifically assessing suitability for entry into Aboriginal communities. This is not something which is expressly acknowledged by Liaison Lecturers when they are asked about their roles. It is a highly political and contentious

role which is why Owen finds it necessary to pause and carefully weigh his words. Sheila *may* be very good teacher in an Aboriginal situation, but there is no overwhelming evidence. Although Sheila passes her bush practicum, her written report suggests that there is some doubt as to her suitability to work in an Aboriginal setting. The same doubts are still there two years later when she requires a reference to work in an Aboriginal school.⁶

Elsewhere, when talking about his role in Chapter 24, Owen talks about working indirectly through 'innuendo'. This approach may also be associated with the diffidence Owen feels when advising student-teachers. Diffidence, indeterminacy, and indirection are not unusual in supervisory practice. Brennan and Noffke (1988), for instance, refer to the need to avoid stepping on eggshells, trying not to tell the student she is doing something wrong or thinking too much for her. Realising the responsibility of the professional power with which they are invested and the complexity of the situation, supervisors proceed with what Britzman (1991:13) has termed 'methodological humility and methodological caution'. Nevertheless, in the continuation of the conference, Owen seeks to position Sheila by directly concentrating on the content and technical features of her teaching, thus making her appear incompetent. The discourse is highly technicist.

The trial

The conference now takes on the form of a trial with the prosecutor formally levelling charges against which the defendant has to defend herself as best she can. The range of

⁶Some commentators, such as Raeburn (1993) in an unpublished report into Aboriginal Teacher Education in the Northern Territory, argue strongly for much closer selection of teachers who are offered bush placements to ensure their suitability.

subject positions open to her has been closed down and the following adjacency pair is established:

Charge or accusation {accompanied by **evidence** of misdemeanour} followed by **defense or counter charge** {based on **allegations** of overgeneralisation, **accusations** of misunderstanding, or **special pleading**}.

OWEN: Why did you get lost on the timetable one? You've got the figures, for example 8.05. This poses difficulties with the digital clock.

SHEILA: I didn't lose all of them. There are two or three levels. I intend breaking them into groups and contracting.

OWEN: Let's stay on that one for a minute. Do you think they knew what a timetable was?

SHEILA: Yes. I held one up.

OWEN: But then went on to introduce a program which you wouldn't define as a timetable.

SHEILA: I wanted to show them what a timetable was or wasn't.

OWEN: A significant number haven't got the concept.

SHEILA: But I held one up!

OWEN: But you didn't start with one ... Is this a times table you asked. You didn't correct this.

SHEILA: Yes, I did ... tomorrow, we will be doing the things we missed out on ... so I don't agree with you.

This extract has all the qualities of the prosecuting counsel leading the witness so that she stands condemned out of her own mouth. Sheila can only fall back upon open contradiction and denial so that no agreed account of what happened in the lesson is produced. Earlier Sheila had admitted she expected 'problems with the concepts' but,

because of the attempt to position her as incompetent, and hence limit her agency, she is forced to deny the accusation rather than admit fallibility.

The crucial point which needs to be made however is that simply holding something up and giving it a label does not ensure understanding. The received truth that Aboriginal learning styles incorporate extended periods of observation needs to be made problematic at this point, as does how one learns from observation, but the issue of Aboriginal learning styles and the way the curriculum can be adapted to incorporate them, assuming that it should, does not emerge.⁷

Strategies of contestation and resistance

The next extract reveals the strategies of contestation and resistance employed by Sheila. Up to this point she has held back, content merely to counter the charges as best she can. She now changes her tactics and, whilst seeking to appear conciliatory, attempts to position Owen as incompetent.

OWEN: Yes, you were doing the stuff but didn't define the concept. This is where lesson notes come in. For example, if you talk about Real Estate and the Stock Market and throw it in in a confusing situation, therefore you will confuse more.

SHEILA: I agree with you on that point, but it's still really hard for you to make a judgement on a one off visit. Did you see my lesson plan today?

OWEN: Yes, but I can't remember what it said.

SHEILA: Did you turn the lesson plan over? So, you didn't read my objectives. So, I'll get them and you'd better explain them to me ...

OWEN: What other things did you find good?

⁷This is currently a very contested issue. See Nicholls, Crowley and Watt (1996) who argue that Aboriginal learning styles are historically and socially constituted rather than culturally constituted. They resist the monolithic essentialism which characterises much writing about Aboriginality. They point out, for example, that a preference for learning by observation has been identified amongst a number of groups including non-Aboriginal working class children.

SHEILA: I'm not feeling particularly good about anything at the moment.

At this point Sheila leaves the room to get her lesson plans. This appears to be a deliberate, symbolic attempt to wrest back control, and testifies to the circulatory nature of power. By physically removing herself, Sheila demonstrates that she can act independently and refuse the positioning offered, whilst she repositions the lecturer and reduces the basis for his power and authority. The lecturer's admission that he cannot remember what the lesson plan contained only strengthens Sheila's position. His subsequent attempt to regain topic control is defeated when Sheila seeks to make him responsible for what has gone on by bringing in her affectivity: *'I'm not feeling particularly good about anything at the moment.'* From Sheila's point of view, it looks as if the lecturer is not prepared to pursue the issue of confused lesson planning. Moreover, she is on safe ground here. As long as her written lesson objectives are not examined from a socially critical perspective any threat to her entrenched beliefs has been removed.

SHEILA: It's important to me because if I've reached third year and don't know how to do objectives, I shouldn't be here. Read out the objectives and in all fairness to me, look at them and see if I've covered them. If I'd put more into it, it would have been expecting too much of me and the kids.

OWEN: You need to show the kids the way you're going early on in the lesson. It's not clear they knew what they were doing and why. We didn't come to grips with it early on.

SHEILA: 'I', not 'we'. On reflection I can see what you mean... That's why I got them to go through the class timetable ... If I stuffed up now, I have three weeks left to get it right.

OWEN: I thought it a very sound lesson and you're going on the defensive... What is a timetable? Why do we have a timetable? You should have given this focus from the word go. This short cuts the whole business of getting the concept across.

It appears that Owen realises that the outcome of the conference is going to be unsatisfactory and attempts to defuse a particularly difficult situation by attempting to

share responsibility and create solidarity. But it is too late to establish mutuality. Sheila blocks any attempt at accommodation with her rejection of the inclusive 'we' of solidarity and refuses the new positioning offered. Although she feels strong enough to confess that she sees what Owen means she maintains the distance between them. At the same time she employs a transference strategy by putting the blame on the University for having let her come so far without pointing out the deficiency.

This proves a turning point in the conference as it forces something positive from Owen. Even then, he uses the situation to reposition the student by drawing attention to the fact that she is going on the defensive: *I thought it a very sound lesson and you're going on the defensive*. At this point in the conference there is very little genuine eye contact or engagement. The discourse is marked by contradictory messages accompanied by prolonged stares, (the judgmental gaze), and looking past the student. It is incongruous that the lesson could be thought to be 'sound' given what has taken place.

'Overstanding'

Owen now abandons the declared procedure of trying to get the student to identify positive features and the conference begins to degenerate with the student adopting a fatalistic, defeatist stance and the lecturer choosing to disregard contradiction. For mutuality to emerge there has to be a desire for and a possibility of a shared reality. The opportunity for this to occur, if indeed it was there in the first place, no longer exists. Attempts at understanding are foregone, and 'overstanding' results which, according to Sparkes (1991:105), is 'a condition whereby people cannot accept alternatives to their own views'.

OWEN: Your relationship with the class was good. I liked that, but when sitting on the floor you were falling into the old trap we all fall into, of telling, not getting children to say it, dates and times.

SHEILA: That was because they couldn't read.

OWEN: Getting kids attention! A real problem. If you were going to say 'listen to me', don't go on while they are still gas-bagging and looking into their desks.

SHEILA: That's not a point I'm agreeing with you. The Liaison Lecturer, before he comes out to supervise should look at what the student has been like in the past because that's one of the things I've been strong at...Point taken, stuffed up!

OWEN: I'm not saying that.

SHEILA: All the way through there's this negativity.

OWEN: So you don't like being criticised perhaps ... I'm just picking up on relatively minor things.

SHEILA: But they've always been strong points, getting the kids attention and so on. You've pointed out systematically where I've stuffed up.

OWEN: Stuffed up, that's too strong a word.

The effects of subjectivity

This marks the end of the conference. The subjectivities of the two protagonists prevent the meaningful construction of knowledge through a dialogue across differences. This is well illustrated in the closing extract above. Getting attention and obtaining a rapport with the class in an urban school where there is a degree of cultural homogeneity which is shared by the student-teacher and which is part of her embodied knowledge, is less threatening and problematic than operating in a school in an Aboriginal community. These are no longer 'relatively minor things' but because the real source of the difficulty is not confronted by both participants at the start, the conference becomes a routinised, scripted, closed text in which differences never really surface. And the reason for this can be found in the *essential* subjectivity of the individual participants, and the disregard of emotionality and affectivity on the part of the Liaison Lecturer.

By admitting her incompetence ('stuffed up'), Sheila appears to accept the position in which Owen attempted to place her during the conference. However, the significance of her remarks about having 'stuffed up' must lie in the fact that she believes Owen has not been able to help her. In doing this the student is able to reposition the lecturer. He must take the responsibility.⁸

That the visit is in fact considered a waste of time becomes apparent in later discussion with Colleen Newton and Grace Heaton. Sheila attributes responsibility for this state of affairs to the university and its representative and rejects the position which is accorded to her discursively by the institution. The lecturer becomes marginalised, no longer has any position or credibility, and now occupies the position of the excluded Other. Neither leaves the episode intellectually enhanced with any form of mutual understanding.

It may be that this situation need not have arisen if the Liaison Lecturer had discussed his own view of his role and the difficulties he experiences. Later on the same day when asked about the need to adapt mainstream Australian teaching styles to Aboriginal learning styles Owen is very revealing:

INT: What about ... I'm trying not to put words into your mouth, it's difficult, but there is one area that I'm also focusing on, certainly with the supervising teachers at this point and this links up I guess with the work we do in sociological ... socio-cultural foundations and in the small schools unit, and that is the cognizance, the realisation, if you like, of the need to adapt teaching styles to Aboriginal learning styles. Do you tend to focus on that at all in the your work with the students?

OWEN: I don't focus on it much at all, again because I don't feel competent to. I sit there frequently, sit there thinking well that's not the way Aboriginal kids learn and at the same time saying to myself, well, this is not an Aboriginal learning situation, is it, and may be if we gonna teach reading skills that's the way we do it and may be we can't teach reading skills in a traditionally Aboriginal learning

⁸I am indebted to Suzanne Parry, personal communication, for this observation .

manner at the moment. I've never thought about it. But I tend to ... unless it's something very very obvious I tend to back right off and say well, that's the business of the supervising teacher, give it to her, she knows, I don't, I know what I've read in the book. And often I've only got half a recollection of that so I yeah.. except for some very obvious things , I'd stay right away from it.

It could be argued that by saying that he does not have the answers, Owen is foregrounding the multiplicity, dispersal and deferral of meaning, but Sheila cannot afford this. She needs to be helped to read herself in relation to the school text, and 'to focus on the diversities of prior understandings, experiences, codes, beliefs and cultural capital' (Lather, 1988:129) that impact upon her reading of it. She herself is aware of this in what she says! This indeterminacy, this indirectness, this hinting at what is not right, at her hidden deficiencies, is of no value to her. The "alterity", the structuring absence, the shadow, the unsaid (and unsayable)' that Lather (*ibid*) goes on to invoke, are of no use to her here, just as Owen's attempts at 'innuendo' are not picked up.

A compounding disadvantage from Sheila's point of view is the fact that, in her opinion, her own supervising teacher was 'not at first base' and continually appeared 'spaced out', a view which a number of the staff shared. This teacher was responsible for the school fete which occupied her practically full-time. In addition, Sheila did not have any recourse to a Teaching Assistant, assuming she could have worked collaboratively. There were, therefore, few people other than Colleen, to whom Sheila could turn for assistance.

Snyder's comparative account of subjective and objective reality (Snyder, 1982) is helpful in explaining the fragmentation which occurs in these exchanges. Snyder sees objectivity as focussing primarily on the intellect but insists that the intellect cannot be separated from the emotions. From the objectivist point-of-view in which there is only one real world, the very idea of perspective is considered secondary in terms of importance,

as dispassion as the absence of point-of-view becomes the rule for discovering the world. Perspective implies a personal contribution to what is seen (and) serves to cloud what is already made (Snyder, 1982:364, emphasis added).

If Liaison Lecturers approach their work from an objectivist perspective, they will adopt a position on authenticity and inauthenticity in teaching, (i.e. that which is permissible), such that their view of a successful student-teacher in a cross-cultural situation becomes part of a world which is seen in 'one way'. But as Snyder (*ibid*) points out there are many possible truths and

an individual may maintain differing perspectives simultaneously with regard to the part of the world with which he or she is concerned.

We attend, he maintains, to the 'present figure of experience'. When we look at how contradictions are manifested and accommodated within the thinking of Liaison Lecturers we can see how the conflict between an internalised commitment to an objectivist point-of-view, and the pragmatic need to attend to different perspectives arising out of different worlds, (or contexts-of-site), characterises the supervision process.

The communicative virtues identified by Burbules and Rice (1991) provide a firm basis for bringing together the affective and the intellectual.

These virtues include tolerance, patience, respect for differences, a willingness to listen, the inclination to admit that one may be mistaken, the ability to reinterpret or translate one's own concerns in a way that make them comprehensible to others, the self-imposition of restraint in order that others may "have a turn" to speak, and the disposition to express oneself honestly and sincerely. (Burbules and Rice, 1991:411)

This is not to say, as Burbules and Rice point out (*ibid*:412), that tolerance and patience need be maintained in situations where racist and sexist speech may intimidate, harm or silence others, but it does suggest that such speech should be exposed and confronted in a sympathetic, supportive and honest manner.

In summary, it would appear that little new knowledge has been constructed in this social encounter. There is no attempt on the part of the participants to take into account individual subjectivities. No negotiated, agreed, account of the meaning of events, or of the events themselves, emerges. Some clarification of content and subject matter knowledge involving timetables and programs has been achieved, and problems associated with teaching the digital clock have been explored, but no further knowledge about objectives and lesson preparation is constructed. From the student-teacher's point of view her knowledge of the practicum script has been reinforced but her beliefs, prejudices, values and attitudes have not been altered. Throughout the conference the positionings attempted by the Liaison Lecturer and the resistance to these on the part of the student-teacher have prevented new knowledge and insights emerging. The lecturer's attempts to control agency have been rejected.

Alternative readings

The way the Liaison Lecturer has been positioned in the telling of this story has led some over-readers to protest at what they see as an attack on his professionalism. Some believe that the student-teacher was given a better hearing than she deserved and that her behaviour was unacceptable. Such reactions are revealing in themselves because they suggest particularly ingrained attitudes towards power and authority amongst the academic community.

A number of supervisory staff will have found themselves in similar situations in the past and it seems incumbent to put forward several mitigating factors in case it should be thought that the participants are being treated unsympathetically. Firstly, the workplace practices imposed on supervisory staff by the university mean there is often literally no time to negotiate interpretations. The lecturer is only at the school for a short period and

he or she must proceed in a businesslike, dispassionate, no-nonsense manner if the workload is to be dealt with. Under such circumstances, the sheer complexity of the supervisor's role with its artistry and demands of connoisseurship, has to be understood. It is not always possible to improvise.

Secondly, we cannot escape the way we ourselves have come to being as educators. Divesting oneself of power and authority and engaging in knowledge construction on the basis of mutuality and reciprocity is not easy to accomplish, particularly in the face of deliberate hostility. Achieving the right degree of explicitness and directness can prove a difficult balancing act.

Finally it has to be emphasised yet again that this is only one retelling among many and that the constructions and interpretations put upon what occurred are framed according to a critical constructivist and postformal viewpoint. Returning to the questions posed at the end of the chapter on constructivism, it is possible to give an alternative reading to the text. Owen can be said to place the student-teachers' own efforts to understand at the heart of the supervisory process. *Conscientization*, the liberation of consciousness, can only be achieved by the individual (Freire, 1972). This inevitably involves individual students in considerable perturbation when they are forced to confront their beliefs.

The level of indeterminism and indirectness commented upon earlier should not be construed as deliberately unhelpful. Supervision is a moral and ethical process and should not be calculated to wound or harm. Indeterminism acknowledges the possibility of being wrong and is the opposite of social or cultural determinism. However, this is not to say that Owen's views are never predetermined, and forcibly and directly expressed, particularly when he is dealing with technicist concerns.

Critical constructivists set great store by collaborative inquiry, emancipatory knowledge, and inclusive pedagogy, all of which are put at risk by an antagonistic and defensive mind set. Such a mind-set is not conducive to the promotion of meaningful dialogue. We may even ask if the necessary sincerity conditions required for conversational interaction are in place. Met by the student's resistance to internally restructure and organise experience, it is not surprising that Owen seeks to impose externally constructed knowledge.

The joint construction of knowledge is a two-way process. One needs to look also at what changes take place in Owen's representation of the situation and what he in effect learns from it. It will be recalled that at one point Owen acknowledges that he has been forced to reconsider his perception of Sheila as a '*real, old, hardliner*', but it is difficult to identify the creation of new knowledge and insights, about, for instance what constitutes racism or which strategies are available to overcome it. All that is reproduced is existing knowledge about power relationships and a perpetuation of the us/them dichotomy.

Reasonableness and the conditions required for dialogue

Whichever way one reads this practicum text, it is a forceful reminder of the conditions required for dialogue and what constitutes reasonableness (Burbules, 1996). Freire's views on dialogue are often frustrating in their idealism, but they may assist us in avoiding the disillusionment and bitterness that surround ineffective conferences such as this.

Firstly, Freire (1972:77-83) tells us, 'dialogue cannot exist in the absence of profound love for the world and for men' (sic!). For him the naming of the world has to be infused with love (which is why emotional bonding is given such space in the sentient life of the participants in this inquiry). Secondly, 'dialogue cannot exist without humility'. The

naming of the world, the joint creation and construction of knowledge, cannot be undertaken with arrogance, and yet as we can see from the reactions of both participants, the humility that both in their different ways bring to the conference is mistaken for arrogance. Freire goes on to emphasise the need for 'an intense faith in man', a faith which allows one to be 'more fully human'. But, as well as faith, dialogue requires hope for 'dialogue cannot be carried out in a climate of hopelessness'.

Finally, Freire links true dialogue to critical thinking based on solidarity, 'thinking which perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than a static entity,' but this focus on reality, as we have seen requires a willingness to defer and not to foreclose.

This interaction takes place in what Burbules (1996) would call 'unreasonable circumstances'. He proposes four interdependent qualities that seem essential to reasonableness: objectivity, fallibilism, pragmatism and judiciousness. 'An objective person is one who can withhold his or her own opinions in engagement with other points of view' (*ibid*, Part 2:2), and is therefore associated with tolerance and discernment. Fallibilism requires supervisors to admit their limited understanding and the capacity to create that awareness in others, and pragmatism makes us

sensitive to the particulars of given contexts and the variety of human needs and purposes, together with tolerance of uncertainty, imperfection, and incompleteness ... A reasonable person is frequently in situations where insufficient information is available, where problems appear intractable, where outcomes are unpredictable ... The threats to reasonableness are when conventional responses fail, when doubts prevail. In such difficulties, what makes the response of a person reasonable and reliable is whether he or she can approach present problems with an open mind, a willingness to adapt, and persistence in the face of initial failure or confusion (*ibid*, Part 2:7).

Owen tries hard to incorporate these principles into his practice, He is aware of his fallibilism, is judicious in his final summing up of Sheila, his 'overstanding' is more a

response to the situation, rather than a preferred technique, and he is objective in the sense that he avoids foreclosure. His pragmatic understanding is evident in his tolerance of uncertainty, imperfection, and incompleteness. Nevertheless there is something of the adhocism with regard to anti-racist teaching noted by Hatton (1996) in her study of a Torres Strait Islander support program in which she demonstrates the lack of success in getting supervisory staff to teach about aspects of racism and institutional discrimination.

CHAPTER 26

TAKING ACCOUNT OF CONTRADICTION

This chapter examines a number of contradictions of practice as they emerge in the work of one Liaison Lecturer. It is not assumed that contradictions should/can be removed or resolved. The removal of contradiction, and the desire for coherence and unity, are associated with Enlightenment thinking and accompanying metanarratives (Davies and Harré, 1991).

In order to explore the contradictions which exist I have turned to the conference held between Owen Fields and Grace Heaton which preceded that with Sheila Cunningham, the conference following which Grace was said by Sheila to be '*bawling her eyes out*'. Contradictions of practice (McNeil, 1986) are of two sorts: those stemming from pedagogical practice in a cross cultural situation, and those stemming from the supervision process itself. Both relate to an unrecognised Eurocentrism, and reveal how Liaison Lecturers disregard the concept of difference, treating it as unproblematic, or passing it on to someone else to deal with.

The initial exchange

The conference with Grace Heaton is 'scripted' in a similar way to that with Sheila Cunningham in the previous chapter, but on this occasion the proceedings were tape-recorded. There is the same brusque, business-like, let's get straight down to it approach at the start: *You reckon it worked?* followed by the same noncommittal response: *I thought it was all right*, repeated three times in the first two of Grace's utterances. There

is an apparent acknowledgement by the Liaison Lecturer of the conditions under which the lesson was observed: *Yeah, you looked a bit tensed, which is natural ..., You haven't had a lot of time with them, no, that's true. And some of them you haven't seen before, Colleen said.* There is the same well-intended laughter throughout. These interactions comprise a kind of ritual or charade, and, after the crucially important details concerning attendance of students are provided, Grace loses no time in asking *Well what do you think?*

Here is the initial exchange:

OWEN: You reckon it worked?

GRACE: I thought it was all right. I was a bit flustered about the whole thing, three people lined up at the back sitting there watching but ...

OWEN: Yeah. you looked a bit tensed, which is natural.

GRACE: Yeah. Yeah, it was all right, it was a bit hard in a group like that though because so many varying levels like the kids are all such varying levels and I said to Colleen how can a session like that work because all the good ones will answer and all the others will just sit back and half the time they were just take it in so ... well, I thought it was all right. This is only my second day that I'm teaching with them.

OWEN: You haven't had a lot time with them, no, that's true. And some of them you've never seen before, Colleen said.

GRACE: Yeah, there's about three, I'd say. Today was the highest attendance that we've ever had most of the other days there have only been about seven, eight, varying...but yesterday twelve was probably the biggest yesterday and today we had about sixteen, so that's okay, *well what do you think?*

OWEN: Well there are a few points that I think we need to pick up on. And the first one that I've written down is motivation. Where was the oomph? I'll ask *where was the oomph* in the lesson, you're not in serious ... you were looking pretty worried, but I understand you probably were with this crowd of people, certainly, when you're being watched ... *I used to freeze* when I had somebody come in to look and inspect us when I first started teaching and I used to perform pretty badly but you really ... I think you need to ... *you need to overact in terms of putting some enthusiasm into your voice and try to get a good expression in your face.*

The high attendance may not be the result of chance. Children are often sent to look over a new person in the school. They want to know how she is going to behave. Will she be loud, extravert, bossy, domineering, oppressive? Which non-Aboriginal group will she represent? Will she be an advocate for the Aboriginal community? Is she prepared to learn, show empathy, hold back? Owen himself knows this and later refers to the fact that Grace is being judged as a person.⁹ Ironically, Owen wishes to change the kind of person she is and produce her differently.

The lack of *oomph*

With this in mind let us re-examine the transcript. Owen sees the lack of *oomph*, the lack of enthusiasm and absence of facial expression as handicaps and reads them from his own Eurocentric standpoint which insists that teaching is a form of dramatic activity requiring extraversion, demonstration of physical energy, and vocal gymnastics. As in the case of Sheila Cunningham, teaching is viewed through the metaphor of the play with the emphasis on production and performance. Grace is urged to *overact*, put *enthusiasm* in her voice, and *expression* on her face. Even the metaphor of *freezing up* on stage, of forgetting one's lines, is employed. Owen attempts to produce Grace by sharing experiences of his own so that Grace will accept the restricted form of agency which he accords her.

This, then, is our first contradiction. In spite of our understanding of difference many educators, including the present writer, have shared unwittingly in imposing a culturally determined, potentially oppressive teaching style in an incongruent situation. The contradiction is compounded by placing the student in a double bind (Bateson, 1973).

There is a primary injunction which prevents the student from being herself. Quite simply

⁹ At Gapuwiyak, for example, Aboriginal people distinguish between *manymak* (Balanda who are prepared to mix socially, and *Yatkurr* (Balanda who stick to themselves). (NATSIPP/DEBATE 1991:86).

students cannot just get 'oomph' out of nowhere. Subsequently a secondary injunction is imposed upon her and she is urged to act as if she were in a 'normal' (urban, predominantly WASP?) situation when she clearly is not. Within the immediate context of the conference the student has no one to appeal to to help her resolve the situation. Difference is acknowledged but disregarded.

Just behaving naturally

A second contradiction is revealed in the next extract and raises again the question of what constitutes a *normal* sort of discussion and *just behaving naturally* in a cross-cultural situation. Grace is told to behave naturally whilst at the same time to overact. 'Behaving naturally' appears to suggest ignoring the sociolinguistic rules of the speech community. It is a universal process which applies in '*most teaching situations*'.

OWEN: Just as you would in a normal sort of a discussion with people because when it all boils down I reckon that if you gonna be a good teacher it will all come back to pretty normal kind of discussion in most teaching situations where you are just behaving naturally as you would in a one-to-one situation ...

GRACE: Yeah, one thing I was counting to do with these kids though because there is so much distance between teacher and the kids.. like you know, last week all the time I was just... Oh God what's wrong with me because you go up and say "Are you all right?" and she just looked at her friend and they burst out laughing or they'll just bury their heads and laugh and it's just really, see, you know, every single little thing you do, they are looking at you and picking you up and sort of judging and laughing and it's really hard with these older kids.

OWEN: Well, they are judging ...

GRACE: Yeah.

OWEN: ... and I don't think there is anything to worry about, I think you just gotta live with it, I know it can be unnerving, in the knowledge that the Aboriginal people, for Aboriginal people it's all about you as an individual, your status, you as a white person, you as a teacher don't matter essentially, it's you as a person, so they will be busy sizing you out and that takes time with all of us so I think you ought to try to adjust to that thing, because it's not gonna change in a hurry, you've only got ... well, effectively two weeks at the most so at the end of two weeks they would have relaxed a lot but they still won't know you and you just got to go

with it and I think you just got to carry on performing as you would in a normal classroom situation just for your own experience and development really.

GRACE: also when... like you ask some questions like you might not get any response like a lot of the time you can see that someone's answering but you can't hear them properly so you know you have sort of ... 'What was that? Did you say ten or did you say twelve?' and they nod whichever one is right, or whatever. But then you look around and you ask some questions and there is just nothing, it's just blank, you know.

OWEN: Yes. That's unnerving. How... what can you do to improve the situation?

GRACE: Well, I don't know . If there is anything they don't know or they don't wanna answer, they don't wanna talk, they are not game to, all we can do is put words into their mouths and wait for a shrug or a nod or something.

OWEN: Well, I reckon that it's probably be a good idea to sit down with Colleen and really talk that one through. I don't know the answers.

In this extract Grace relives the experience that so many non-Aboriginal student-teachers and novice teachers have faced before in their initial attempts to interact with students from an unfamiliar culture. The very nature of the opening question 'Are you all right?' is set to raise laughs. *All right* according to whose say so? The implication is that there must be something wrong or unnatural with their culture and behaviour. The submerged answers that are so much part of students who are not invested with individual knowledge by the group, and the resistance to direct questioning techniques, can cause acute discomfort and embarrassment to the student-teacher and to the class.

The right to silence

Current thinking with regards to ESL acquisition accords to students the right to silence but Liaison Lecturers generally find this hard to accept as it conflicts with the 'progressive' view of interactional teaching and the primacy of speech. This gives rise to a further contradiction which forces Grace into a position where all she can do is put words into the mouths of the pupils and *wait for a shrug or a nod or something*.

At the end of this extract Owen admits that he doesn't know the answers and refers Grace to her supervising teacher. This is an example of presuming that the meaning of what is occurring will become clear retrospectively as more information is obtained (Davies and Harré, 1991). Ironically, the remainder of the conference suggests that Owen *does* have some predetermined answers which involve how Grace should exercise agency and how her performance should be constituted, although he acknowledges that Grace 'as a teacher' doesn't matter essentially. This is an attempt to construct her as a person.

Being unnerved

The message that begins to come through is that the student was '*unnerved*', but this emotional state is not addressed. The personal and the emotional becomes an excluded discourse. Feeling-states are dismissed as transitory. Being unnerved is something that has to be lived through, put up with: *I think you gotta live with it, I know it can be unnerving*, and again *Yes, that's unnerving* or later *that is something unnerving undoubtedly*. In a subsequent extract this disheartening, dispiriting aspect is acknowledged but immediately dismissed with *Okay, well that takes us on to the next point*. Two kinds of subjectivity discussed in the previous chapter are evident here: the one which is worked *for* so that the student is constructed or produced by the discourse of the Liaison Lecturer; the other which, although acknowledged intellectually, is denied and worked *against* and assists in the constitution of the former, another contradiction. The result for the student is fragmentation, depersonalisation, and consternation.

Gender-related role separation may be at work here, whereby the supervising teacher is expected to offer mothering, comfort and solace to the student whilst the Liaison Lecturer holds himself apart from emotions and feelings, admitting them only intellectually, but not in a form which can lead to solidarity, mutuality or reciprocity. This is an example of

what Davies and Harré (1991) call *division* in the management of contradiction which relates to the allocation of separate role requirements.

Meaning business and getting the message

The next extract reveals that Grace has already talked to her Field Supervisor and believes she had been successful in implementing a strategy of indirection. Owen does not accept that. The focus is increasingly on his concerns, not those of the student. He wants to see Grace showing more persistence, '*giving clues, giving hints, prompting*' which Grace believes she has been doing. On no account are the students to be '*left alone*'. An adversarial relationship is introduced. Grace is told how the students themselves are to be understood and positioned. She has to show them that *she means business*: the students have *to get the message*. This advice is based on the assumption of universal principles of development as they apply to adolescents in 'western' cognitive psychology. Grace knows that this is a dangerous way to go.

GRACE: Yeah. Well, she said the same sort of thing, she said you have to put words into their mouths, do you think it's twelve or do you think it's fifteen, you know if it is twelve then they will nod, if it is fifteen ... [indecipherable---voice trailing].

OWEN: Yeah. But that gets back to persisting, giving clues, giving hints, prompting, all those sorts of things and I thought that you gave up too quickly today. You'd ask a question, you got the blank looks, that is something unnerving undoubtedly.

GRACE: I thought you, I thought you'd think that ... like most of those times when I did write the answers up I was getting the answers back.

OWEN: I knew that, I knew that, when they were answering but earlier on they weren't. You were jumping straight in with an answer or turning round to the board and putting something on the board instead of just persisting or encouraging them. That's not always gonna work but over time they will get the message 'we're hoping she'll leave us alone,' it's fairly normal adolescent response, if we don't say anything maybe she'll leave us alone but if you leave them alone you just reinforce them in that sort of behaviour so that you got to persist, they've got

to see that you mean business, when the chips are down, okay you give up and give them the answer.

GRACE: Yeah.

OWEN: But it's my guess, it's only a guess. The more you persist the more you get some of them responding.

Grace's consternation is obvious. She starts to hesitate, can't get her words out. *I thought you, I thought you'd think that...like most of the times I was getting the answers back.* Later, she will claim that she had already identified the criticisms Owen would make from the dissatisfaction visible in his face during the lesson. Her worst fears are being confirmed. These contradictions dominate the next section of the conference although they are never directly voiced.

Doing stuff all over the place

Two predominant features characterise the next exchange: one is the absolute, categorical nature of Owen's comments and the absolute certainty in which they are given; the other is the vague, indefinite, imprecise, colloquial nature of the language adopted by the student which contrasts with the precision of the Liaison Lecturer's speech.

OWEN: There is no doubt that that's disheartening, dispiriting. Okay, well that takes us on to the next point that you end up telling them the answers rather than getting responses from them and relatively I think you need to think about the way you explain things and I've got a couple of examples here. You used the word 'dots'. No such thing as 'dot' in mathematics, they're decimal points, first one but fairly minor one. But then with this one, you started off, if we got three earrings, they were 20 cents each, how do we work out the answer. No answer, so you say, and this is good because you were insisting, do we subtract, do we add, do we multiply, no answer. You say, we multiply, or do we? Think of it, three earrings for 20 cents, you could just as easily add or multiply in the situation and then you went on to an addition lesson that had no more to do with multiplication at all with the rest of the lesson, so I think that was probably confusing for them. 'What are we doing today?', Are we doing addition or we're doing multiplication?' Wasn't clear to me.

GRACE: Oh we did a few more examples of five blocks of \$1 and five blocks of \$2 and then adding them together. I mean, it's just all the money thing because

they're gonna be working on the stores, the fete, they've gotta start getting to know these things.

OWEN: Yeah. Okay, yes they do. So what you have to do is think about how you gonna break up your lesson, if you gonna teach a whole mob of things, wasn't clear to me what ... just what you gonna do.

GRACE: No, we all, just total a revision really because they've done a bit of work on that. and yeah ...

OWEN: Right. Okay. Fair enough then, well I didn't understand that, I expected to see some sort of ... you know we'll do some division and multiplications. Given the situation that you find yourself in you tell me and Colleen tells me that you've got kids there who are barely numerate, some who are pretty good, ...

GRACE: There are some there who really can't, and one girl doesn't even join in the lessons. She's just there.

OWEN: Yeah. I noticed that. But ...ah ... yeah.. Okay, well it wasn't clear what you were just ...just what you were on about. Probably it has something to do with the fact that you didn't get a nice clear lesson, that's all and they need to be.

The absolute certainty of conviction and the precision of speech is evident in

You used the word 'dots'. No such thing as 'dot' in mathematics, they're decimal points, first (example) but fairly minor one.

Contrast this with the student-teacher's language with it's limited lexical resource:

Oh (1) we did a few more (2) examples...I mean (3), it's just all the money thing (4) ... they're gonna be. ... (5) these things.

No we'd all (6) just total revision really (7) because they've done a bit of work (8) on that (9), and yeah (10).

The intonation contour on the *Oh* (1) suggests that Grace does not believe what the Lecturer has said to be all that significant. *A few more* (2) suggests a casual, unplanned approach, as does (4) *just all the money thing*. *I mean* (3) marks an attempt at clarification rather than constituting a filler as elsewhere in her utterance. *Gonna* (5) predominates throughout.

The generalised *we'd all* (6), the indefiniteness of *really* (7), suggesting the lesson had not been all that carefully thought out, the lack of precision of *a bit of work* (8), the indeterminate anaphoric reference of *that* (9) and the trailing away of the message at the end in *and yeah* (10), suggesting she has said enough to justify her position, all indicate a student-teacher who has not appreciated the realities of teaching, one who is *gonna do stuff all over the place*.

It appeared to me that Owen lapsed into the student's vernacular with this utterance in an attempt either to reflect back Grace's speech to her, or, in terms of social exchange theory, to seek social acceptance, but Owen rejects both explanations, saying that he often addresses students in this way.

Although indefiniteness, vagueness, misleading over-simplification and limited vocabulary are features of the lessons on which he comments, at no stage does Owen directly challenge or evaluate the student's use of language. However, the student now sees that her subjectivity, or uniqueness in the way she uses language, is now under direct threat in order that she becomes subject to the discursive demands of the framing of knowledge. This casual use of language cannot help but convince Owen that the student is not taking teaching seriously enough.

Getting back on track

The next extract speaks to the Liaison Lecturer's techniques for exercising control both over the topic for discussion and ensuring that his version of the lesson predominates, another contradiction of practice. At first it appears that he accepts the student-teacher's explanation that she was engaged in general revision: '*Fair enough then, well I didn't understand that.*' Later, however, reverting to the discourse of the courtroom, the witness

is told that 'you weren't just revising, you were in fact reteaching'. At no stage is the difference between revision and re-teaching clarified. The student is implicated in this apparent deception through the complicit use of 'we' which goes unchallenged, and by a normalising reference to 'the human condition', sinfulness which we as individuals have to acknowledge and fight against. This 'fixation' with planning in an attempt to overcome 'aimless' teaching is a valued part of Owen's own practical, personal knowledge which he is determined to share, and which also featured in the conference with Sheila.

GRACE: What... did I have to do lesson notes, wasn't the day book good enough or....

OWEN: No, I don't think the day books are ever enough because I reckon lesson notes are all about indicating to you, precisely what it is that you have to achieve in a lesson and if you don't know that ...

GRACE: Is that if you've got a programme as well?

OWEN: I think so. Because I reckon that, and this is just a personal thing, I reckon that the reason that we lose track all the time in our teaching is because we don't go in saying 'Today, or in this lesson, I am going to achieve this, at the end of the day these kids will be able to do this' and in that case it might just have been a revision, so all we're going to do today is revision, but that wasn't all you were gonna do today, what you gonna do is really try to sharpen up their skills, you weren't just revising, you were in fact re-teaching, you're re-teaching all that column stuff, for example, now I reckon that you could have anticipated that you are doing that and you needed to make that point so that ... you weren't if it wasn't just revision, if it was re-teaching then that has major implications for the way you teach, you're not gonna do stuff all over the place, you're not gonna do a bit of adding, a bit of multiplication, a bit of stuff on columns, a bit of stuff on dots, all over the place, it's gonna be all nicely structured. The structure will come unstuck because lessons always do, but at least you know that there was a task, I'll do them, I'm getting off the task, get myself back on to it, forget about that stuff until I got this one right and that's where objectives come in. It is awfully important, because we do drift it's part of human condition, if you like, we go all over the place, I do it, that's why whenever ... every time I give a lecture at work, whether I've done it once or I've done it 15 times I take in lesson cards, I use cards instead of lesson notes, I always have them there, I always get off track but I always got something to come back to. Now, what was I doing, for goodness sake, we didn't start off doing this, look at the cards and get yourself back and I am not ashamed to say that to students, oops, we got ourselves off track, I've forgotten what's in the card, hang on for a sec, they understand that .

GRACE: Yeah.

OWEN: So it is something that I got a bit of a fixation about because I just see, everywhere I go, teaching, teaching that started off in here somewhere in somebody's aimless mind, then when I got off track we didn't have the cops to get us back on the track.

GRACE: Yeah.

OWEN: That makes sense?

GRACE: Yeah.

The conference is marked by a technicist approach to teaching, based on anticipation of learning difficulties, precise objectives, and detailed lesson planning, culminating in '*nicely structured*' lessons. In pursuing this technical aspect of teaching, a more significant moral issue remains unfronted. By positioning the student-teacher as someone who did not really know what she was doing, the *plight of those who really can't* and the one girl who *doesn't even join in the lessons*, but is *just there*, go unexamined. Grace clearly wanted to talk about this issue, if for no other reason than it provided her with an excuse for her lack of success, but this bid is disallowed. She meets with the acknowledgement, *I noticed that* and nothing more.

The technicist nature of the knowledge being constructed here is in blatant contrast to the knowledge being suppressed: dangerous knowledge on the fraudulent state of Aboriginal Education in the Northern Territory - marginalisation, exclusion, abandonment and dis-empowerment. The pronominal shifts made by the Liaison Lecturer to mitigate, through generalising to his own experience, what is a direct attack on the student-teacher's subjectivity, and the policing metaphor he employs in doing this, are revealing: '*Everywhere I go, I see teaching, teaching that started off in here somewhere, in somebody's aimless mind, then when I got off the track we didn't have the cops to get us back on track.*' There is clearly only *one* route and there has to be somebody there to ensure teachers stay on the track and if the police are not available, we need to make ourselves conscious of our wrongdoing.

Gathering to a close

Owen now moves the conference along at an increasing pace. The student-teacher's responses become shorter and when she does speak at length, take risks with her disclosures, or attempts to justify herself, she is discouraged. There can be only *one* reality and that is that possessed by the Liaison Lecturer as revealed in this extract in which Grace attempts to explore the problems she is experiencing with grouping. Once again, the imprecision of her language characterised by the overuse of 'like' can be detected. The use of 'like' appears to be an appeal for sympathy and a desire for shared understanding, similar to 'do you know what I mean?' The tone contour rises to give the respondent time to come in and express support.

GRACE: Another thing is that most of those kids in class don't talk to each other *like* there's only two or three that they talk to and ... *like* I got groups worked out *like* Colleen gave me a list of all the kids and their abilities and I worked them out into groups and that but *like* this ... there were pretty well one ... good student in the group, they can't ... they just go through and tell them, the answer, it's a sort of thing they do because ... *like* one of them can work out the answer in their heads and the other one can't even read the sums and ...

OWEN: Yes, it's probably something that's worth talking more to Colleen about, she knows them and try to put that one through with her and devise groups where they can talk things through because the reality is ...

GRACE: So it's really having a small group in the class ... *like* it's better when you do only have eight or nine kids coming in because it's so much ... much more of a relaxed atmosphere as for me and the kids because they haven't got all the other ones that they don't talk to, listening to them.

OWEN: Always, but that's a cop out, because that is not the reality it can never be easy, you gonna have five one day and fifteen in the next, you know. And the other note I've got here is don't write wrong answers on the board.

The implication here is that Grace is looking for an easy way out, that she has not understood the reality of the situation, (which is affected by kinship restrictions on who can talk to whom, a point which is not discussed), whereas she is honestly revealing her

feelings of relief when only a few pupils turn up. In approaching the conference in this way the related issues of Aboriginal learning styles, socio-linguistic rules, and ways in which non-Aboriginal teachers can utilise this knowledge are not addressed.

The reality of the student's situation is also ignored in the following extract in which Owen issues a directive and does not address the problem facing the student.

Symbolically he takes her 'base' (a chair near the black-board) away from her without showing her why the physical position she had taken up was interfering with the lesson.

The student-teacher's attempt to justify herself is ignored and serves only to implicate her further.

OWEN: You compounded that [beginning before she had their full attention] by actually turning your back writing on the board and talking after you called their attention, or sometimes you didn't actually you just went on and assumed that they would attend and virtually none of them did so if you gonna work on the blackboard, get rid of those tables in front of the whiteboard because it is forcing you to write ...

GRACE: Usually I sit up on the chair on the blackboard..

OWEN: Yeah, but I reckon, get rid of them because you are forced to write like this and there is only one way to write on the blackboard and that's like that, from the side and like that so you can always see whether they are attending or not, I mean you don't have a behaviour problem, you 're not gonna have kids messing up the way you might in a urban school where I think that's even more important, you know the 'eyes on the back of the head' syndrome has got a lot to do with how you write on the blackboard. You certainly can't turn your back on them and assume that they will listen.

Grace's naivety, directness, honesty and openness are disregarded. In spite of the good natured laughter accompanying this exchange, she is still positioned as 'out there'. There is no attempt to use the 'we' of solidarity. Her revelations are used as more accumulating evidence against her:

OWEN: And my final observation has to do with the latecomers, most of them you ignored. If you've got kids drifting in, the moment they come in, get them on task, they don't know what to do.

GRACE: Yeah, Colleen was saying that to me and quite frankly I didn't see any of them come in.

OWEN: Didn't you?

GRACE: No, until I went around and saw them blankly, I knew they must have, because I knew they weren't there. I didn't see any of them come in.

OWEN: Okay, well, let's ... that means you're a late starter in the 'eyes in the back of the head' syndrome. Teachers has got to have eyes on the back of their heads. Now you really got ...

It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that, in spite of his supportive response, Owen believes that Aboriginal people are invisible to her:

GRACE: Yeah. And I still have trouble with their names. Because one looks like the other to me, most of them.

OWEN: Well, I'm hopeless with names and I just ... I just sort of say ... "Sorry, who are you again, I am sorry I forgot your name" and it is embarrassing when you say it but that's the only way you'll ever know their names, you've got to persevere on things like that.

Another contradiction of practice is found in the way Owen interprets the statements and behaviour of student-teachers, and the behaviour of the class, without negotiating the interpretation. In this extract Owen reinterprets for Grace the meaning of her behaviour and utterances from the point of view of the class in terms of getting attention.

OWEN: Attention giving ... the real problem, we've got kids that aren't highly motivated, that you're talking when they're talking, you're saying 'Right listen, Honey', and before they had a chance to listen to you you started talking which is as good as saying to them, 'Don't listen to me, because I'm not gonna talk anyway' you carry on, you've got to ... you've got to insist on no response, silence, try the silence bit, (indecipherable), you know, nothing going on in here, *all the little tricks of the trade* but make sure that they all listen to you. Okay, at that age, I guess you don't want to single them out and shame them and all that sort of stuff, so you might be talking that one through with Colleen what sorts of ... what sorts of things do you do to make sure they listen before you go on but you certainly don't go on until they are listening.

For the student-teacher advice of this kind is particularly frustrating because, although the student is to '*employ all the little tricks of the trade*', these are not revealed to her except

for the 'silence trick' (remaining silent until the pupils pay attention) that she is expected to know about. Moreover, the context-of-site renders her previous knowledge inappropriate. She cannot afford to 'shame' the pupils or see them lose face. Her sense of agency is once again compromised. It is at this point that the dynamics of cross-cultural communication need to be directly addressed, preferably with the assistance of an Aboriginal Teaching Assistant, particularly as Grace does not possess the local Aboriginal language. This is a tremendous concern to her, a concern which has not occurred to the Liaison Lecturer as this extract dealing with grouping reveals:

OWEN: I wonder and I don't whether this would work or not whether one way to go might be to get them, try to get more groups going, you know small groups with two's, three's, where they are doing the sums together and talking it through together, I mean this really puts the onus on you to be hopping around, supervising to make sure they are not talking about anything else under the sun which is ...

GRACE: Yeah, because you can never tell if they are talking in another language ...

OWEN: ... in language, that's right.

How can Grace intervene with the students if they are using their mother tongue which she does not understand but which, in terms of current bilingual theory, she should encourage? Here is a potential point of interconnection which would allow the possible restructuring of knowledge, but it is not followed up.

To sum up, it is clear that Owen's actions are characterised by a number of deep-seated, felt, but unrealised, contradictions: between embracing a closed-systems model of Teacher Education which permits of only one answer based on one reality, and promoting an open-systems, constructivist, model; between leaning towards a transmission view and veering off to embrace a problem-based learning view; between searching for certainties, regularities, and definitions, and embracing uncertainty, irregularity and indefiniteness; between according basic trust and remaining with mistrust; between 'giving the student

mistrust; between 'giving the student reason' and suspecting the student's reasons; between embracing particularism whilst justifying universalism; between the demands of a 'one way', mainstream, Australian curriculum and a 'two way' curriculum reflecting the wishes and desires of Aboriginal people; and between the normative requirements of the teaching profession and his personal interpretations of these.

The analysis of the sub-texts which form the basis of the last two chapters has revealed (1) the way in which power circulates during the practicum conference; (2) the complex relationship which exists between the different forms of subjectivity and the way these inter-relate with different knowledges; (3) the strategies available to student-teachers to resist positioning and maintain a sense of agency; (4) the way in which contradictions are contained and managed; (5) the way in which mutuality and reciprocity are constructed and the conditions which can frustrate their development; (6) the importance of emotionality and affectivity and their likely effects on the social construction of knowledge when they are disregarded; and (7) the importance of considering the historical, spatial, temporal and physical factors associated with the context-of-site.

CHAPTER 27

CONTESTING THE MYTHS OF ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

In the conference between Robert Scales and Tracy, technical considerations such as programming are avoided and educational, social and moral issues make up the bulk of the discussion. In this chapter I examine the supervisory practice of Robert Scales in much closer detail.

Robert's approach at Burarra is deliberately calculated to offer Tracy the opportunity to examine some of the popular myths about Aboriginal society and culture that are prevalent in non-Aboriginal society, myths that Tracy accepts without question. He manages to do this without arming her prejudices, and by reassuring her in a straightforward, matter of fact way that in her dealings with children and her overall classroom teaching performance, she is highly competent.

Robert's agenda is apparent from the opening remarks in which he acknowledges that there has not been sufficient time to examine some of the complex issues surrounding Aboriginal Education. It is clear that he wants to use the conference to address some of these issues even at the expense of neglecting practical considerations

ROBERT: We haven't had time to get into some more complex matters of Aboriginal education, like, you know, what is the future of this school and what is the future of people like you in this school and what is the future of Aboriginal teacher training and your views of bi-culturalism and Aboriginal control and all these things, perhaps that's not the purpose of this session [which] is to see whether you are really handling the teaching role in a confident manner.

These remarks are delivered in a measured, careful manner without condescension. There is a joking pleasantness about the voice, a daring to say, which eggs the student on to

reveal more about herself and her beliefs and values. His discourse at this point is the discourse of progressivism. It reinforces Tracy in her belief that she has succeeded in what she set out to do. He detects an atmosphere of freedom: freedom to explore; freedom to be oneself; freedom to loosen up and relax whilst achieving a good balance and maintaining control, which all contribute to the '*very free sort of teacher*' that Tracy has always wanted to be. This atmosphere of freedom is carried into the conference.

ROBERT: It seems as if you are doing really well and your supervising teacher is really happy with you and you are behaving like a very competent person, seems to me that you've got lots of good things about your teaching behaviour, you're outgoing and not frightened of the kids, you're willing to sort of loosen up with them and be yourself, quite open and free with them and I can imagine you being quite an extravert sort of teacher once you're out on your own classroom for a while, you'll turn into quite an actress and you'll put on a show and I think you'll get lots of involvement and you'll be really sort of a very free sort of a teacher and I think I can see the beginnings of that. You use your voice well, you assert yourself with the kids and push them around if you have to, but the rest of the time it's a very good balance between you being in control and then feeling free to be relax and go about their business so, I was happy with what I saw.

If Tracy is willing, Robert is now in a position to produce engagement, that is he can engage the student in a consideration of her practice in the cultural context in which she is operating, 'to open up the underside of teaching,' to use Britzman's (1991:1) evocative phrase. As we have already seen in the previous chapter Robert is more of a gradualist and a communitarian, than he is radical. He is not expecting to see immediate results or effect any dramatic change of view. He starts from the position Tracy is at. Although Robert's time is limited in the school, he manages to create an unhurried atmosphere in which this examination of the myths can take place.

Integral to his approach is the image of teaching as the big and little picture and he returns to it again and again. In a very simple, homespun way he brings together some of the complex philosophical conundrums of the current post-formalist debate: the relationship of the parts to the whole, the relationship between micro and macro concerns,

the problem of how local knowledges and difference relate to universals, and concerns with emancipation and empowerment. The way that the little picture relates to the big picture picks up on all of these issues.

The image of the big picture is used by Robert as a metaphor to distinguish between local, classroom-based occurrences such as teasing, and the much wider moral, social and political issues or, in his own words, '*the overall sociological context, the political future of the community*,' the long-term self-determination and self-expression of the group.

ROBERT: Well, you see, Aboriginal Education ... you can operate on two fronts, I think you should be operating on both of those two fronts all the time. One front is this big picture, the overall sociological context, the political future of the community, you know, you take a 20-year perspective and you say look, if this community is going to have continuity of staff and real rapport with the kids in 20 years time, then we've got to work towards local people being trained as teachers at very high levels, you know, so you have that vision at the beginning and you have this 10, 15, 20-year picture to work towards.

Historical perspective is given a future orientation in all Robert says, an important consideration for students who see only the immediacy of the classroom. Robert acknowledges that Tracy is only in the classroom for four weeks and that she can achieve very little in that time. He is looking to some possible future effect that she may have on schools in the years ahead.

Engagement is first secured in the conference through Tracy's concern with class management and control issues as a result of the fighting induced by teasing. Robert moves Tracy way from her own personal concerns to wider community concerns. He suggests that matters of discipline are essentially moral issues which involve Aboriginal solutions. He is keen to know the dimensions and seriousness of the teasing problem because that might be more of a problem for whites, 'foreigners' as he calls them later, than for the Aboriginal community. In all that follows it is not my intention to challenge

Robert's views but to examine how he goes about promoting and modelling reflection, and, how, in the process, he engages Tracy in a form of cognitive apprenticeship (Brown, Collins and Duguid, 1989).

Once engagement is established, Robert can begin assisting the student to interpret the culture and beliefs of the community. Engagement is not meant in any combative sense but is used to suggest interaction and involvement. Thus Robert can venture to disagree, contradict, speak bluntly, even be dismissive if necessary, without provoking conflict or risking a breakdown in communication. Robert talks in terms of educational principles utilising Tracy's own situated knowledge. Three inter-related themes emerge and re-emerge: disciplining children in Aboriginal society; the role and status of Aboriginal Teaching Assistants within the school; and self-determination or 'how much are Aboriginal people really used to (i.e. habitually involved in) solving their own problems'.

Disciplining Aboriginal children and the issue of teasing

Tracy's immediate 'problem' is deciding when a situation is serious enough to call in the Principal. Having been told to '*such and such off*', her own words, by a boy being subjected to teasing, should she take the offender off to the Principal and leave the rest of the class, or should she keep going and take him down later? Her attitude to the violence endemic in the classroom is that one cannot expect much else in view of the nature and history of the community.

TRACY: I find the fighting really hard to handle within the classroom. But the children see it all the time outside.

Robert discusses the problem in terms of the principles which apply to praise and sanction in Aboriginal communities which Tracy is already aware of and appears to have

incorporated into her own practice. Why then, does she bring the incident up? Is it because in spite of the presence of Mary, the Teaching Assistant, she feels the situation could get so out of hand that she might not be able to control it and it might become life threatening? Is it because she wants her own successful intervention acknowledged? Or could it simply be an expression of what non-Aboriginal teachers have to put up with in such contexts? Whatever the reason, Robert uses the opportunity to link the issue of disciplining Aboriginal children to local child-rearing practice, the way Aboriginal staff are used in schools, and the degree of input from the community in the same way that he does with June Muir in the next chapter.

The use of Aboriginal Staff in the school

What Robert has to say contains implicit criticism of the school that he is not prepared to draw directly to the attention of the principal for fear of giving offence.

It seems to me that the Aboriginal staff member, if she can't actually help you in that situation, then there's something wrong with her role in the school, with her status in the school, you know, ultimately though, these issues are moral issues and it's a matter of whether you're willing to put up with it ... it's all ... on the other hand, it's a matter whether the parents are bothered by it or not. I mean the parents own their kids and in a way, that sort of behaviour is their responsibility, in the long run there should be an Aboriginal solution for that and my question would be if the school is trying to find the Aboriginal solution.

At this point he reframes the question to ask, indirectly, what the role of the non-Aboriginal teacher in an Aboriginal school should be and sets out to challenge a number of taken for granted assumptions.

ROBERT: How serious is the teasing? Can you see it having a bad impact?

TRACY: Yeah.

ROBERT: Well, see, look I can only talk in terms of principles again, that again is a moral community problem. It's an Aboriginal problem, it's an Aboriginal solution. I reckon you can be part of the solution but I wouldn't try to implement

a solution without lots of discussion with Aboriginal people about, you know, what can we do about it. Do you want your kids growing up doing that? Does that fall within the acceptable range of behaviors, if not, you know, I'm just talking in terms of principles now, the big principle is how much are Aboriginal people really used to solve their own problems? Or do we ask really highly qualified people step in and ... you know ... the solution won't ... if you went up to an Aboriginal person and said, you know, what's the solution, they're not gonna give you a quick answer. So *you have to start at the basic*, their need to be, you know, meetings of Aboriginal staff, I mean *it would take months, years to work it out*. You have to have the hierarchy of the school totally in favour of the whole thing or it wouldn't work. You couldn't implement it on your own, unless the principal and Deputy principal are really supportive of it. You'd have to have meetings of Aboriginal staff on their own, without whites there. They don't communicate well with white people there. They are very conscious of the white person. They either play to the gallery and say what they think the gallery wants to hear or they just clam up ... They're only really themselves talking realities and honesty when they are on their own. You'd have to have staff meetings which work on the problem of teasing. What does this school's solution gonna be to that? And you know, some of your SACE lesson might or your R.I. lessons, whatever, might have to be actually run by very most respected people, Aboriginal people in the community, not Aboriginal staff and they might have to work on this teasing problem. It might be a part of the aspect of indoctrination of identity formation, just sort of formation that takes place.

He then links this role to the wider issue of assisting in the process of self-determination.

Self-determination

The following extended extract is presented, not simply because it is unusual in the data to find Liaison Lecturers talking at such length to student-teachers about such important matters, nor because it represents the discourse of liberal humanism, but because it serves as an illustration of one way of helping students focus on the wider dimensions of the big picture. The importance of understanding the historical influences to which different communities have been subjected emerges strongly and forms a central part of the conference later on.

Now, don't we all have responsibilities on the big picture as to try to help people reach their potential. I mean, that's my definition of a teacher. Somebody who helps people reach their potential and do those things that deep down they want to do even if they are not aware of it at first. So you have this sort of role, sort of

working with people and that's what happens when you I think, the school if you really try to recruit TA's who have a future of going to college and becoming teachers and that sort of stuff, part of the work of teachers actually is getting to know those people so well, working alongside them, opening up doors of imagination to them, possibilities to them and so on I mean that's the educators role to me. If they say no after the opportunities have been offered, truly offered, and then say no, I wanna go and sit down under a tree, well, good luck, let them go, but I suspect that there's lots of communities in the Territory where that hasn't really been put to the test and I ... I ... I ... reckon that some of those like Milimgimbi, Elcho and Yirrkala, are partly really pushing Aboriginal teacher training now not because of some fashionable thing that happened in the last couple of years but because the Uniting Church had a really liberal interpretation of community work, community development, they've had community development workers, adult educators working in the last 20-25 years in those communities. They've had a policy of training their local ministers, the Aboriginal ministers, working towards Aboriginalisation of the church and their stores, and management of their stores to be in the hands of Aboriginal people and stuff. *And that's actually been going for 20 or 30 years* and so that ... and that's a vision the people have sort of picked up on and they've gradually... in other words, because of the tradition the white people have established, doors have *gradually* been opening, now I suspect there are other Aboriginal communities, but there's no doors ever been opened really and because they are not starting, you know, they just...

It might be argued that what we have here is more monologue than conversational dialogue, and that reflective practice requires the lecturer to hold back. Although there may be some truth in this, the benefits to Tracy of seeing reflection modelled for her and having her thinking challenged may outweigh the drawbacks. There is nothing which suggests preaching in the manner in which these remarks are uttered. Tracy is being invited to consider other options.

Challenging the myths

As he attempts to engage Tracy in a conversation with the situation as part of her cognitive apprenticeship, Robert demonstrates how to go about challenging a number of myths which have served to reassure the colonial usurpers. This is very similar to the confronting stage identified by Smyth (1989) in his analysis of developing critical reflection.

The first myth is the one that maintains that *non-Aboriginal people should not get involved in local political issues*. This has been made clear to Tracy by the principal and reinforced by a member of one of the leading Aboriginal families in the area. In getting her to confront this Robert also exposes another myth, *the myth that Aboriginal people have been consulted and that their views are known*. Robert reveals how such myths have become entrenched over time without being questioned.

I think often myths are perpetuated in schools, you know, people will just say 'oh no,' people will say 'don't get involved in this and that'. How do we know that they haven't just been telling each other that for the last 20 years and because it never developed actually the mechanism to find out what Aboriginal people really feel and think about it, we might not actually know what they feel and think about it. Don't you have some sense of this, traditions that are sort of established and the Aboriginal community is reported to think this and then somebody else reports what this person reported about what Aboriginal people are reported to think and it goes on for years and you build up the whole theme of what Aboriginal people are supposed to think and actually if you dig into it you find out that it might be three years since Aboriginal people were actually asked about that and when they were asked about it, it's in a funny way, somebody bowls in to somebody else, 'what do you think about such and such'. They don't analyse like that and come back with a quick answer. They would need weeks to think about it. A series of meetings to talk about if those meetings didn't take place or didn't have an opportunity to take place you have to conclude that they weren't interested in the issue. I mean in other words, we haven't really started about how to consult Aboriginal people truly, you know, we're still at the stage of the charter flying in from the Liberal Party, landing on the strip, coming in a truck having a community meeting and have an hour's meeting and climbing on the plane and going away again. We've consulted them. It's not the way they will find an information from each other. It's not the way they come to decisions. So it takes the fundamental, you know, fundamentally different approach to what influence the Aboriginal people should be having in the school and that as I say we take the whole ... you'd have to have the school hierarchy and the school as ... at least the majority of the staff, after talking out their approach, they'd have to have.... you know, interested in actually getting into these things.

A third myth that Robert is able to challenge arises out of his remarks about identity formation, quoted earlier and repeated here to contextualise the exchange. This myth maintains that *Aboriginal people are losing their identity*.

ROBERT: They (Aboriginal people) might have to work on this teasing problem. It might be a part of the aspect of indoctrination of identity formation, just sort of formation that takes places.

TRACY: Yeah, the problem there though is they're losing a lot of their identity. Ah ...

ROBERT: No, no, hold on, what ... we're just talking about the old world identity.

TRACY: Yeah.

ROBERT: People have identity, I mean, we are delving into a big topic, but I mean the old Aboriginal is no more real Aboriginal than these people here. The people of Bathurst, because they're more traditional than the people here, are actually no more real people, they're no more real Aboriginal and they are no more real Tiwi, it's just we're not talking about a contemporary Tiwi here, we are talking about a ... Tiwi. It's just like saying people from London are more truly English than the people from Sydney. It's a lot of rot. It ... People only say that because we let them say it. I mean unless human life is collapsing here, they've got ideas, it's a matter of finding them. I mean they've got ways of living, they've got moral systems, they've got standards, they've got ideals and they've got the norm and you know this teasing might be ... come within their ideal, and they might say, well bad luck, that's what foreigners have to put up with. I mean ... we are starting to open up the cans here, I think Aboriginal education in the long run has to get into those areas, otherwise, there's just this white expert coming in like some sort of foreign agent and we come in and we do our job and inject their injections and then we go away.

TRACY: But a lot of communities don't want that. They don't want you interfering with politics. This school, you're not to be involved at all within local politics.

ROBERT: Yeah, okay, but is teasing local politics?

TRACY: Can be.

Here Robert is challenging one of the myths with which non-Aboriginal Australia likes to comfort itself. It is vitally important to contest that myth because once the dominant group strips away the marks of identity from the Other, then that group can be discounted. If they cannot be identified because they are losing their identity, then why consult, why bother? On this reasoning at best they will be forcefully assimilated, or, at worst, they are left to become degenerate, (the meaning behind Robert's '*unless human life is collapsing*'). In any event, difference will no longer be a significant issue.

Nevertheless, Tracy remains unconvinced. Throughout the conference the meaning of the phrase 'interfering in local politics' is never clarified. In what way is teasing an extension of local politics? This question is never answered. It is left up to Tracy to decide.

In all of this, Robert makes no attempt to position the student. He accepts the position she has currently arrived at and supports her. It is evident that he cares for her as a person, with rights and a certain dignity. He is emphatic that as a member of the school community, she shouldn't have to put up with what the teacher herself considers to be offensive behaviour, as the following excerpt shows.

ROBERT: Well, look, okay ... I think she's right (Tracy's teacher). I think the classroom is actually the teacher's domain. As I said before as a teacher you've got sort of two areas of responsibility. One is to insist on behavior in your domain that you can put up with. If they're doing things that you can't stand and you find just intolerable and because you're one of the humans who happens to be here and because you're there in authority by their wish, then it seems to me you have the right to insist on behaviours that are acceptable to you ... See odd thing like kids having snot running down their nose all the time, that seems to be acceptable to Aboriginal people, do teachers have the right to pull out the Kleenex? My answer is if it's making them sick, yeah, pull out the Kleenex, because you know, they're one of the humans who happens to be there. So I think in the context of this school, Martina has come up with the good solution. You do what you have to do in your context. But if you are worried about it as a bigger issue, like those kids getting stuck into some new girl walking up the road and giving her hell, and you think that's something the school should be involved in, well, I'd say certainly on a four-week visit you can't. But if you wanted to try to do something substantial about those, some sort of moral conscience about it over the long term then you have to start working on a much different scale. You'd have to start having the school hierarchy who really wanted to find out what the Aboriginal community thought about serious teasing and to find that out you'd have to have a body of respected Aboriginal people who actually sat down and without any whitey influence at all talked about and then came up some kind of suggestions about what to do. But I mean that's quite a big shift in what some people see school as being for.

Instead of positioning Tracy, in interpreting the culture to her he is outlining a number of positions that she might wish to take if change is to be achieved. He compliments Tracy on how she handled the child who instigated the teasing, and another child who, after rapport had been established, began to produce work no one had thought him capable of.

But Robert still comes back to the fact that the Aboriginal staff should be a real resource in the schools. Tracy is still having problems with according the Aboriginal staff status and feels uneasy with ideas of actively promoting empowerment. She is impressed with Mary, largely because Mary can raise her voice louder than either she or Martina can, but sees her as only a limited resource in the classroom, unable to exercise authority over all groups.

Mary is sometimes very loud and she speaks over us and Martina and I just ... oh, just amazing, she yells three times as loud as us. Sometimes we get drowned out. So do I leave ... sometimes Mary can't control and I don't know whether it has something to do with her skin group or some children just don't have respect for her, so I don't know whether to leave the children with her and go down.

Patiently Robert puts over his point, revealing other positions she and the school could take. He is not afraid to challenge and disagree but does so without hostility. He hints later at causes of alienation and passive resistance (Rose, 1986), but always makes socio-cultural theory quite accessible. To his mind, the principles are simple and straightforward.

Robert moves by implication and suggestion, by gentle exposure of the convenient myths which provide for stasis, and in so doing alerts Tracy to Aboriginal decision-making procedures, and forces her to confront a further myth: the racist lie that *Aboriginal people lack ambition and aspirations*.

TRACY: I don't know, what I've seen... what I've heard so far is what I have seen, I don't know ... I don't think they've got those sort of aspirations, having their people in here as teachers. They're quite ...

ROBERT: How do we know that? How do we know that? I'll tell you what. [Sighs of exasperation from Tracy]. Why is there such variations between Aboriginal communities in the Territory, is it because Aboriginal people are so different in these different places or have they had different histories of white staff working with them?

TRACY: A bit of both. A bit of both.

ROBERT: It's a bit of both but I believe it's more the second than the other.

TRACY: Do you? I don't know because ... just the difference in the people I notice between the desert people and the Tiwi people, just amazing. The Tiwi people just talk so much and desert people, it's hard to get boo out of. Just little things like that it sort of amounts to something bigger. Okay ...

At this point Robert dismisses difference in favour of universals.

ROBERT: Let's forget about Aboriginal differences, let's talk about a universal, the human universal of people wanting to be in control of their own affairs and wanting to influence the child rearing, all the influences their children get. Isn't one of those universals that you could say ... you could assume in all societies that the parents would like the kids to be trained by people who are similar to them. If that is a universal, you sort of start with an act of faith in that kind of universal and you start saying to yourself, these people possibly don't have that aspirations simply because for the last 20 years, that's never been a serious option for them. If you dug in to the history of this school over the last 20 years, I wouldn't mind betting that there has been no confirmed continuity of encouragement of Aboriginal teacher training, I bet. Because you see, to me, the universal assumption would be that provided we knew how to tap the aspirations and the interests, there would be interest in that sort of thing. Otherwise what have we got? What have we got here, some sort of social services, some culture where people are just willing to sit there all their life under a shady tree? I mean do you really believe that? That's the only alternative to what I'm talking about - either people want to do their own thing deep down or ...

This is an appropriate point to critique the approach used by Robert in encouraging reflectivity. What guarantee have we that student-teachers such as Tracy, will not continue to '*want to do their own thing deep down*'? Is the gradualist approach which assumes that in time the student as teacher will reconsider these issues and change beliefs and attitudes viable? Can it be justified? Can this version of coaching, in which the supervisor acts as a meta-guide (Wodlinger, 1990), engaging the student-teacher in a form of cognitive apprenticeship, bring about potential change?

There can be no doubt that although she listens and responds Tracy is not at all convinced. She cannot reposition herself for another act of seeing. She cannot willingly embrace an alternative viewpoint. Being confronted by the myths does not lead to their rejection.

Like many non-Aboriginal Territorians she sees Aboriginal people as getting an unfair advantage in that they can exploit what both cultures have to offer.

ROBERT: So I don't believe that families like that ultimately don't want their kids to sort of take ... pretty prestigious western jobs, if they get an opportunity.

TRACY: Yeah, but they ... the [name of local family], especially, when they wanna be white, they'll be white, when they wanna be black, they'll be black.

ROBERT: All right. That's the way to survive. They are bi-cultural people.

As in so much racist discourse, oppressed people are damned if they do and damned if they don't. If they attempt to enter mainstream Australian culture for whatever advantages such a move may bring, they are condemned. But, if they cling vigorously to their own culture, they are equally denigrated.

Gore and Zeichner (1991) have attempted to account for the fact that there is so little evidence of critically reflective teaching practice in pre-service teacher education. Whilst acknowledging the biographical, situational and cultural factors which constrain student-teachers, they reject the view that student-teachers are not ready to tackle critical issues. In their view it is a question of the way the issues are foregrounded and the way the topic or question is framed that are critical. In particular they point out that supervisors need to be alert to the danger of personalizing the 'problem' in an individualistic manner.

Robert is alert to all of these factors, except that he sees moral principles as having some sort of transcendental force before which other lesser considerations give way. '*Don't you have some sense of this?*' he asks earlier on when discussing the way myths are handed down and manufactured, finding it incomprehensible that a student should not be aware of such things. It is doubtful whether as a group, student-teachers recognise the seriousness and gravity of the moral issues to which he refers or have developed the kind

of sensitivity required. Tracy is seen to be a loving, caring, compassionate, child-centred person, the sort of teacher of whom it is said, and indeed it was said, 'she is wonderful with children'. Within the limitations of that paradigm, she has the making of an effective and competent teacher. Why then, would she want to change?

In one sense, although Tracy passes the practicum, the university has failed her and failed with her, as it did with Sheila Cunningham, assuming that it is the moral duty of the university to intervene and contest Eurocentric beliefs and attitudes. Over an early breakfast on my last day at Burarra, Tracy confirmed her resistance to the liberatory agenda that Robert espouses. She is not concerned with Aboriginal aspirations and rejects the big picture.

TRACY: No, Robert is quite good. If he had just not concentrated so much on Aboriginal education, because he really pushed that and asked us about all sort of aspirations and what we thought and how things were run.

At the same time she uses Robert's own words about the purpose of the practicum in her own support.

Robert and I have concentrated on Aboriginal education which in a way isn't the aim of the practicum. The aim is for us to be confident teachers.

Even the concentration on Aboriginal education did not produce the kind of advice Tracy had hoped for.

With the child being Aboriginal, [I thought], he would be able to offer some guidance but he ... everytime I sort of broached the subject he tended to get wider, and cover a really wide view.

I wanted some specific answers and I ended up having world views and how you get all the community involved and have big meetings and work out a policy on teasing and that's not what I wanted.

The only outcome that can be hoped for, as far as Robert is concerned, is that later in her career Tracy will re-examine the issues of social justice, emancipation and Aboriginal empowerment. This view requires yet another act of faith.

CHAPTER 28

THE PERSISTENCE OF COLONIALIST ATTITUDES AND THE PRESENCE OF INDIRECTION

The conference between Robert Scales and June Muir is of interest for what it reveals about the persistence of colonialist attitudes and the way that the Liaison Lecturer responds to these. I follow Hodge and Mishra (1990) in viewing the situation in the Northern Territory as a form of internal colonialism in which the original inhabitants of the country are treated as a subject group. The stories reveal the uncontested continuation of practices reminiscent of colonial times.

The conference is also noticeable for the strategies of indirection employed by the Liaison Lecturer. The opening stages confirm our understanding of the constructivist approach adopted by Robert Scales. He begins, as usual, by seeking to reassure the student-teacher that she is doing well:

I think it's really good, I'm happy with it. Ben's very happy with it. He says you're one of the best prac students he's had for a long time and I reckon that's really ... that's great. You should be really happy.

Nevertheless, Robert keeps this assessment in balance and he spends time talking to June about the difference between a 'good' and a 'superb' performance leaving her to judge where she stands in this regard. Challenging June to consider why it is that the Aboriginal Teaching Assistants do not hang around the school and join in the planning, he uses a strategy of indirection. For example, the focus of his question in the next extract implies that she is overgeneralising, but he never needs to make that comment directly, or to accuse her.

JUNE: I'm not sure why they [the TAs] don't wanna stay behind and plan, you know. But most of them aren't literate, like they can't read or write so ...

ROBERT: What do the really literate - this is just a general question - what do you think the really literate people in this community who actually do well at primary school and then go away to high school, what do they end up doing as people?

JUNE: I couldn't answer.

ROBERT: That's okay. There's no reason why you should.

This extract suggests the Robert does not consider that June is ready to engage in reflection but judging from the 'dangerous knowledge' which eventually surfaces, Robert is successful in convincing June of the openness of the conference when he says:

I want to emphasise that from your point of view you are free to talk about anything and we're happy to sit here for an hour or more and discuss issues ... it's truly an open session, this is from my perspective.

The conference is very relaxed. At first the concerns raised by June appear to be purely technical ones, the noise level and what she calls 'waiting time', that is making the pupils hang around without attending to them. Here again Robert demonstrates his competence in beginning with where the student is at, whilst sounding warnings and drawing her attention to underlying principles which amount to commonly accepted folk beliefs about teaching:

JUNE: I'm just ... like the noise level, I keep saying to them, you know, 'Be quiet, be quiet' all the time but like, they'll be quiet for five minutes and then they'll start up again. I mean, is that normal? Like is it ... they can only be quiet for five minutes and then they start...you're always saying to them 'Be quiet, be quiet'. and then I'll stop that and then I would say "be quiet" then if they keep going. I'll let it go for a while a bit more and then....

ROBERT: Well, this is a purely subjective judgment from my, you know, ... I guess, lengthy but very subjective and in a way a limited exposure to lots of classrooms in Aboriginal schools and my responses is that that's not an unusually noisy classroom. I didn't see., you know, I didn't get any negative feeling about the noise level in the classroom. I ... One feeling I had is that a couple of times, you raised your voice to the kids and virtually, you know, spoke pretty loudly, a low yell or a loud speak, I don't know what you were trying to say, my feeling about that is that that's a good tool and that's legitimate to do that but if you

actually do it too much they get used to it and it will just go over their heads, so it's like ... it's like am, ammunition you wanna keep up your sleeves as much as you can because if you.... and I'm not saying you were doing it too much, but if you do do it too much, they will get used to it and the noise level in the class will gradually creep up and they'll eventually not take any notice of it, so it's a little like a special occasion type thing that you have to draw out if they really over the top, that, you know, sort of shock them back into. But now, I.. I, *I can only talk in terms of principles*, and I suppose one of the principles is if the kids are too noisy, either they are very, very involved in what they're doing and they're busily talking to each other, in other words, you really have a high productive noise or that you know the difference between productive noise and destructive noise, useless noise. And if it was useless noise, may be they're not interested in what they are doing. So the challenge comes back to the teacher. So how can I find something that will engage them more? And that's the difference between being good and superb. I mean, what I saw today, I think was good. May be though if you really, if you want to quieten them down, the only way is come up with something that's superb and that's ... I'm not saying ... I mean, I'm not saying that in a critical way at all but kids who are interested are not over-noisy, except that sort of excited noise that you are aware of.

Robert's response is self-deprecating and deferential. He begins with a couple of disclaimers *Well, this is a purely subjective judgement based on only limited exposure to lots of classrooms*; his speech is punctuated with *I guess* and *I suppose*, suggesting that he might be wrong, that he does not have a complete understanding; the implications of what he says are always qualified as in *because if you [do] ... and I'm not saying you were doing it too much*; he speaks of his feelings which might not be reliable as in *one feeling I had ...*; the warnings are gentle and the criticism defused as in *if you do it too much ... they'll eventually take no notice of it*; and there is a considerable amount of hesitancy as in *But now, I ... I, I can only talk in terms of principles* or, later, *the only way is to come up with something that's superb and that's ... I'm not saying ... I mean I'm not saying that in a critical way at but ...* He is at pains to legitimate what June is attempting to accomplish.

When it comes to the issue of waiting time, Robert attempts to set this against the impressive standard of the written work that the children are producing.

And so, in other words, you've got to give him full marks for what he [Ben Cruikshank, the class teacher] has achieved in his own special way and he's got his own way.

Consistent with what he has said elsewhere, he does not see it as the practice teacher's role to reform the classroom. From his point of view,

because he's not hurting ... or kids aren't being hurt or you know, there's not a real moral issue, it's just a matter of style, a matter of how you'd like to do things a bit better.

These remarks inadvertently provide June with the opportunity she has been waiting for.

JUNE: If I say something is it all private like ...

INT: Yes, it's confidential.

JUNE: One thing, like he hits the kids when they don't do what they're told like I've never seen that before and that really shocked me the first, you know for the first couple of days, when he hits the kids, I couldn't get used to that, so I don't know like whether the parents agree with it or not or , you know, that's the way it is but ... I don't know. Hitting kids, I don't. I can't.

Robert's first reaction is to try to suggest ways in which June can clarify the legal position but he then moves on to look at physical punishment as a long standing tradition embedded in the culture of the school. This explanation is based on the continuing separation of school from community and suggests a total denial of the principles of 'two-way' education on the part of the school.

Stephen: There's probably a long standing tradition here that the parents stay there, the school is here, the school does its thing, the parents do their thing and they've learnt not to interfere with each other and so we've got this well-established tradition just continuing and people will accept that. I don't think that just because its a traditionally-oriented school [indistinct] that that's necessarily what the parents want. Most Aboriginal communities that I know of, parents would be incensed by anybody touching their kids. That's the silliest thing you can do.

¹This appears to be the accepted wisdom as expounded by Hamilton (1981) in her ethnographic study of child-rearing in North-Central Arnhem Land where shaking was observed to the most severe form of physical punishment amongst pre-schoolers up to the age of five. (Hamilton, 1981:99).

June herself points to the fact that the TAs are aware of, and appear to condone, what is occurring.

JUNE: Well, it's just like, because we have the TA's in the classroom when he does it, that's , you know, like whether they report back to the parents. Like he does it so... I don't know ...

In his response Robert returns to the theme of separation of school from community, and just as he did with Tracy, suggests ways in which June might reflect on the situation and examine the big picture before taking a moral stand.

ROBERT: Well, I suspect they would put it ... I suspect the whole community knows everything that happens in the school. But I'm saying there's probably a strong tradition established. To me that's an indicator that basically the school is fairly separate from the community. And you know, in the long term, I mean I think there's probably other ways to go about it. It seems to me that the school is trying to do a good job in the classroom. It's not actually ... It doesn't actually believe and it is not trying to actually to look at the bigger picture of Aboriginal education, what is the long term, what's the projection for this school in 20 years' time? What sort of place is this going to be? Is this the sort of place where parents really have strong influence or even control of the school or what? Or is it just, you know, in all the time there's another level to look at Aboriginal Education and my feeling is that this school doesn't wanna get involved in that other level and so that's for you ... something for you to think about. I don't think you can change things in the prac. If people ask you outright, of course you should say what you believe. And I'm not sure what that is. But if you are a teacher in an Aboriginal school, I think in this age, you've got to really think about the big picture there's the political picture, the self-determination picture as well as the classroom picture and I suppose when, you know, you've got to sort out where you take a stand on those sorts of things because I think we're in a new era and we're in an era which, you know , if we take a 20-year view, and I think we should have a 20-year view, you know, that ... that we ought to be a lot more responsive to what the Aboriginal community wants and we ought to be going ... leaning over backwards to find out what that is.

It is not that Robert is incorrect here in what he says, but I believe that we are dealing with a hegemonic tactic of separation which we can see working at another level in the discouragement of pan-Aboriginality within Australia. This tactic is a colonialist device instituted for the perpetuation of the system. By promoting this form of separation, wider, more fundamental issues remain unacknowledged by the community as a whole.

I do not propose to seek a detailed explanation as to why physical punishment was permitted without protests from the parents. However, from an account of the early days of the school written by a former teacher there, it would appear that what we are dealing with here is a colonialist hangover, a way of controlling the local population which has been internalised and accepted by the oppressed themselves (Freire, 1972). Judged from this perspective the problems of noise levels and waiting time now assume a different dimension. What appeared to be purely technical concerns involving classroom management can now be represented as disciplinary strategies for the suppression of the voice of dispossessed peoples in the one case, and a reminder of dependency on the agents of an internal colonialist power in the other.

This first teacher at the school appears to have shared the views of Malinowski, writing some twenty years earlier, for whom punishment and chastisement were absolutely necessary in education. In *The family among the Australian Aborigines*, Malinowski put forward the popularly held view that it was 'impossible to conceive of any serious education without coercive treatment, ... especially at the lower stages of culture' (cited in Hamilton, 1981:80).

It is of course possible that the Aboriginal people at Burarra were able to accept physical punishment for their children as being a necessary and unavoidable part of the 'western' educational system, associated with success in learning the white man's ways, whilst keeping this separate from their own cultural norms and child rearing practices.

Michael J. Christie (personal communication) has observed that lack of protest could result from the perception of political advantage to be gained from remaining quiet. Moreover the fact that Ben was often seen at weekends driving off on fishing trips with

Aboriginal people could also mean that he held their trust and respect. In any event, it calls into question the wide-spread acceptance of Hamilton's thesis.

For June Muir, the violent events she witnessed both within the school and in the wider community, amounted to a loss of innocence and produced feelings of guilt and complicity, particularly as Ben had expressly asked both Tracy and herself not to make any references to his hitting the children in anything they wrote. Added to this, were concerns for her own self-protection, hence her insistence on clarifying the legal position. She looks to the Liaison Lecturer to absolve her from moral responsibility and Robert was at pains to emphasise that she was in no way responsible. Nevertheless, for June there remained an element of guilt by association. She was little more than twenty years old herself and to speak of taking a twenty-year view cannot assuage her immediate concerns and her feelings of repugnance.

June was however made aware that apparently unproblematic means-ends concerns have to be re-examined in terms of practical morality, and that she is not there to make decisions for Aboriginal people. One important moral concern, though, remains submerged and that is the connection between the production of cultural artefacts of high quality, (the superior forms of writing produced by individual children in Ben's classes), and the methods used to achieve these.

We have already seen other indications of the existence of a colonialist hangover in Chapter 22. Attitudes towards community violence also suggested the persistence of a colonialist hangover. Violence was generally considered to be endemic and part of the Aboriginal way of life. On one occasion student-teachers at Burarra watched the systematic beating of a white council employee for offending against Aboriginal law without being able to intervene, but violence, sometimes fueled by alcohol, was not

confined to Burarra. At Miyapunu violence was also common-place. Penny Alsop, whose understandings of life in Aboriginal communities, and whose work as a journalist had made her somewhat more aware than the other students, is saddened by the violence but is able to remain detached.

Well I've survived my second barge night. We did heaps of watching television. That's our euphemism for shutting the door, switching off the light in my room and lying on the floor looking out the louvres to see the "action" in the house next door. There wasn't too much on that night, but the people in this particular house tend to get aggro and have fights when they're sober, it's better than "G.P."
(Journal entry, 10pm, Tuesday 18 September).

I am not asserting any direct link between the tradition of physical punishment meted out in schools and violence within the community, nor am I embracing a essentialist fallacy with regard to any predisposition towards violence on the part of Aboriginal people which is part of the way that the Other has been constructed for so long. Doug Thompson, a former Territory teacher, recalls 'the thud of fists on faces and bodies, the shrieking and the sound of running feet to and from a fight' but saw it in terms of place and the concentration of people in one area. 'The revelation for him was not about the violence of Aborigines, but of all people.' (cited in Nelson, 1989:187)

Exploitation and mistreatment of student-teachers.

Colonialist oppression is frequently associated with the blatant exploitation and mistreatment of disempowered groups. Student-teachers are a marginalised and disempowered group. There are very few instances of blatant exploitation of student-teachers in the stories. Very often student-teachers were welcomed as another pair of hands and all were expected to undertake yard duty or work in the canteen. Even at Piapia

where one of the class teachers was preparing almost full time for the fete, the student-teacher was never overloaded.

At Miyapunu the situation was different. After a comparatively trouble free two and a half weeks, during which time the Liaison Lecturer had been and gone, a three line entry appeared in Penny Alsop's journal suggesting all was not right with the world. The explanation for this outburst of anger?

My carry on yesterday reflects that I'm doing all the Secondary staff's duties: my teacher's, Simone, Dale's and Em's, the vice-principal, which I think stinks but I smile sweetly and fume inside because I'm a student. On Wednesday I did Dale's Tuck Shop duty, which she held me up talking in the classroom, so I was late, it took the whole recess (it usually takes half that) and I was supposed to do staffroom for Emma, so I couldn't and could only do it after school. I was astounded. No teacher *ever* does more than one duty, usually *once* in four weeks, not three in one. Deana keeps saying "Oh, well, you'll know what it's like when you get out." What is this? Do they think I'm some lady of leisure who needs to know what hard work is? ... I'm supposed to be able to channel my energy into teaching, doing polished lessons, with more effort than they usually put in - not doing chores *for* them ... I'm inhibited by heaps of factors they aren't - e.g. I've no keys so I can't get into the rooms to get ready, and they are always late for school, for my lessons which makes organisation very difficult for me.

This extract and the following one testify to the thoughtlessness and disregard with which some student-teachers can be treated during the bush practicum.

My teacher, even though I worked so hard to get all my work done on the weekend so my tasks during the week are lighter, is loading me up with all her dirty work, e.g. worksheets for literacy work next semester - displays of material from last month that are nothing to do with me. I am so pissed off to put it bluntly.

Nothing is done to rectify the situation. Right up until the end, the pressure of unpaid clerical work intensifies.

It's midnight and I've still got another hour's work to do. I am afraid tomorrow will never come. I want nothing more than to get out of here and be back in my own home.

No instances of exploitation are recorded in the stories from the urban phase of the research. In the urban situation it is usually possible to find an alternative placement. This option rarely exists in the bush.

To sum up, the purpose of this chapter has been to show how, as part of the context-of-site, colonialist attitudes find expression during the practicum and how these are dealt with by liaison lecturers. The account reveals how particular disciplinary practices continue to re-appear over time and lends more support to arguments involving a loss of innocence. Although student-teachers may see uncaring and inappropriate responses to Aboriginal children in the urban situation, (Malin, 1990), it is only in the bush context that such behaviour is problematised.

Once again we are able to see how historical antecedents act upon the subjectivities of those involved, penetrate the working of the practicum, and influence its effectiveness. Once again the agents of university are seen as powerless to intervene, rendering the practicum conference generally ineffective in contesting colonialist attitudes. The separation of school and community which Robert Scales refers to continues unabated and the issues are rarely confronted by all those directly involved. The university must be seen as complicit in this. A recent study by Tibodeaux (1995), carried out while a student at the university, has demonstrated how racist discourse, cultures and practices are reproduced unwittingly within the Northern Territory University itself.

CHAPTER 29

UNLEARNING COMPLICITY AND THE LOSS OF INNOCENCE.

As the stories from the bush practicum are told and retold, a number of features emerge which distinguish them in a qualitative way from those obtained in the urban phase of the research. These features include the effects of reality shock and displacement; the ways in which student-teachers come to terms with difference which in some cases necessitates a loss of innocence; and the need to unlearn complicity. At the same time the stories testify to the greater need for solidarity and emotional support required by student-teachers in the bush situation, if the practicum is to be effective.

Reality shock

Reality shock (Gaede, 1978) appears to be more intense in the rural context than in the urban situation. It is accompanied by an absence of familiar markers, a numbing sense of dislocation, a generalised sense of guilt, and a feeling of unreality *like being in the movies*, or being a character in one's own story. The practicum experience constitutes a real-isation, a coming to grips with reality, which can cause perturbation and consternation.

Beverley Hodges at Miyapunu gives us a good insight into the effects of reality shock.

BEV: Well, I went into the situation of being not having any preconceived ideas at all and actually the thinking that ... my first ... when we were flying over Miyapunu, when we came down I suddenly thought, oh God, this is the place, like being in the movies, then it suddenly dawned on me that I was going to somewhere that was extremely ... totally different than anything. I'd spoken to people and I'd spoken to Aboriginal people before going as well and still, the feeling was I so different and then after that it was a real whirlwind because we had to go to the council and do the formal, sort of introduction and there was a staff meeting on that afternoon, so we were guiding us around, it was sort of really fast and I remember thinking that I could sense a bit of ... slight optimism because

it was, very much what we were doing, was formality and that's all it was and these people didn't really have much of a choice as to our coming. May be I don't know what context that was in, I mean 'cause I think that student teachers need that kind of experience so I can't really I suppose comment. And next minute, I was in the classroom and we went through the art building Penny went and there were just colours everywhere, (indecipherable). And the principal, the vice principal, I suppose he was (indecipherable) I suppose he was giving the impression of very sort of traditional and again ... that's an absolute stereotype and I knew it. I tried to make ... but not let that colour my feelings towards him and the school.²

Coming to terms with difference

Each student-teacher in this phase of the investigation was forced to come to terms with difference in their own way. It is this coming to terms with difference which for some amounts to a loss of innocence, of naivety, of idealism. Coming to terms with difference is a highly charged emotional experience after years of psychological repression.

Following her earlier reality shock, Beverley Hodges is forced to contemplate her own unwitting complicity as a non-Aboriginal person when she attends a School Council meeting, at which, as a representative of her social and cultural group, she discovers what it is like to be treated as an outsider and a member of a minority group.³

She experiences the feeling of hopelessness that results from not knowing how things work in a particular culture and not knowing the meanings of the cultural signs and symbols.

BEV: ... a really interesting situation happened to me and I was terrified but there was a school council meeting that afternoon ... Now I went back to the room

²This account brings to mind the same sense of disorientation that Bhabha (1994) identifies when he speaks of living 'on the borderlines of the present':

The movement of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion (p1).

³Terry Wolverton (1983) has an interesting essay on 'Unlearning complicity' in which she shows how groups of white women unlearn the lie of white racism.

where we've been given sort of to sleep, because I was so tired and I got up and (indecipherable) programmes, I really didn't know where to go, Friday afternoon and I saw this group of people sitting up in the staff room and it looked like a staff meeting or some kind of a meeting, that I obviously wasn't supposed to be a part of, so what I did to get Cathy's attention, or just let her know that I was there and so I sort of walked up and headed at the table and then I said 'Oh, God, what would I do?' you know, you know when you're sort of in a pretty hopeless situation because you don't know how things work and I didn't really know what's going on, what's supposed to be the meaning of all that, so I walked around and sat down next to somebody who was on sort (indecipherable) and time ... I didn't know what the time so I had to find out well ... and somebody, a fellow called Jack, speaking in (indecipherable) he was saying, I found out later he was saying that he was sick of people coming into the community. He didn't know why they were coming. They never stayed long. They just come and go and I was walking up (indecipherable). They've never seen this person, they don't know what she's doing here and she'll be gone tomorrow and he was going off like this and I sort of ... I could sense something because he also turned to the principal and blew him off, you , you don't do this and you don't that , and I sort of ... (indecipherable) and asked him to repeat, what have I to say? He said you don't listen ...

So then I went off with Cathy and she told me all about it. I immediately interpreted this as as Oh, God, this is really big difference, down there there's Aboriginal people and they are not happy... And I might be a typical white person who just marches in, you know, even ... suddenly I felt audacious even going up to the meeting when I ... I did it ... my manner was it was not at all aggressive. I was completely ... over sort of acting like ...

Beverley accepts that there was nothing personal in this attack:

No, I had to realise that and I did realise. I also found that ... I mean I found that really interesting because I thought to myself, right this is great, these big people are saying straight out what they don't like and they are laying down the law, *and that makes the difference*, then I thought to myself, God, *I've never ever in my life been in a situation like that. somebody else is making the law and I'm having to abide by that law. I mean of course, that happens everyday but the law that I live under is sort of integrated into my way of teaching ... You know, I mean, suddenly I realised that I was a minority member.*

Beverley is being confronted here with the realisation of difference and what it feels like to be made to feel Other. This is the point at which she begins unlearning her complicity in acquiescing in the making of law for others. The self-critical, reflexive process enables her to understand what is happening. The account supports Bhabha's assertion that 'the affective experience of social marginality ... transforms our critical strategies' (Bhabha, 1994:172).

Moreover, Beverley reaches beyond language to the emotional and the intimate, and a whole new appreciation of what it means to be agentic, to be subject. In her recounting of the her experiences we can detect echoes of:

a text of pulsational incidents, the language lined with flesh, a text where we can hear the grain of the throat ... a whole carnal stereophony: the articulation of the tongue, not the meaning of the language (Bhabha, 1994:180).

The loss of innocence

Students undertaking the practicum in the urban situation are relatively protected from the social problems which affect Aboriginal communities. In the urban situation it is rare to find the containers used for petrol sniffing set down in the doorway of the classroom when you arrive at school in the morning and even rarer to listen to the clanking of the tins and smell the petrol fumes wafting into your bedroom through the louvres. The nature of the day to day interaction with children and their communities is different.

Before Beverley can be effective she needs to discover what her secure, white, middle-class world has denied her. Her experiences at Miyapunu start her off on a voyage of self-discovery, of preparation for the world ahead. She has to discover her vulnerability and come to terms with her sensitivity if she is ever to engage in transformative action. In this excerpt she tells of a night of terror as petrol sniffers are active outside her window.

Yeah. because I have this brain, have this mind, I am very sensitive and also take things far too personally. I have to stop and I'm aware of it. And also I know, it's just self-indulgence really ... but I was obsessed with the idea that the kids didn't like me for some reason they didn't like me, ... and all I've read ... I really I didn't take it into account and when I was asleep (indecipherable) there was petrol... I could hear and smell petrol it's a very distinctive smell, outside my window, and I realised oh, God, they just decided they want us out, and I was relating this back to the council experience, and I thought that the council ... (indecipherable) and so I thought, oh God, they just wanna do away with us completely and I was terrified and that was purely because I thought that some people didn't like me. I kept

thinking, what have *I* done, I haven't done anything, and I was remembering the class and how I did single out one child (indecipherable) I really lost my cool with one child but I didn't speak to him in front of the whole class, I spoke to him at his level, just to him

... when I think back on it, how pathetic really that I could become ... I was so displaced at that particular point and time I felt very displaced and I felt totally vulnerable and I can now look back and even a couple of days later, I could look back and say well, my light, bad light (indecipherable) so there was a dark area for people to siphon petrol out of a big container, and ...

INT: Which is what they were doing.

BEV: Exactly what they were doing, and when we made, sort of shook the window and said what do you do, what do you want, they totally ignored us, and I thought oh, they really don't care, they don't care, because we'll never speak again, you know, perhaps I had watched too many horror movies, it was really terrible but yeah, it really was ... it leaves me very little control over my job and I felt very insecure for that.

This excerpt has something of the quality of what Bhabha (1994:9) has called 'unhomely lives' in which 'unhomeliness captures something of the estrangement that is part of cross-cultural initiations'. As the personal and the private spill over into the public, pedagogical world of performance, Beverley 'relates the traumatic ambivalences of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunctions of political existence' (Bhabha, 1994:11).

The excerpt also reveals a gradual process of decentring in which self-concerns are laid aside. Beverley herself is aware of this when she mentions self-indulgence. The pronouns underlined and placed in italics in the transcript were heavily emphasised. Guilt-ridden and fearful, she generalises to all the whites (on the community? in the house?) revealing her hidden fears: 'they want us out', 'they just want to do away with us completely'. The excerpt once again reveals the importance of place. Things are literally taking 'place' away from her but fortunately Beverley recognises that she was 'dis-placed', but not 'mis-placed'.

The provision of emotional support

Beverley was fortunate to receive crucial emotional support from two sources: her Liaison Lecturer, Rose Dawson, and the other student-teacher, Penny Alsop. To provide emotional support, Rose had to step outside of her role as Liaison Lecturer.

BEV: I knew Rose before from lectures. I was very pleased to see her for a start, although she has this role and though (indecipherable) Rose and I found we could remove ourselves from those roles and that ended up ... (indecipherable), because I really, after in the second week when I was there, I didn't know what was going on, I mean I really believe that I suffered a kind of amnesia. My memory went, I was just ... I was just holding this role and I was doing it quite really well according to Rose and inside I was in complete turmoil and I was panicking and so I almost had to insist that she leave that role and help me and she did and she also wrote an extremely detailed and incredibly perceptive report, being able to take into account ... (indecipherable) and she knew me and she is really perceptive, I found and so looked at the comments were really personal to me in that situation.

The empathy, understanding and perceptiveness of her Liaison Lecturer helped Beverley towards a self-reflexive understanding of her predicament. Beverley is given the opportunity to work things through by someone who 'knows', in a way 'beyond the sentence' as Bhabha would have it. She comes to see that the conflict and turmoil are part of the process of perturbation. At the same time she is beginning to question the presence of non-Aboriginal teachers in such situations.

BEV: No. we did talk in depth about it and the role of the school, we talked about the role of the school and the community because I really had a question. And that was the other thing I found it very difficult to even to teach because I was questioning what I was doing and that was really difficult because those teachers, they all come to decisions they made and they could accept what they doing and they knew why. And Cathy knew why too, but I didn't know why and that... and I really needed someone like Rose to talk to rather than another teacher.

INT: So you could work it through yourself?

BEV: Yes, because she *knows*. She *knows* I'm at that level, where I have to work it through and I have seen that yes, its a good thing and I have read things that it's not good, good is not even the right word, all the pros and cons and weighing up and because Penny and I discussed that in depth and Penny was reading

Whitefella School [Folds, 1977, a recommended text for the socio-cultural unit at NTU] at the time, I mean Rose knows so much more about context that a book like that is written in because she was able to say well, you haven't spent much time in certain communities, or just to clarify that... The combination of ... for me, anyway, personally, Penny and Rose, particularly was extremely reassuring and very positive.

With the assistance of both Rose and Penny, Beverley is able to rupture the physical and emotional ties that protect her from naked self-exposure and engage in 'radical self-interrogation'. In this process dependence on the Other and independence, the desire for self-autonomy are not opposed, but are joined (McNay, 1992:97-8).

Issues related to identity, which are generally deemed to be 'private' are politicised and opened up as sites of transformation. (*ibid*:99)

CHAPTER 30

RESISTING THE DISCOURSE OF IMPOVERISHMENT

The predominant discourse in which the bush practicum takes place is one of impoverishment. This discourse emerges from a sense of hopelessness and disillusionment, culminating in defeat, resignation and a sense of failure. In its most extreme form it approaches nihilism (Osborne, 1994). This chapter reveals how some student-teachers are caught up in and contribute to a discourse of impoverishment and despair and how one is helped to resist it.

The complete and utter despair felt by some teachers on Aboriginal communities has been captured by Cameron (1992) in his *Beginner's Tale*, a short but riveting account of Bill, a first year out student, told largely in Bill's own words. Bill experiences the same sense of cultural and environmental dislocation as Beverley Hodges, and in his first weeks is also beset with a feeling of complete helplessness, wanting to run away but being unable to. Even the feel and smell of the community scares him. There is nothing that he is used to and depression sets in, accompanied by a lack of motivation and slackness. He can obtain no emotional support from those around him and is scared to talk to his principal who is 'under just as much pressure' as he is. Everything is reduced to a question of sheer physical survival.

The following extracts from Bill's journal were written after three terms at the school and reveal how a generalised discourse of despair comes into being.

You know what I feel like at the moment? Not being here. I don't want to be here: in actual fact, I don't want to be alive. ... I'm not enjoying my life. I feel sick. I

don't think anything I'm doing is right. Oh, what is it? How do you feel? When you feel this bad you don't want to be on earth. I'm extremely f***** depressed.

I just really, really don't want any more. I've stopped preparing lessons. I don't think I'm cut out to teach in an Aboriginal school. May be I'm just not cut out to teach. I just can't f***** hack it at the moment. I'm getting worn out: I feel I just can't.

What else? I want to ring up someone. I need some support and some comforting. 'Comfort thyself, Billy boy'. Say, 'ah the world is lovely'. Look on the positive side of things. Motivation: f***, it's easier said than done, isn't it? get up and smile in the morning! Get off and be a happy face - have the kids sit up and swear at you. I don't particularly need it or want it at the moment, I'm really f***** tired but I can't go to sleep until late. (Cameron. 1992:120)

Although none of the student-teachers in the second phase of the investigation had their self-confidence and self-esteem stripped from them in this way, and although none of their Field Supervisors spoke with such bitter cynicism and disillusionment, these are the lived experiences which give rise to the discourse of despair.

Embedded in this discourse of impoverishment are racially motivated attitudes and beliefs. There is a widespread belief amongst teachers in the Northern Territory that non-Aboriginal teachers who can't teach effectively elsewhere are posted to schools in Aboriginal communities. *Beginner's Tale* suggests one way in which such a belief is propagated. Commenting on a successful meeting with his probationary panel after his first ten weeks of teaching, Bill says somewhat cynically:

My personal point of view is that if you go out to a school like that and you do not break the kids' arms and you have them turning up each day, and you don't go around unshaven and drunk or something during the day, and attempt to teach the kids, then you're okay.

This belief is part of the folk belief of student-teachers which the university and the Department have done little to rectify. Indeed, some student-teachers believe it is much easier to get through the bush practicum than the urban counterpart because standards of supervision are not so demanding. The discriminatory belief that Aboriginal children do

not need such experienced and competent practioners as white children do is also widespread.

At Jikilijipa, as Wayne observes, there is a great deal of lip service to Aboriginal aspirations: people are 'saying these things but it's not really happening. They have given up trying to get things changed'. The mood is summed up well by Sheila Cunningham at Piapia who tells Owen that she has got no intention of catching hepatitis and

getting burnt out like so many non-Aboriginal teachers who try to live like Aboriginal people ... I know some outstanding teachers in Aboriginal communities and they've become laid back in the same way as Aboriginal people. They have adopted a particular mind set: Don't burn yourself out.

The responsibility is placed back upon Aboriginal people who are seen as impoverished and lacking motivation. As Wayne says,

Motivation on the part of Aboriginal people! The motivation's not there. They don't seem to want to badly enough. Until they are ready to accept the concept, nothing's going to happen.

Jikilijipa was seen as 'enjoying' a fairly relaxed atmosphere. Wayne frequently draws attention in his journal to the 'Who cares!' attitude:

Everything goes very slowly for most of the teachers and they give the appearance that there is no stress, no worries at all. Everything is pretty casual. Standards are pretty low. There is little unity amongst the staff. Everyone seems to be doing their own thing.

Expectancies amongst the non-Aboriginal staff were said to be very low. 'The European teachers,' Wayne wrote in his Journal, 'seem not to place too much emphasis on the children's education. Only two out of twenty-one are up to the expected standard. The rest

live in a chaotic situation: barking at print, memorisation of sentences; guessing; cannot regroup numbers... Leo has *given up hope* of something reasonable'.

Wayne expands on this theme in the interview:

WAYNE: Some teachers have views like 'who cares!' or 'I can't do much' or some others would say, 'oh well, we can only do so much, we've done our share, if they don't learn, that's it.' So they are not looking for ways to approach those students and help them to get out of where they are and I think Aboriginal education is a bit behind in the school. I mean they should do something to improve their standards, they could do something better than that.

INT: So it's just a general acceptance, that things can't be changed all that much?

WAYNE: Not all of them. Not all of them. There are some who believe that, there's a lot of others who don't. As I said the general view that I have is that some, you know, most of them have this attitude [INT: Right] Take it easy, slow down, cruise along and you can't change them. Some others said well, that's not teaching stuff, that one, but that person who's in the school said they're not bright, 'they ain't bright so don't work yourself out.' [A view shared by the principal as will become apparent later]. So that was his advice and the community also sees the same thing. Someone is blaming it on the religion. There's too much emphasis on the religion and not so much emphasis on the actual work. Somebody said, no homework ... but I don't agree with that. I mean they wouldn't be able to cope with that at home because of their home background. But that's another view coming from the community.

INT: But when you say 'community', meaning the Aboriginal community, particularly, or some of the other non-Aboriginal community?

WAYNE: No, no, I'm referring to non-Aboriginal people.

INT: Right.

WAYNE: Aboriginals are well... they care about their school, they want their children to learn but they don't do much at home, I think to help them.

The situation is made worse because of the lack of any corporate spirit or school ethos amongst the staff. Only two or three of the staff mix together: 'The rest? Recess time they go home. lunch time they go home.'

Hints begin to emerge that the principal, whom Wayne finds undemonstrative, uncommunicative and difficult to approach, is not playing a traditional leadership role, although Wayne finds excuses for him, another characteristic of the discourse of impoverishment, because how can a teacher be blamed or held accountable under such impossible circumstances! In a discussion of school climate and personality, I asked Wayne about the style of administration adopted by the principal.

WAYNE: Ah, that's interesting, yeah. Basically he seems to be a very quiet person and as a principal I would expect him to be more ... to force more power and so that he's got more power on things and he hasn't shown much of it to me or to the others. Sometimes, he doesn't even say good morning, so is that... well, I don't know whether its personality, his personality is quite different, others I assumed, he seems to get along well with local people, he works at the disco every Friday and he's a D.J., and he's doing that, one incident, I remember, at the disco, there was fight, two small Aboriginal kids were having a fight, one of them had a blackeye and all getting really wild, I sort of jumped up to go and, you know, stop them because things were getting worse, and he looked at me and I realised that he had something to say so I went up to him sort of find to stop those kids and he said "you stay out of fights let them sort out ...and I said they're school kids, we are teachers, and this is a school's disco'. So this is their attitude or his attitude, he says leave them do their own thing. For the first time, we talked. Yesterday, Friday, yeah, that's right, yesterday, that was the first time, I came up to approach him because I was a bit concerned, I want to see how he was like. So I went next to him and said "(indecipherable) I tried to make it up with himself, and asked him his staff members, how many we are and all those details which I knew and he offered himself at the (indecipherable) he said one thing that these kids, 'they aren't bright again, we can't teach them'.

Wayne sees a lack of commitment to professional development as being partly responsible for the poor academic performance at Jikilijipa.

Well, should I make a strong comment? Some of the teachers are not taking care of their professional development.

They stay away. They got out of the university and well, I won't mention who it was, but one teacher said, "well, that suits me because I don't have to do homework," so he prefers places like xxxxx, or whatever and I bet that teacher wouldn't be able to cope in an urban school, no way.

The discourse of impoverishment also characterises the student conference as can be seen when we start to examine the nature of the advice provided and the content of the conference itself when pedagogical theories are discussed.

The discourse of impoverishment takes many forms. Even those student-teachers coming from a socially critical perspective employ the discourse of impoverishment which accompanies bourgeois thinking on education. Penny Alsop's journal is revealing in this regard. Penny's commitment to social action and social justice cannot be doubted, yet a book sale at the school library at Miyapunu gave rise to the following reflections.

I grabbed a few things, Dylan Thomas' first book of poetry, Thomas Hardy, and I found F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The beautiful and the damned*. All these books, huge piles, lots of paperback thrillers but heaps of all-time great classics, no-one reads and no-one will ever use. Inside *The beautiful and the damned* there was a dedication. 'Donated to ----- School' (it used to be called this) by John Someone, 1972. I couldn't help thinking in a very ethnocentric manner, how sad it was that no pupil of the school will ever in all likelihood, read such literature and I felt immensely sad to think of the man twenty years ago who didn't realise that the children from here would, despite all their efforts, seldom pass Year 3/4 in educational achievement and should they reach high school this would be a marvellous thing.

I felt immensely saddened that none of the children would ever read F. Scott Fitzgerald's perceptive and ironic portrait of the jazz age and they'd never relish the buzz and glow of descriptions of a heady era.

Significantly Penny recognises she is giving way to ethnocentrism. Her remarks are tinged with a romanticised, nostalgic regret. Although she understands the unsuitability and inappropriateness of these classic texts, she regrets that she cannot share the bourgeois world that she considers of value.

Assisting student-teachers to cope

How do Liaison Lecturers assist student-teachers to cope in an atmosphere of defeat, resignation and fatalism? How are some student-teachers able to remain unaffected by it?

How do they learn to resist these discursive practices and create a discourse of empowerment? For the purposes of this section, I shall return to the conference between Robert Scales and Wayne Cavallero at Jikilijipa.

One of the few extended discussions in the whole of the practicum text which deals with a particular pedagogical theory involves Whole Language. Whole Language, as the following extracts demonstrate, is notoriously difficult to delineate. It is frequently equated with the process approach or 'natural' language learning (Goodman, 1986). As Altwerger, Edelsky and Flores (1987) demonstrate the confusion surrounding Whole Language stems from the holistic nature of language and the relationship of the parts within it; the relationship of reading and writing to speaking and listening; the part which a 'whole word' approach plays in the teaching of reading; the need to embrace the teaching of language skills in context; the eclecticism which surrounds the theory; and the incorporation of aspects of the Language Experience Approach such as negotiated text and scribing.

As part of his second year Language Arts Curriculum unit Wayne will have examined the ideologies underlying genre-based and process writing approaches and will have attempted to decide whether they are compatible or incommensurable. The discussion will have considered progressivist views of education based on the uniqueness of the individual child, creativity and the need for choice on the one hand and the collective, interdependent, social construction of knowledge on the other (Gilbert, 1989). Some discussion will have taken place about whether the process approach in general represents what occurs in natural language learning in the home and community and whether the approach is suitable for adoption in a Second Language classroom. Modelling,

scaffolding, and negotiation of meaning will have been examined in detail using transcripts of parent-child interaction.

Wayne's view of Whole Language appears to be based on a vague, nebulous, unsubstantiated theory of 'natural' language learning. Some writers see this as the extreme, or strong, form of 'natural' language learning, learning by osmosis, absorption 'through the pores of the skin'. However, to his puzzlement, Wayne finds that a Whole Language approach doesn't appear to work/have worked with the Grade 6 children in the class, although he claims it has worked with the Year 7s. Why this should be never becomes apparent but it is quite clear that Wayne's experience should cause us to re-examine Goodman's claim that 'Whole Language programs get it together: the language, the culture, the community, the learner, the Teacher' (Goodman, 1986:8).

At no time does a negotiated definition of Whole Language emerge, although Robert attempts to achieve this at one point. None of the theories Wayne has studied prior to the practicum appear to have been of any assistance, particularly theories of motivation based on pupils' interests. Nothing he has studied helps him to get started in this situation and the possibility arises that Wayne may be rejecting the approach for the wrong reasons or simply using a buzz term without understanding it.

Of particular interest here, though, is how the Liaison Lecturer supports Wayne through his intellectual confusion as he, Wayne, constructs new knowledge for himself, and in the process assists him to resist the discourse of impoverishment without drawing direct attention to it.

We know from the work of Cummins (1986) on empowering minority learners that where people feel disempowered, lack full self-autonomy, or are victimised by an imposed and

oppressive colonialist system, one of the only ways to resist is to reject what the system has to offer. Penny's post-primary students at Wampaka, for instance, preferred Kriol and resist 'having to learn all this 'White man's shit' [i.e. English].

Learned disabilities are pedagogically induced and the Grade 6 students have clearly been disabled by their school experience. Wayne looks for answers in language teaching methodology rather than examining the effects of social, cultural and historical factors which contribute to the methodology adopted. Robert attempts to get him to examine these factors and in so doing resist the discourse of impoverishment which emerges.

Wayne assumes that the school as a whole has been employing Whole Language techniques all along. There is no evidence of this except that the extreme form of whole language teaching might become the default position if successive members of staff have given up actually trying to teach the students anything.

Wayne cannot see anything to build on. The Whole Language theory of natural language learning cannot be expected to work with the Grade 6 students in this class as this extract demonstrates:

WAYNE: And up to now, that's why, I haven't got a text programme for year 6 because most of these trial and error were year 7's and more advanced and I tune in more to their level. They've got something that I can build on. The year 6's haven't got anything. And I mean it anything, blank page, what you saw today is what their level is and it's not perhaps wasn't just the afternoon made them not to write, it's their level of ability, which means they don't have any writing at all or any reading skills and that's where I'm concerned about and I'm trying to work out methods that I should develop to help those students at least to fire a basic skill to learn how to read and to learn how to write. At least ten lines of writing and I wish I had more time to work with them.

A ghostly reminder of Wayne's predicament is heard in the story of Martha, a reading specialist in an inner-city elementary school in the United States (Jalongo and Isenberg, 1995:96).

... You can't possibly know what it's like to be teaching here. These children can't learn. Their parents aren't home, they come to school hungry and dirty, they're really not interested in school. I'm tired of constantly thinking of ways to motivate them. I've come to believe they are just not smart. Whole language doesn't work with these students, nothing does - nothing ... these children cannot learn. I'm convinced.

At this point Robert begins to explore with Wayne the ways he might fire up this basic skill, or 'reach' the children and find ways to motivate them. Wayne starts to call into question certain related pedagogical practices which are advocated by some writers on Aboriginal teaching and learning styles.

ROBERT: Yes. Well, what lines are you think are you thinking of going along now in reaching those kids.

WAYNE: At this stage, it's mainly getting them to ... for reading, as I was saying to Mike, I shall have to get them to focus more on the words, when I tell them to look inside there, they've got to look inside the book and not outside, that's one of the things we've got to do because they remember what they hear. And instead of reading they sort of look up there and repeat the words, so I've got to get them focus into the print more because the whole language learning doesn't seem to work with those children. Again it won't be 100% [...]

ROBERT: The whole ...

WAYNE: The whole language ...

ROBERT: Explain what you mean by that.

WAYNE: Whole language , well when I say whole language, I mean the way I see, it's when you're hoping the children will pick on the way the words they learn through reading, although those children haven't been reading for so many years and they have been following others as they were reading, they still haven't picked up the skills to get the ... to read the word, so they don't have word attack skills and they haven't picked those things in a natural way, so what we've got to do is to give them those skills, give them some ways to attack the words, the ways to read the words and well, the whole language learning approach works with year 7's 100%, but not with year 6's.

ROBERT: Well, the reason I asked what you mean by the whole language is that ... you know, that can mean a whole lot of different things,

WAYNE: Yeah, was it clear, I explained it?

Although the explanation is anything but clear, Robert attempts to engage Wayne in thinking out what his approach might involve. Robert's major concern is that the pupils will not respond to the approach Wayne suggests. When Robert mentions 'interests', Wayne immediately identifies this with maintaining happiness at all costs.

ROBERT: Yes. but I'm no expert in all this. But the thought that comes to mind is that what you just suggested was sort of starting to work on smaller chunks of language ...

WAYNE: That's right.

ROBERT: You gonna depend on a lot of discipline to actually make the kids do that. So you're falling back on discipline rather than interest.

WAYNE: But again they are not picking anything. They are not learning anything. And in 6 years of schools and they still haven't learned how to read and how to learn how to write. so if you try to make them happy all the time, they're not gonna learn.

ROBERT: No, I'm not saying try to keep them happy. Have you talked this out in detail with Leo?

WAYNE: Yes, and he agrees with me.

This agreement should not surprise us for we have already seen that Leo retains a sneaking regard for the days when knowledge was beaten into students. Still searching for ways to help Wayne, Robert, like Owen Field in a different context, falls back on the class teacher, but in view of the dyadic solidarity which has been built up this avenue yields nothing. For Robert, language learning is a purposeful social activity and, remembering the ability of the Year 7 group, he suggests a form of peer tutoring.

ROBERT: Had any ... thinking about putting the strong kids with the weak kids and sort of lots of big book reading where the weak are being carried along by the strong?

WAYNE: Yes, I'm doing that. This one I'm doing, I'm using year 7's to teach year 6's. So I forget about the year 7's work for some sessions and I switch it in another slot, time slots, you know. take them out and I get them with the year 6's and that seems to go on, you know, fairly well but still the students are sort of try to follow others, what others are saying around them. Pick words or they are not reading. They are not interested in what they are doing. That's what I found and I asked one student, I don't know if ... Mike noticed that. I asked one student why aren't you writing? 'I don't like writing.' And another student that I recall said 'I don't like reading.' They don't seem to like to learn. They only like to watch videos.

INT: Perhaps they don't know what reading and writing is?

WAYNE: No, they don't.

INT: How does it go when they are reading along with the strong students? Do they enjoy the content?

WAYNE: They were barking at the print, it's like barking .. the print, they sort of follow the other ones, what the other is saying and sometimes one comes up with the wrong guess, the other one say it with the wrong guess, you know, you can understand it they are not reading , just following the others and if the good readers go wrong, all the rest go wrong, *that's where you start laughing but, you know you stop yourself laughing.*

The poverty of the concepts which drive so much primary education such as 'natural learning', 'activity-based learning' and 'children's interests' are revealed in this exchange. The advice, though well-meant and delivered with compassion and concern, is threadbare. Simplistic repetitive chants, the learning of the story of by heart, the over-reliance on illustrations, all result in textual meaning being severely impoverished. The situation is compounded because of the widespread belief that Aboriginal children learn through prolonged observation and imitation involving social consensus.

At the same time, the simplistic notion that parent-child interaction patterns which characterise middle class homes can be automatically transferred to the learning of reading by Aboriginal children in a different cultural context is singularly unhelpful. Modelling, negotiation, error correction, and the search for meaning which characterise the acquisition of oral language and early literacy in western, book orientated societies,

cannot simply be applied wholesale to different cultural environments (Gee, 1990; Heath, 1982).

To allow the present situation to maintain whereby student-teachers operate with such misguided and restricted notions of literacy teaching merely compounds discriminatory racism. Aboriginal students stand condemned for their own preferred learning styles. Resistance is denied them. They play into the hands of their critics. Wayne understands the seriousness of this situation: *that's where you start laughing but, you know, you stop yourself laughing*. Aboriginal people need to be able to challenge the neutrality of the stories they read. They cannot remain 'outside'. The exclusionary orientation of teachers towards minority communities and the transmission models of teaching which accompany it, inhibit students from active participation in learning.

ROBERT: Have you gone as far as learning one of those stories by heart? Have the kids actually gone to the point where they know them ...

WAYNE: Yes, we've been doing one page two weeks now, one single page reading, they don't know how to read it. Some of them memorise, yeah, they've learned outside, you know, they know all the story they can tell it me, I bet.

ROBERT: Is Leo convinced that ... or even those Petros and Walter, [the Teaching Assistants] is it? What do they say about the interest of the story? Interest level of it? Have they got any opinions about the story?

WAYNE: They haven't got any opinions on any matters that have to do with ... what is happening in the classroom. They sort of ... I don't know they stay outside. As I said Petros is doing something, he's doing some good work his way, but again they are not very much into discussing things and analyse why things happen, saying you know, what is good and what is not good for the kids.. they see what can we do to keep them happy or busy. and that's not the way it should be I think if we really want them to learn something.

ROBERT: I got not quick solutions, I just ... I mean... I think in situations like that you've got to try to fall back on the principles that you have, and practice trial and error on the principles and ...

WAYNE: That's what I do.

ROBERT: ... and the principles say that there has to be a meaning line that grabs the kids attention and that's what stops them barking at print, if they can hook into the meaning. You just said ...

WAYNE: That's right. That's why we charge all those Aboriginal stories. I'm doing the PeeWee stories, based on Aboriginal lifestyles and they've been written specifically for Aboriginal schools, I think, I'm not sure, I might be wrong but the contents are about Aboriginal life, rainmaker, how he made the rain, or the goanna, how the goanna and the lizard got their lines on their backs.

INT: How do you know that they are interesting topics to them?

WAYNE: Well, because it's part of them and I assumed that something that you know is something that live with, you're interested in, you expected more than something else, now if I talk about markets or something the theme will say, it's not something that they are very familiar with, particularly these kids here. It could be boring to them or if something they don't understand, yeah, yeah, it should be boring. They might understand it than I thought.

The answers to the problems of literacy acquisition lie in the Aboriginal community and Robert tries to steer Wayne in that direction. This is the first step in getting Wayne to interrupt the discourse of impoverishment. As Nakata (1995:18) has written in connection with Torres Strait Islanders, English literacy enables them 'to guard against the deprecations of their culture ... It is a political tool for building a "big picture"'.

ROBERT: Well, okay, I guess in your situation, something I'd be trying to do would be to find who is the ... has the reputation in that other school as the best, the cleverest person in the area in teaching reading and writing? You got a chance in a big school like that, I'm not saying that these people aren't ... I'm just saying that if I'm in a corner like you are now, how are you gonna capture these kids interest because I don't think they gonna learn without some interest being sparked off, we know that's not easy, there's a chance that somewhere in these two schools, let's say the two schools, there's one super gifted teacher who has somehow got into the skin of some Aboriginal people and the kids ... and they have clued into how to capture their interest. I'll be trying to find out if there is such a teacher and talking to that person. They could come up with something quite helpful.

Wayne finds it hard to accept that he might find answers in 'that other school', the girls' school. The dynamism, initiative and socially critical position adopted by the girls' school stand in direct contrast to the general atmosphere of defeat and fatalism which surrounded the boys' school.

PART 6**NEW DIRECTIONS**

CHAPTER 31

IMPROVING TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Having established the generally low level of effectiveness of the practicum conference as evidence by the pronounced dissatisfaction expressed by some student-teachers, this study highlights the anachronistic and unproductive nature of supervisory practice and calls into question the suitability of the clinical model. It reveals the unpreparedness of those entrusted with carrying out supervision, and suggests a need to reshape the practicum experience and rewrite the practicum text by removing the supervisory connection and preparing practising teachers as teacher educators working collaboratively with university staff.

Although any understandings must, of necessity, be partial, hesitant, and temporary, the stories obtained point to possible ways of achieving improved outcomes and directions in Teacher Education in the Northern Territory. This final chapter returns to the concept of an eco-logic and examines what it means to be a teacher educator in a postmodern world, suggests alternatives to the traditional practicum by moving towards Field-Based Teacher Education, presents the proposals adopted by the Faculty for practical action, and suggests ways in which future research into the practicum might be undertaken.

Substantiating the eco-logical approach

This thesis lends support to an eco-logical approach to research and reveals the vast, complex, interweaving network of living interconnection that make up the practicum. The stories reveal the multiple relationships that comprise the practicum text, and the powerful forces which come together in the construction of the student-teacher. An eco-

logical approach provides for alternative ways of knowing and allows us to capture the fluidity and mobility of the practicum text. Coupled with a pragmatic approach it permits an understanding of the multi-formulative and multi-consequential nature of talk, talk which does not produce the formulations and consequences intended, and which reveals multiple lines of association and causation.

The stories suggest that the presence of invariant, easily identifiable principles, predictable patterns of human interaction, and sequential models of linear development for undertaking supervision cannot be substantiated. By descending into the swampy lowlands, we have revealed the discomforting untidiness, unwieldiness and awkwardness of complexity, which testifies to the centrality of the *bios*.

This thesis demonstrates the need to attend to the subjectivities of the participants and the conflicting attitudes, beliefs, interests, purposes, desires and values which are only partially realised or understood. It moves us beyond language to the sentient world of anger, love, disgust, hope, fear, despair, jealousy, joy, anguish, and pain. We become immersed in a murky, incoherent, interior world of hints, shadows, and unfamiliar sounds, in which knowledge is truly embodied.

The teacher educator in a postmodernist world

In the current political climate in Australia with the emergence of neo-rightists such as Pauline Hanson opposed to cultural pluralism and fostering racial intolerance, and the reaction of pastoralists and the mining conglomerates to the recent High Court Wik decision regarding the co-existence of native title with pastoral leases, it is more important than ever that teacher education be seen as a form of *phronesis* or moral praxis. For this reason, we need to problematise the practicum and theorise teacher education in

terms of the changing nature of community, raising the consciousness of those involved and challenging their reliance on comfortable, self-serving, explanations.

The relativism, anti-foundationalism and anti-representationalism which characterise the postmodern world do not imply that teacher educators should take up a vacuous, non-interventionist position. The move away from publicly-funded state education towards the privatisation of schools heralded by the current federal coalition government; the declining commitment to the democratisation of education associated with the continuing cutbacks to Higher Education funding; the promotion of individualism and privatism; the emphasis on managerialism and technocratic rationalism; and the emergence of globalisation and the corporate state, together with the general disillusionment with the political process, all suggest that teacher educators have a moral duty to intervene.

The two cultures

The research suggests that teacher education as presently constituted suffers from the perpetuation of status differentials based on power/knowledge; an outmoded division of labour which views theory as the province of the university, and practical, experiential knowledge as residing in the schools; and unproductive restrictive practices whereby, far from opening up the practicum to possibility, student-teachers remain prisoners of a closed curriculum of reproduction in which questions of authority and expertise are not fully addressed, and there is little evidence of genuinely collaborative practice. This separatism leads to the perpetuation of two cultures: the culture of the university and the culture of the school.

Given the crisis of confidence in professional practice, it is not surprising, therefore, to find that the work of supervision is characterised by indirection, indeterminacy, and

uncertainty, and accompanied by self-deprecation and self-doubt amongst supervisors as to their suitability and efficacy.

The distinctive contribution of the university in the past has indeed been its connection with research, but that research tended to be phallogentric, logocentric and disembodied, giving rise to grand narrative and disregarding the lived, local, experience of teachers. It may be a poignant irony that any extended discussion of pedagogical theory was usually absent from the practicum conference in this study. Encouraging practising teachers to become more fully involved with teacher education, as proposed here, does not mean the demise of the Faculty of Education, as some fear. It means that the type of research undertaken and the nature of our work has to change. University staff need to be involved in joint action research and action learning projects, community-based research, collaborative workshops, and critical incident sessions involving practising as well as student-teachers.

Breaking down the binaries

Much of the practice of Liaison Lecturers and Field Supervisors suggests the continuation of a number of unhelpful binary divides originating with modernism: cognition and affectivity; reason and unreason (*dérailson*); logic and rhetoric; the reasonable and the unreasonable; sameness and difference; centre and margin; self and Other; justice and care. The relationships between the opposing poles were rarely explored by supervisors, and the way that each term is implicated in and is mutually dependent on the other, in often unexpected and contradictory ways, was not acknowledged and therefore did not inform their practice. In the same way, supervisors generally, with some significant exceptions, failed to make permeable the boundaries between another set of binaries where the preference was for the second term: subjectivity and objectivity and personal

and professional. Teacher educators of the future will need to break down these oppositional binaries.

A focus on subjectivity

With certain significant exceptions, the research suggests little attention was paid to the subjectivities of the student-teachers. This is particularly true of those stories involving power and control, and dominance and subordination in which student-teachers were treated as Other. At the same time, the research points to the importance of fostering emotional and relational bonding in the building up of collegiality, whilst maintaining a capacity for emotional detachment. Trust and trustfulness, comfortability and protection, and a relation of care are all seen to be crucial to the successful practicum.

The provision of feedback

The importance of providing feedback has been well documented. Failure to provide feedback for whatever reason, whether as a display of symbolic power, or simply through lack of experience and/or interpersonal and interactional competence, interrupts the flow of attention, produces anxiety and leads to the intrusion of unwanted thoughts into the consciousness thus preventing the transcendence of self. It is difficult to be immersed in an activity when you do not know what to do, or how well the activity is thought to be going.

Nevertheless student-teachers need to be made aware of ways of responding when feedback is not forthcoming. The stories reveal instances of strategies involving problematicity, assertiveness, and resistance and contestation which contribute to the growth of self-reliance and self-efficacy. These strategies need to be affirmed. At the same time students need to be aware of the significance of informal, anecdotal, conversational feedback which often goes unrecognised.

Understanding the importance of context-of-site

Turning now to the working of context-of-site, the stories reveal important qualitative differences between the urban and rural practica. In the rural situation, research suggests teacher educators need to address cultural constructions of time and space and the long-term effects of internal colonisation and settlement. Whilst in the opinion of Liaison Lecturers, context-of-site does not appear to matter as far as acquiring teaching competence was concerned, the failure to attend to context-of-site affects how student-teachers engage with difference, cultural pluralism and heterogeneity. All too often these issues were identified as problematical and then put to one side - something to think about.

The care and protection of the self

In view of the critical importance of subjectivity, individuation, and the growth of personal autonomy, teacher educators need to come to terms with changing attitudes towards the self, and promote the care and protection of the self in the face of fragmentation and saturation, and the removal and denaturing of the subject. Many student-teachers were still preoccupied with self-efficacy and self-identity. Caring for the self is both a social and an individual responsibility and should be at the heart of moral praxis. The predominant view of the self was romanticist and it would appear that greater attention needs to be given to the promotion of the relational self, practical sociality, and the workings of transference and desire in the process of subjectification.

Emotionality and the sentient being

Attention to subjectivity also requires greater recognition of emotionality and the sentient being. This is particularly true when examining the effects of positioning in attempts to provide for agency. Teacher educators need to critique their own attempts at positioning,

and the positions that they themselves take up. The strategies and tactics of power and the use of formality and informality need close analysis.

Providing emotional support

The stories reveal that teacher education is much more than advising student-teachers on curriculum content, resource availability and lesson presentation. It is a process of interiority in which teacher educators may need to provide emotional support in the face of displacement, disorientation, and fear. At such times, student-teachers need an abiding presence, someone capable of supporting them through the loss of innocence, someone capable of imaginative introjection, someone who 'knows' and is capable of moving beyond language.

The complicity of the university

The university may not be the emancipatory, liberating force, that it might be thought to be. The research reveals that the university and its agents are complicit in the perpetuation of inequalities, and the suppression and disempowerment of Aboriginal people. In spite of drawing the attention of students to the myths surrounding Aboriginal education and the continuance of a colonialist mentality, university lecturers tended to be individualist, gradualist and communitarian rather than transformative and generative. The conferences did little to advance Aboriginalisation and responses to seemingly racist discourse were muted. The failure to engage other teachers in dialogue or draw the attention of the Principal to inequities and abuses can only lead to the perpetuation of stasis.

Resisting the embourgeoisement of education

Teacher educators of the future will need to resist the growing embourgeoisement of education. One way to attempt this is through teaching a deconstructive reading of the

practicum text, emphasising polyvocality and polysemy, and identifying and confronting dominant discourses such as psychologism, the mother-made-conscious, teaching-as-parenting, and racism. In addition, ways need to be found to interrupt the discourse of impoverishment and despair.

Pedagogical theory and curriculum knowledge

There is also a need for teacher educators to have a much deeper understanding of pedagogical theory and school curriculum, particularly theories of literacy, difference and diversity. This might assist in the more systematic application of constructivist and reflective approaches.

Reflective practice

Although the process of reflection is not modelled extensively and tends to deal with environmental and ecological issues, rather than moral or ethical considerations, elements of reflective practice do emerge in the exploration of cultural and social issues surrounding literacy teaching, the extended discussion of cultural attitudes towards corporal punishment, and the debate (not presented in this thesis) involving teaching in accordance with one's religious views.

Frequently, what appeared to be technicist considerations were seen to impinge on moral and ethical issues. The process of reflection is not easy to identify and there is some indication that it proceeds at a much deeper cognitive and emotional level than conferences and interviews indicate. More moral, spiritual, social, cultural and environmental issues surfaced than might be expected from other studies, considering several supervisors did not see themselves as promoting reflectivity. However, 'reflection' tended to be seen as demonstrating neutrality and putting forward both sides of an

argument, rather than promoting associative, analogous thinking or the systematic consideration of alternatives.

Constructivism

Isolated and inconsistent instances of constructivism involving coaching, participative modelling and mirroring were observed, but again there was little systematic attention to how new understanding related to older belief systems. This may be because a constructivist approach was not acknowledged or espoused, either by the schools or the Faculty of Education. Nevertheless some Field Supervisors understood that student-teachers constructed reality differently and were prepared to give the student reason, admitting to 'not really knowing what goes on inside their heads'.

Relational language and the language of indirection

In moving away from a mindscape which views supervision as the necessary oversighting of the behaviour of another to ensure accountability, teacher educators will need to adopt a more relational language in pursuit of mutuality and reciprocity. There is also a need to promote relational dialogue. Much conferencing was taken up with monologue, with supervisors tending to reflect back, or interpret experiences for the student. Admittedly, this was intended to motivate the student to interact with the situation at hand but conferences with Liaison Lecturers were nevertheless ritualised, with limited input from student-teachers, sometimes taking the form of a trial. The lack of dialogue and opportunities for sharing suggest the need for seminars, workshops and critical incident sessions during the practicum itself, open to all participants.

At the same time, all involved need to be aware of the delicate nuances of language and of how strategies of indirection are being increasingly adopted. As we rewrite the conference script, and relanguage and retool to ensure survival, students need to be

comfortable with incompleteness, diffidence, ambivalence, contradiction, imprecision, the deferral and postponement of meaning, irony, and understatement. At the same time teacher educators need to recognise the agonistic nature of language in textual and personal politics, and the way language is used in mitigation. This can be achieved by instituting a deliberate program of meta-cognition and meta-awareness involving reflection on language in use.

Attention to age-related and gender effects

Explicit discussion of possible age-related and gender effects may also assist the promotion of collegiality and collaboration. The study demonstrates that mentoring and role reversal is clearly possible between mature-age female student-teachers and considerably younger male teachers, and that young people can assist in the professional development of those much older than themselves.

Accounting for ourselves

Finally, we need to give an accounting of ourselves. We may need to acknowledge our connivance and complicity, and the way we are trapped and implicated in outworn methods and procedures of thinking, often relying on discredited approaches in the face of institutional constraints and embedded workplace practices. We need to examine our operational procedures and methods of assessment, and we need to ask in which ways power works through us, and if, as a consequence, we are failing the student-teacher by allowing racist and discriminatory views to predominate whilst we watch helplessly as others suffer from a colonialist hangover, participate in the inculcation of guilt, and tolerate the exclusion of Aboriginal people from participating in decision-making with regard to the schooling of their own children.

Field-Based Teacher Education and the new Bachelor of Teaching

Given the generally unsatisfactory and unproductive nature of the supervisory process as revealed by the research, and the ambiguous relationship between the university and the schools in the Northern Territory, an attempt is currently being made to involve the schools, child care centres and employing agencies in a partnership with the university to promote Field-Based Teacher Education (FBTE) as part of a new Bachelor of Teaching degree. This is being done with a view to restructuring power/control relationships, associating practising teachers more closely with teacher education, and reformulating the Teacher Education Curriculum.

This move has involved the following practical action:

re-opening dialogue with schools and employing authorities;

circulation of a flier asking for expressions of interest in instituting an FBTE program (Appendix 3); and

determining agendas in meetings with the NT Principals' Association and NTDE, and arriving at trade-offs.

The plan also incorporated the setting up of a Standing Committee on the Practicum which is occupied with:

reworking roles and responsibilities for inclusion in *Field Notes*, an occasional publication which deals with matters pertaining to the Field Work component in the early part of the course;

negotiating the Teacher Education Curriculum and designing the new ten week In-School Semester;

resourcing and arranging professional development with the assistance of the Human Resources Management branch of the NTDE which deals with social, cultural and technological change, changes in the nature of Teachers' Work, and what it means to be a teacher educator;

making an input into assignments and assessment procedures;

deciding on new narrative form of reporting;

providing seminars/workshops to deal with such things as achieving congruency and the giving of feedback through parallel teaching, participative modelling, coaching, mentoring and counselling and to extend the concept of Teacher Educator to practising teachers;

fostering the practice of critique, and interrogating our own practice and experiences;

providing instances of action research, action learning and community-based research programs; and

providing for a compulsory Aboriginal Studies unit taught by Aboriginal lecturers from the Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, and closer liaison with Batchelor College.

Subsequently a Rural and Small Schools Practicum (RASSP) consultancy group was set up comprising graduates from Batchelor College and former NTDE mentors from the schools to advise on the following:

gaining entry to communities;

consulting with Aboriginal communities on role of non-Aboriginal student-teachers;

Aboriginalising the curriculum;

consulting with Aboriginal staff on appropriate pedagogy;

developing team-teaching; and

engaging in reconciliation and advocacy.

Further research

This thesis only serves to provide teacher educators and researchers with a program for more work. Hopefully, the way in which the practicum text has been presented will help legitimise the practicum and Field-Based Teacher Education as an area of research. In spite of the renewal of interest in the practicum, for many academics it remains episodic and discontinuous, fragmentary, and lacking in coherence. Students are not in the schools for any prolonged period of time, the teaching in which they engage is not sustained, and the experiences to which they are exposed are transitory and judged of little consequence.

For such critics the practicum is considered to be undertheorised and its connection with practical and experiential knowledge is disallowed.

As far as the Northern Territory is concerned, further research is needed from an Aboriginal perspective, undertaken by Aboriginal researchers, which provides accounts of cross-cultural workplace conditions, the subtle and hidden effects of context-of-site, contradictions of practice, and the ways in which non-Aboriginal student-teachers can assist and work with Aboriginal communities and schools. There is an urgent need for more journal studies of mentoring programs, autobiographies dealing with the subjective experience of ethnicity and unlearning complicity, published accounts of interactive dialogue, and video diaries portraying the everyday life and experiences of practising teachers in field-based programs. In addition, studies are required into the work-place practices of both teachers and university lecturers. More case studies of the use of the beginning teacher competencies as a possible basis for organising teacher education at a distance using action learning and electronic communication are also necessary.

In short, we need more eco-logical research which reveals new possibilities for human beings and suggests new forms of human relationships involving changes in the position, role and skills of professional academics and practising teachers, and which attends to the voice of student-teachers, some of whose stories and experiences have been related in this thesis.

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APPENDIX 1

**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON THE EIGHT DARWIN GOVERNMENT
SCHOOLS BASED ON *A SOCIAL ATLAS OF DARWIN* (TAYLOR AND
JAENSCH, 1989)**

1. School catchment areas

Data provided on school catchment areas indicate that with one exception, Darwin schools drew the baulk of their enrolments (66% or greater) from the immediate area in which the school was situated. For instance School D drew 84% of its enrolment from the suburb from which the school takes its name. This trend would be less true of the Alice Springs schools which tend to have much larger catchment areas and high enrolments. Schools drawing students from the immediate area might have been expected to have closer community links and thus provide student-teachers with more opportunity to engage in community-related projects.

2. Population change between 1981 and 1986

This gives some indication of the relative stability of the area. Schools A and D were found in areas of declining population associated with a general ageing of the population and the outflow of young adults as families have matured. This trend is confirmed if we examine the figures for persons in the same dwellings over the last five years.

3. Population density

Population density tends to be related to the type of accommodation available in the area and the relative newness of the suburb. Only two schools, C and H, are situated in areas of low population density, the others all being of medium density.

4. Persons aged 0-4 and 5-14 per square kilometre

Most schools are in areas where the number of 0-4 year olds is between 200 and 299 per square kilometre, with 400-599 in the age group 5-14. School D is in an area where persons aged 5-14 number 600-799 per square kilometre.

5. Ethnicity

A measure of ethnicity can be obtained by examining the percentage of residents who were Australian-born with both parents also Australian-born, and the percentage of overseas-born residents with less than five years in Australia. For the majority of areas the percentage of Australian born residents with both parents Australian born ran in the order of 50-59%. Only schools C and D were in areas recording a lower percentage. Schools C, E and G were all situated in areas containing pockets of overseas born persons of less than five years residence, numbering some 200-399 per square kilometre. These were generally areas where cheap rental accommodation was available. However, *A Social Atlas* tells us that overseas born residents were 'distributed widely, with no tendency to cluster in any particular area' (Taylor and Jaensch 1989:22). In spite of this some schools, particularly School E, do appear to have a sizeable minority of children from South-East Asian families. Attitudes of participants towards multi-culturalism and cultural pluralism could well affect the success of the practicum for individual students.

6. Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders

Persons of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent made up 7.6% of the total Darwin population. The Social Atlas tells us that Aborigines were twice as likely to occupy rented government dwellings; that only 8.7% were represented in the managerial,

administrative and professional class, compared to 24.1% for non-Aboriginal Australians; that they were twice as likely to be unemployed, and that a far greater proportion were not in the labour force. The proportion of pupils of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent varied markedly between schools. Schools A and D were both in areas which have a high concentration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, (200-399 per square kilometre), although School D had only a small pocket of such persons and drew mainly from an area of 50-199. Student teachers placed in these schools would be expected to require advice on teaching English as a Second Language and on how to adapt their programs and teaching to suit Aboriginal learning styles.

7. Persons in the same dwelling for 5 years or more

This provides another measure of the stability of an area and affects pupil turnover in the schools. The highest figures were for schools in areas A, C and F, and H, (the Palmerston school)

8. Single parents per square kilometre

Single parents comprised 8.9% of all family types in Darwin (Comparable figures: Canberra: 7.5%; Melbourne: 5.1%) Single parents correlated 0.45 with low income households and tended to be located in areas where housing and accommodation is cheaper. The number of single parent families was around 50-99 per square kilometre for most areas, with school D and H being bordered by considerably higher concentrations of 100-227 per square kilometre.

9. Proportion of nuclear families

This was fairly constant for most of the areas under consideration, running at 30-49% of families, although several schools in the newer suburbs were bordered by areas with a higher rate

10. Annual household and individual income

This provides a measure of relative poverty or affluence. Most areas were running at around 10-19 % of households in which the annual income was less than \$15,000. The figure for School H was 20-29%.

11. Occupation

Occupation was expressed in terms of (1) managerial, administrative and professional, comprising groups 1 and 2 on the Australian Bureau of Statistics occupational classification and (2) plant and machine operators, labourers etc., classified as Groups 7 and 8 on the ABS scale. For most areas in the sample the figure for the managerial, administrative and professional group was running at 20-29 percent. Some schools such as school D were in small pockets of from 0-19% but were surrounded by areas containing 20-29%, and drew on managerial and professional groups from suburbs further away. Only school H was totally restricted to 0-19%. Blue collar workers were most predominant in areas D, G and H.

12. Married women in the labour force

60-80% of all married women in areas C, E and G were in the labour force. All other areas, with the exception of Palmerston, recorded percentages of 50-59. The Palmerston area returned percentages of 40-49. The implications of these figures for schooling are not easy to determine. They may provide a measure of relative affluence and it may mean that some schools enjoy less contact with parents because family members are working.

13. Unemployed persons

The overall unemployment rate for Darwin was 9.7%. Only two areas exceeded that figure. These contained schools A and H.

14. Rented and owner-occupied dwellings

The largest percentage of dwellings either owned or being purchased was found in Areas D and G (60-76%) and the lowest (0-19%) in Area H. which also had the highest figures for rented Government dwellings. Area G together with area A, had the lowest percentage of rented government dwellings (0-19%).

APPENDIX 2

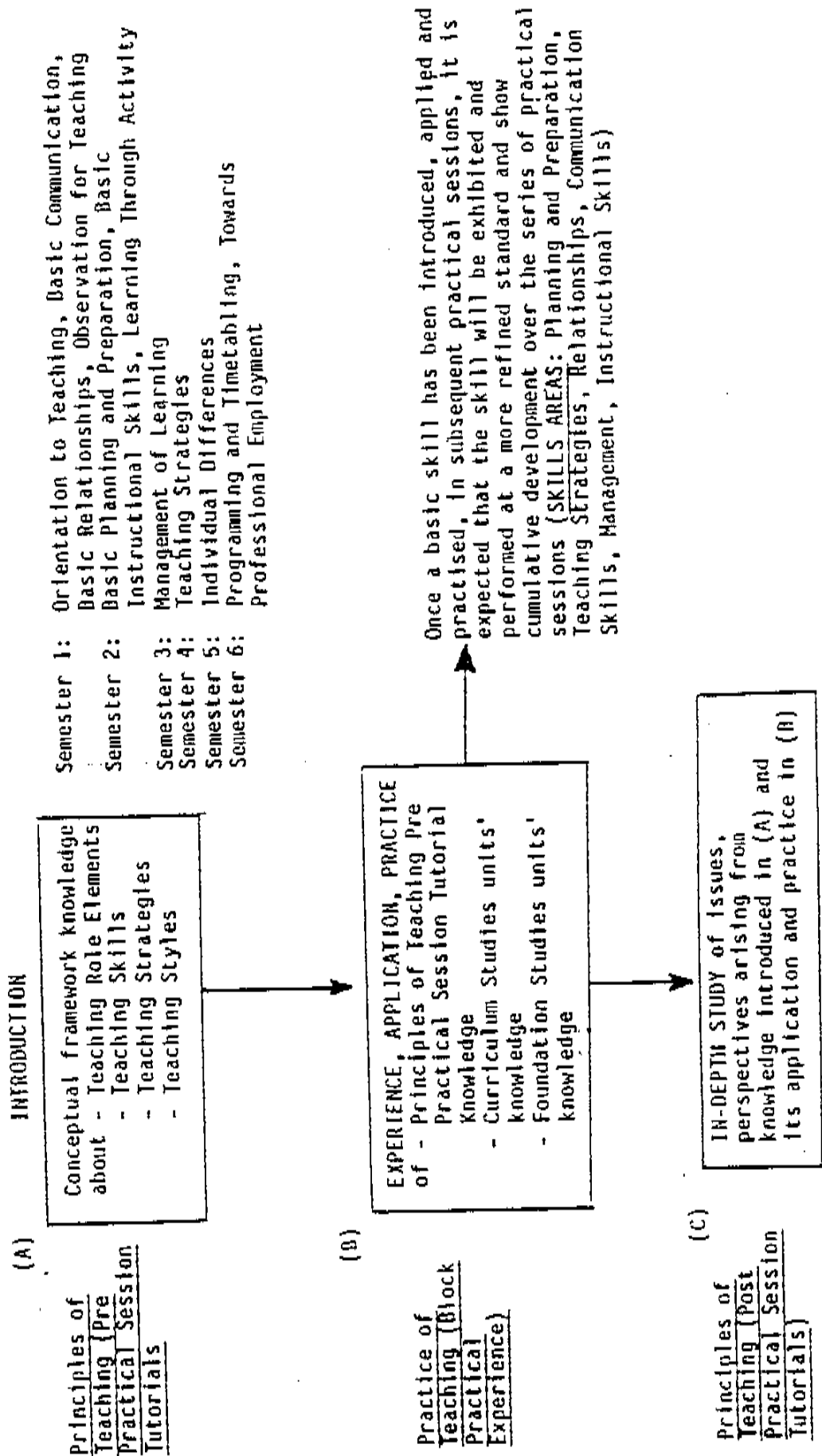
EXTRACTS FROM THE DIPLOMA OF TEACHING CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS

- **Overview of the Principles and Practice of Teaching strand**
- **Integration of the Principles and Practice of Teaching units**
- **Unit outlines**

TABLE 6.1: OVERVIEW OF THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING STRAND

UNIT	FOCUS	ROLE DEVELOPMENT STAGE	ROLE ADOPTION STAGE	FORMAL TEACHER-PUPIL INTERACTION
Principles & Practice of Teaching IA, Semester 1, 10 days field experience	Orientation to Teaching, Basic Communication, Basic Relationships and Observation for Teaching.	Suitability	Orientation	Assist in simple teaching tasks with individual children or small groups.
Principles & Practice of Teaching IB, Semester 2, 10 days field experience	Basic Planning & Preparation, Basic Instructional Skills & learning through Activity.	Suitability (Commence Performance)	Orientation (Commence Conceptualisation)	Conducting single learning experiences unrelated for a largest group or whole class.
Principles & Practice of Teaching II, Semester 3, 10 days field experience	Management of Learning	Performance	Conceptualisation	Implementing a sequences of related experiences to develop skills or concepts in various curriculum areas.
Principles & Practice of Teaching III, Semester 4, 20 days field experience.	Teaching Strategies	Performance	Conceptualisation	Being responsible for a half-day program over a week.
Principles & Practice of Teaching IV, Semester 5, 20 days field experience	Individual Differences	Effectiveness	Conceptualisation (Commence)	Being responsible for a half-day program over a weekly period. Occasional full day program responsibility over a number of days on the basis of the field supervisors program.
Skills of Teaching V, Semester 6, 20 days field experience	Programming and Teintetabling, Towards Professional Employment.	Effectiveness	Assumption	Full program day responsibility for most of the four week period on the basis of a student prepared program integrated with the field supervision existing program.

Figure 6.1 INTEGRATION OF PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING UNITS



CODE: EDN104

NAME: Principles and Practice of Teaching IA

PREREQUISITE: Nil

DURATION:

Nine hours of tutorials prior to a block ten day practical session in a school or early childhood setting. One mass lecture on completion of the practical session.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Principles of Teaching: To introduce students to knowledge relevant to:
 - i The role of the student in the educational institution.
 - ii The role of the teacher and the educational institution.
 - iii Education and Care in the Northern Territory.
 - iv Basic communication and relationships with learners.
 - v Observation as the basis for educational planning, practice and evaluation.
 - vi Requirements and expectations for the first practical session of the course.
2. Practice of Teaching: During this practice students will:
 - i Begin to determine personal suitability for teaching as a vocation by investigating, assessing and comparing their own and the required personal and professional qualities.
 - ii Gain a basic orientation to and understanding of the teaching group, the educational institution and education and Care in the Northern Territory.
 - iii Begin to develop an understanding of and interest in children and a sincere and positive manner in relating to them.
 - iv Communicate with children using clear, appropriate level and correct speech.
 - v Begin to develop and effectively use observational skills and techniques.
 - vi Assist in simple teaching tasks with individual children and small groups.

ASSESSMENT:

At the completion of the practical session an assessment profile is completed by the supervisor. The student will be recommended as pass, unsatisfactory or grade pending.

TEXT:

For the tutorial component of the unit each student will be provided with a Principles of Teaching 1A Handbook; this contains a set of critical reading central to the objectives and material taught. For the practical session component each student will be provided with a Practice of Teaching 1A Handbook which sets out learning experiences, expectations and guidelines for the practical session.

CONTRIBUTION TO OVERALL COURSE AIMS:

The Principles of Teaching component prepares students for their first look at educational institutions in action from a teacher's point of view. The Practice of Teaching component links and integrates knowledge gained from first semester's Principles of Teaching unit, Curriculum Studies units and Foundation Studies units with the practical situation.

MATERIAL TAUGHT/TEACHING STRATEGIES:

1. Principles of Teaching

Broad expectations and function of the various components of the educational and care system as stated in specific policy documents; the structure and components of the systems.

A code of ethics for student teachers.

Professional responsibilities of teachers.

Basic and general teacher and school/centre characteristics contributing to effective learning and teaching.

The educational/care environment of the Northern Territory.

Techniques and skills for fostering positive and sensitive interpersonal relationships with learners and members of a school staff.

Techniques and skills for effective communication with learners.

Principles of observational methods, analysis of child behaviour and procedures of data collection (including anecdotal reports, checklists, rating scales, timed observations and interview/questionnaire survey).

Teaching activity, Curriculum and Foundation Studies units', situation analysis, resource collection and personal summary/evaluation/objectives requirements for the first practical session of the course.

2. Practice of Teaching:

Student tasks and learning experiences (as detailed in Practice of Teaching 1A Handbook) embracing:

- specific teaching activities
- Curriculum Studies and Foundation Studies units' exercises.
- a situation analysis
- a resource collection
- a personal summary and evaluation of the practical experience and the setting of personal goals for the next practical experience.

CODE: EDN107

NAME: Principles and Practice of Teaching IB

PREREQUISITE:

EDN104 Principles and Practice of Teaching IA

DURATION:

Fifteen hours of tutorials prior to a block ten day practical session in a school or early childhood setting. Fifteen hours of tutorials post practical session.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session): To introduce students to knowledge relevant to:
 - i Basic formal planning and preparation of learning experiences for the teaching-learning process.
 - ii Basic teacher skills for initiating and guiding learning.
 - iii Requirements and expectations for the second practical session of the course.
2. Principles of Teaching (Post Practical Session): To introduce students to knowledge relevant to the development of a personal philosophy and teaching style embracing pupil learning through activity, discovery learning and the fostering of creativity.
3. Practice of Teaching: During this practice students will
 - i Have established their personal suitability for teaching as a vocation.
 - ii Demonstrate the ability to plan, prepare and use basic and thorough lesson notes.
 - iii Improve ability to communicate with children - verbal, non-verbal and written.
 - iv Begin to develop skills with particular emphasis on beginning and concluding lessons, giving directions and instructions, clear explanations, basic questioning and control techniques, and use of appropriate teaching aids.
 - v Begin to evaluate the learning outcomes of lessons presented in terms of objectives set.
 - vi Teach and manage a class or large group for a period covering one lesson's duration.

CONTRIBUTION TO OVERALL COURSE AIMS:

The Principles of Teaching (Pre-Practical Session) component prepares students for the second practical session of the course. The Practice of Teaching component links and integrates knowledge gained from second semester's Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session) unit, Curriculum Studies units and Foundation Studies units with the practical situation, and prepares students for the post practical session Principles of Teaching tutorials.

MATERIAL TAUGHT/TEACHING STRATEGIES:

1. Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session)
 - i Planning and Preparation for Learning: Selecting and specifying objectives; choosing content; lesson steps/stages and time allocation; selecting and using resources; assessment procedures consistent with set objectives; a lesson plan format.
 - ii Initiating and Guiding Learning: Motivating/beginning a lesson/setting a learning task; questioning and responding; explanation; conducting discussion; closure of lessons; providing feedback and reinforcing children.
 - iii Teaching activity, Curriculum and Foundation Studies units', situation analysis, resource collection and personal summary/evaluation/objectives' requirements for the second practical session of the course.
2. Principles of Teaching (Post Practical Session): Basic introduction to different curriculum orientations and instructional goals and their implications for learning spaces and resources, role of children, teacher role, teacher-child relationships and interaction, assessment procedures and organisation in the learning environment; school based curriculum and negotiating the curriculum; integration across the curriculum and the integrated day; open education; multiple option units of work; learning centres and special corners.
3. Practice of Teaching

Student tasks and learning experiences (as detailed in Practice of Teaching IB Handbook) embracing

 - Specific teaching activities
 - Curriculum Studies and Foundation Studies units' exercises
 - A situation analysis
 - A resource collection
 - A personal summary and evaluation of the practical experience and the setting of personal goals for the next practical experience.

ASSESSMENT:

At the end of the practical session an assessment profile is completed by a panel consisting of the supervisor, the school co-ordinator of practice teaching and the visiting liaison lecturer. The student will be recommended as pass, unsatisfactory or grade pending. For Principles of Teaching material taught post practical session, a major assignment requiring the application and relating of content to the practical context experienced during the practical session.

TEXT:

For the tutorial component of the unit each student will be provided with a Principles of Teaching IB Handbook; this contains a set of critical readings central to the objectives and material taught. For the practical session component each student will be provided with a Practice of Teaching IB Handbook which sets out learning experiences, expectations and guidelines for the practical session.

CODE: EDN204

NAME: Principles and Practice of Teaching II

PREREQUISITE:

EDN107 Principles and Practice of Teaching IB

DURATION:

Fifteen hours of tutorials prior to a block ten day practical session in a school or early childhood setting. Fifteen hours of tutorials post practical session.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session): To introduce students to knowledge relevant to:
 - i The concept of management
 - ii The components of management
 - iii Management style as relative to orientation to curriculum and instructional goals.
 - iv Practical management tips for the teaching-learning process.
 - v Planning and preparation for a sequence of lessons to develop a skill or topic in one subject area.
 - vi Requirements and expectations for the third practical session of the course.
2. Principles of Teaching (Post Practical Session): To examine in-depth specific management issues and perspectives, and their direct implications for teaching spaces and resources, role of children, teacher role, teacher-child relationships and interaction, assessment procedures and classroom organisation.
3. Practice of Teaching: During this practice students will:
 - i Display clarity in planning, preparing and using lesson notes for a sequence of lessons in a particular subject area.
 - ii Demonstrate a positive attitude to children and a growing confidence in establishing relationships with them.
 - iii Continue to improve communication and instructional skills as outlined in previous practices and Principles of Teaching units.
 - iv show ability in establishing sound management techniques and gain experience in administration of the class or large group.
 - v Teach and manage a class or group for a period covering a sequence of lessons in one area.

CONTRIBUTION TO OVERALL COURSE AIMS:

The Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session) component prepares students for the third practical session of the course. The Practice of Teaching component links and integrates knowledge gained from third semester's Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session) unit, Curriculum Studies units and Foundation Studies units with the practical situation, and prepares students for the post practical session Principles of Teaching tutorials.

MATERIAL TAUGHT/TEACHING STRATEGIES:

1. Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session)

The school/centre and classroom as an organisation from the systems perspective.

Organisational elements requiring management (formal structure, technology and social system).

Innovation, organisational change and organisation development techniques.

Management as a total process comprised of synergistic organising, planning, leading and controlling sub-processes.

Developing a positive learning climate/atmosphere

Practical skills and techniques for improving classroom management

A planning and preparation format that accounts for the location and relevance of new work to previous and future work.

Teaching activity, Curriculum and Foundation Studies units', situation analysis, resource collection and personal summary/evaluation/objectives' requirements for the third practical session of the course.

2. Principles of Teaching (Post Practical Session).

Issues and perspectives relevant to organisation (e.g. the arrangement of space, resource and movement variables), planning, leadership and decision making (e.g. the different theories of leadership and decision making; management styles) and control (e.g. discipline as narrow punishment or assisting children toward the development of appropriate behaviour).

3. Practice of Teaching

Student tasks and learning experiences (as detailed in Practice of Teaching II Handbook) embracing:

Specific teaching activities

Curriculum Studies and Foundation Studies units' exercises

A situation analysis

A resource collection

A personal summary and evaluation of the practical experience and the setting of personal goals for the next practical experience.

ASSESSMENT:

At the end of the practical session an assessment profile is completed by a panel consisting of the supervisor, the school co-ordinator of practice teaching, and the visiting liaison lecturer. The student is recommended as pass, unsatisfactory or grade pending. For Principles of Teaching materials taught post practical session, a major assignment requiring the application and relating of content to the practical context experienced during the practical session.

TEXT:

For the tutorial component of the unit each student will be provided with a Principles of Teaching II Handbook; this contains a set of critical readings central to the objectives and material taught. For the practical session component each student will be provided with a Practice of Teaching II Handbook which sets out learning experiences, expectations and guidelines for the practical session.

CODE: EDN207

NAME: Principles and Practices of Teaching III

PREREQUISITE:

EDN204 Principles and Practice of Teaching II

DURATION:

Fifteen hours of tutorials prior to a block twenty day practical session in a school or early childhood setting. Fifteen hours of tutorials post practical session.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session): to introduce students to knowledge relevant to:
 - i The concept of teaching strategy.
 - ii The relativity of the nature of a teaching strategy to particular goals/objectives, learning/cognitive style and children's needs/interests.
 - iii A range of teaching strategies across curriculum areas and levels.
 - iv Planning and preparation for a sequence of lessons across curriculum areas.
 - v Requirements and expectations for the fourth practical session of the course.
2. Principles of Teaching (Post Practical Session): To plan and prepare lesson formats to accommodate different teaching strategies..
3. Practice of Teaching: During this practice students will:
 - i Plan, prepare and present lessons/learning experiences for continuous teaching across curriculum areas.
 - ii Show increased confidence in the understanding and handling of children.
 - iii Further develop management, instructional and communication skills as outlined in previous practices and Principles of Teaching units.
 - iv Apply an understanding and knowledge of effective teaching strategies appropriate to particular goals/objectives, learning/cognitive styles and pupil needs/interests.
 - v Teach and manage a class or whole group for an extended period of time.

CONTRIBUTION TO OVERALL COURSE AIMS:

The Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session) component prepares students for the fourth practical session of the course. The Practice of Teaching component links and integrates knowledge gained from fourth semester's Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session) unit, Curriculum Studies units and Foundation Studies units with the practical situation, and prepares students for the post practical session Principles of Teaching tutorials.

MATERIAL TAUGHT/TEACHING STRATEGIES:

1. Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session).

Teaching skills, strategies and styles.

Strategies as purposefully arranged sequences of teaching skills.

Strategies for narration, demonstration, explanation, basic questioning, discussion, practice (drill) activity, data collection (e.g. from T.V., video, film, audio tape), research (study) activity, revision and recording, experimentation, role play, discovery (by questioning), discovery (by use of material), small group-work (common activity), small group work (different activities).

Functional learning styles and teaching strategies for formal and informal learning modes.

Strategies for different abilities, rates of learning, needs and interests.

A planning and preparation format that accounts for extended teaching and management across curriculum areas for an extended period of time.

Teaching activity, Curriculum and Foundation Studies units', situation analysis, resource collection and personal summary/evaluation/objectives requirements for the fourth practical session of the course.

2. Principles of Teaching (Post Practical Session)

Workshop sessions involving the planning and preparing of lesson notes appropriate to specified objectives/goals, learning/cognitive styles and abilities/rates of learning/needs/interests.

3. Practice of Teaching

Student tasks and learning experiences (as detailed in Practice of Teaching III Handbook) embracing:

Specific teaching activities

Curriculum Studies and Foundation Studies units' exercises

A situation analysis

A resource collection

A personal summary and evaluation of the practical experience and the setting of personal goals for the next practical experience.

ASSESSMENT:

At the end of the practical session an assessment profile is completed by a panel consisting of the supervisor, the school co-ordinator of practice teaching, and the visiting liaison lecturer. The student is recommended as pass, unsatisfactory or grade pending. For Principles of Teaching materials taught post practical session, a major assignment requiring the application and relating of content to the practical context experienced during the practical session.

TEXT:

For the tutorial component of the unit each student will be provided with a Principles of Teaching III Handbook; this contains a set of critical readings central to the objectives and material taught. For the practical session component each student will be provided with a Practice of Teaching III Handbook which sets out learning experiences, expectations and guidelines for the practical session.

CODE: EDN304

NAME: Principles and Practice of Teaching IV

PREREQUISITE:

EDN207 Principles and Practice of Teaching III

DURATION:

Fifteen hours of tutorials prior to a block twenty day practical session in a school. Fifteen hours of tutorials post practical session.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session): To introduce students to knowledge relevant to:
 - i The sources and implications of individual differences.
 - ii A broad overview of school practices which can be modified to cater for individual differences.
 - iii Identifying and assessing individual differences:
 - iv Planning and preparation of lessons to accommodate individual differences.
 - v Requirements and expectations for the fifth practical session of the course.
2. Principles of Teaching (Post Practical Session): To examine in depth specific educational resources, centre/school/classroom management features, teaching strategies and advisory/resource/support services that aid in catering for individual differences.
3. Practice of Teaching: During this practice students will -
 - i Plan, prepare and present lessons which cater for individual differences from various sources across a range of curriculum areas over an extended period of time.
 - ii Display an empathy, concern and interest in the welfare of learners as a group and as individuals in both formal and informal relationships.
 - iii Refine management, instructional, communication and teaching strategy skills for effective teaching in all class, group and individual pupil situations as outlined in previous practices and Principles of Teaching units.
 - iv Apply an understanding and knowledge of measures to cater for the range of sources of individual differences.
 - v Further improve skills in continuous teaching and management over an extended period of time.

CONTRIBUTION TO OVERALL COURSE AIMS:

The Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session) component prepares students for the fifth practical session of the course. The Practice of Teaching component links and integrates knowledge gained from fifth semester's Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session) unit, Curriculum Studies units and Foundation Studies units with the practical situation, and prepares students for the post practical session Principles of Teaching tutorials.

MATERIAL TAUGHT/TEACHING STRATEGIES:

1. Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session)
 - i Individual differences in abilities, rates of learning, particular needs (skills), interests, cognitive and learning styles, social needs.
 - ii Modifying school/community relationships and interaction, school and classroom/centre organisation, curriculum and teaching strategy/style to cater for individual differences.
 - iii Parents, children, fellow staff members, children's records, advisory personnel, diagnostic/standardised/criterion referenced tests as sources of assessment and identification of individual differences.
 - iv A lesson plan format that allows planning and preparation for individual differences.
 - v Teaching activity, Curriculum and Foundation Studies units', situation analysis, resource collection and personal summary/evaluation/objectives' requirements for the fifth practical session of the course.
2. Principles of Teaching (Post Practical Session)
 - i Multi-level and individualised learning schemes.
 - ii Grouping schemes; their relative advantages and disadvantages.
 - iii Co-operative and team-teaching arrangements; child and teacher benefits.
 - iv Teaching strategies for formal and informal learning styles.
 - v Advisory/resource/support services available to the classroom teacher in dealing with individual differences.
 - vi Multiple option units of work, learning centres and special interest corners/areas.

3. Practice of Teaching

Student tasks and learning experiences (as detailed in Practice of Teaching IV Handbook) embracing

- i Specific teaching activities
- ii Curriculum Studies and Foundation Studies units' exercises
- iii A situation analysis
- iv A resource collection
- v A personal summary and evaluation of the practical experience and the setting of personal goals for the next practical experience.

ASSESSMENT:

At the end of the practical session an assessment profile is completed by a panel consisting of the supervisor, the school co-ordinator of practice teaching, and the visiting liaison lecturer. The student is recommended as pass, unsatisfactory or grade pending. For Principles of Teaching materials taught post practical session, a major assignment requiring the application and relating of content to the practical context experienced during the practical session.

TEXT:

For the tutorial component of the unit each student will be provided with a Principles of Teaching IV Handbook; this contains a set of critical readings central to the objectives and material taught. For the practical session component each student will be provided with a Practice of Teaching IV Handbook which sets out learning experiences, expectations and guidelines for the practical session.

CODE: EDN307

NAME: Principles and Practice of Teaching V

PREREQUISITE:

EDN304 Principles and Practice of Teaching IV

DURATION:

Fifteen hours of tutorials prior to a block twenty day practical session in a school or early childhood setting. Fifteen hours of tutorials post practical session.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session): To introduce students to knowledge relevant to:
 - i General principles for constructing and implementing a program of work;
 - ii Situation specific principles for constructing and implementing a program of work for early childhood, primary and Aboriginal pupil groups;
 - iii Requirements and expectations for the sixth practical session of the course.
2. Principles of teaching (Post Practical Session): To consider specific issues and perspectives particularly relevant to the full-time professional employment situation.
3. Practice of Teaching: During this practice students will:
 - i Implement and evaluate their own produced program of work which will be integrated with the supervisor's existing program;
 - ii Display effective teaching and role performance behaviour through a facility with communication skills, relationships, planning and preparation skills, instructional skills, management skills, teaching strategies, and measures to cater for individual differences as outlined in previous practices and Principles of Teaching units;
 - iii Have consolidated all personal teaching objectives from previous semesters;
 - iv Demonstrate that he/she can function as an autonomous and competent teacher.

CONTRIBUTION TO OVERALL COURSE AIMS:

The Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session) component prepares students for the sixth practical session of the course. The Practice of Teaching component links and integrates knowledge gained from sixth semester's Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session) unit, Curriculum Studies units and Foundation Studies units with the practical situation, and prepares students for the post practical session Principles of Teaching tutorials.

MATERIAL TAUGHT/TEACHING STRATEGIES:

1. Principles of Teaching (Pre Practical Session)

Sources of information suggesting and guiding program content: Departmental policy statements, curriculum documents, school/centre policy, children's needs, management committees.

Total curriculum objectives; components of the curriculum: core, recommended and other useful resources, and school and centre based; time allocations for the curriculum; key curriculum areas and their broad aims.

Converting the curriculum into teachable units and the necessary records; an overview showing content and time sequence; statement of time period which program covers; clear statement of objectives; statement of content, teaching/learning strategies and resources used; indication of student assessment procedures and instruments; teacher's unit evaluative comments; the day book.

An integrated programming format.

Teaching activity, Curriculum and Foundation Studies units', situation analysis, resource collection and personal summary/evaluation requirements for the sixth practical session of the course.

2. Principles of Teaching (Post Practical Session)

Problems identified by beginning teachers; quality of judgement and deciding rightness-ethics and teaching; formulating classroom policy and participating in school policy formulation; reporting to parents, community involvement; teacher professional development; school and teacher assessment; teachers and the law; homework; unionism; gaining employment.

3. Practice of Teaching

Student tasks and learning experiences (as detailed in Practice of Teaching V Handbook) embracing:

- i Specific teaching activities.
- ii Curriculum Studies and Foundation Studies units' exercises.
- iii A situation analysis.

- iv A resource collection
- v A personal summary and evaluation of the practical experience.

ASSESSMENT:

For Principles of Teaching material taught pre-practical session, the quality of the student constructed program of work to be personally implemented during the practical experience determines the student's eligibility to undertake the practical session. At the end of the practical session an assessment profile is completed by a panel consisting of the supervising classroom teacher, the school co-ordinator of practice teaching, and the visiting liaison lecturer. The student is recommended as pass, unsatisfactory or grade pending.

TEXT:

For the tutorial component of the unit each student will be provided with a Principles of Teaching V Handbook; this contains a set of critical readings central to the objectives and material taught. For the practical session component each student will be provided with a Practice of Teaching V Handbook which sets out learning experiences, expectations and guidelines for the practical session.

APPENDIX 3

BACHELOR OF TEACHING (PRIMARY AND EARLY CHILDHOOD)

FIELD-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AND CHILD CARE CENTRES

Expressions of interest

Visiting neighbourhood shopping centres, community centres, and sports clubs, and attending after-hours functions, sporting events and community action meetings.

Active participation in environmental protection movements, community projects, fundraising events and publicity.

Class observations with (1) general, and (2) specific focus. For example, (1) Teachers' use of language (2) Questioning techniques

Reacting to planning, programming, and policy and procedures documents.

Undertaking participant observation in different sites: tuck shop, school yard, sleeproom and play areas.

Examining teaching materials and other resources.

Administering interaction schedules and undertaking simple discourse analysis and ethnographic work.

Involvement in community and environmental projects: fundraising, publicity and other activities.

Participation in classroom/centre activities under supervision.

How Does the School/Centre Benefit from the Field-based Teacher Education Program as a Whole?

In order to decide whether to become involved schools and centres need to consider the new program as a whole. Over the three years of the program schools and centres benefit from:

The opportunity to help shape future teachers through sharing practical knowledge and inculcating a sense of professional responsibility.

Assistance in the classroom and centres from students and university teaching staff.

The presence of additional team members, releasing teachers to undertake curriculum writing, community projects and school/classroom investigations, subject to legal considerations

The stimulus to Professional Development provided by a changed approach to collaborative supervision.

A continuing opportunity to review work-based practice.

Substantial input into the Teacher Education curriculum through participation with university staff in seminars and workshops

An opportunity to engage in participative action research with student-teachers and university staff.

Bachelor of Teaching

Field-based Teacher Education Partnership in Schools and Child Care Centres

Expressions of Interest

Partnership Agreements

The contents of this Information leaflet will form the basis for the provisions of the Partnership Agreement after further discussion with the SCP (Standing Committee on the Practicum).

For further Information please contact a member of the Practicum Coordination team:

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3/11/94

Faculty of Education



NORTHERN TERRITORY
UNIVERSITY

Bachelor of Teaching Field Work Component

What Does the Field Work Component Comprise?

The field work component involves schools and child care centres in taking students for the equivalent of a half-day a week for 8 weeks for each of the first three semesters of the Bachelor of Teaching program. The days and times will need to be negotiated between the schools and centres and the student-teachers in the light of the student-teachers' timetable, the school/centre calendar and the proposed observation activities.

What is Expected of the School or Centre in the Field Work Component?

Participating schools/centres are asked to:

- Provide a supportive and collegial environment in which student-teachers feel free to participate.
- Provide opportunities for classroom observation. Such observations will require purposeful interaction between student-teachers and teaching staff.
- Encourage and enable student to sit in on unit or team meetings, joint programming sessions, and school/centre action planning.
- Demonstrate a willingness to subject work practices to critical examination in a non-threatening environment.
- Make available copies of action plans and policy documents for students to read.
- Introduce students into the planning process and associate them with ongoing programming. Students will not be expected to undertake independent planning or programming during this period.
- Demonstrate how good relationships with children are established and how these are managed in the daily program.
- Facilitate attendance at staff meetings, parent-teacher-pupil conferences, and meetings of the School Council, the School Council Curriculum sub-committee and Management Committee meetings.
- Provide feedback to the Standing Committee on the Practicum on how the Field Work component of the program is working out.

Does the Field Work Component Mean More Work for Teachers?

Yes and no! You judge!

There are no reports to write although as the student's mentor you will be asked to help the student decide whether he or she has chosen the right profession.

The standing committee would also appreciate feedback on the way the program is working.

The standing committee thinks that having a first year student-teacher will be much like initiating a parent or volunteer into the work of the classroom or centre.

A student should be able to undertake some activities which will release teachers and caregivers to spend more time working with individual children and small groups. For instance students might be asked to oversee assigned work, read to small groups, supervise a painting project, etc.

Classroom teachers would facilitate observation and data collection activities and become involved in interpreting the results. Such results will be treated as confidential.

Schools and centres may wish to appoint a Coordinator to channel communication with the University and the SCP.

A student can become a sounding board for discussing problems, a person with whom to share the successes and highlights of the day, and provides another set of eyes, ears and hands to manage the many everyday tasks that need to be done.

Teachers do not receive payment for the Field Work component of the program which does not qualify as a practicum.

Accepting students for field work does not mean that a teacher or carer will be unable to work with ongoing students in the Diploma of Teaching which continues until the end of 1996.

What are the Benefits of the Field Work Component to the Student-Teacher?

Student-teachers are expected to obtain a number of benefits including:

- An opportunity to decide whether teaching or child care is the right career choice.
- The opportunity to relate the content of Educational Studies units to the lived experience of children, teachers and caregivers.
- An insight into the work of teachers and caregivers to discover how professionals operate in action.
- Immediate 'hands-on' experience and the acquisition of practical knowledge.
- Experience in a variety of classrooms and schools within the cluster and an understanding of the ecology of particular classrooms/centres.
- Experience at working as a member of a learning community in a collegial setting.

An opportunity to see at first hand how the school or centre responds to family issues and community concerns.

An opportunity to discover how schools and centres are dealing with issues of class, gender, and race.

What Does the University Contract to Do?

The university contracts to undertake the following:

- To ensure student-teachers are fully aware of their responsibilities with regards to the moral and ethical requirements of Field Work.
- To provide close direction and supervision of the program through the Coordination Team.
- To prepare students to undertake observation activities.
- To issue all those involved with clear guidelines as to what is required of student-teachers in the observation activities.
- The Standing Committee on the Practicum has insisted that these be *interactive* activities. Some suggested field work activities are given below.
- To involve teachers and caregivers in the design of observation activities through visits to schools by members of the coordination team.
- To provide teachers and caregivers with suggestions as to how they might assist students with the observation and data-collection activities.
- To assist teachers and caregivers to engage in critical reflection and participative action research, over the life of the program.

Suggested Field Work Activities

- Discovering how participative, collaborative teaching is undertaken as a member of a team.
- Reaching out to individual children and building relationships with parents and the community.
- Critical reading of school policy and planning documents.
- Keeping a private journal or diary to record and reflect on field work activities.
- Engaging in reflective practice in follow up workshops, group seminars and tutorials.
- Observing parent-teacher-child conferences.
- Sitting in on staff meetings, unit meetings, planning meetings and School Council meetings to discover how decisions are made.
- Interviewing teachers, parents and School Council members.