

LEARNING SELVES

**A study of police students' learning in community placements,
using diaries**

PhD

Catherine Layton

2004

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

This research draws primarily on three items of five students' writing. These are their diaries (D) (referred to largely in terms of the day of the diary entry), the required 20 activities (A1 – A20), and two reflections (R1 and R2). Some information about the students was provided on a cover sheet (CS) supplied to them.

To distinguish between the writings of the various students, each writer's initial becomes a prefix, with, for example, Annabel's second reflection being referenced as AR2, or Denis' cover sheet as DCS. Although several students share the same initial, all of the detailed quotations and references concern the five students whose work was intensively studied. None of these five informants shared the same initial.

Other abbreviations used in this study are as follows:

CARE	Centre for Applied Research in Education, University of East Anglia
CSU	Charles Sturt University
ECT	electro-convulsive therapy
LPP	legitimate peripheral participation
NSW	New South Wales
PARC	Police Academy Review Committee
PREP	Police Recruit Education Program
S/E	socio-economic

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Abstract

When considering how people learn through, and are themselves changed by, work, the processes of learning are largely conceptualised in terms of the immediate work context and its tasks, and in terms of reflection upon experience. These approaches tend to obscure the location of work itself in people's lives in late modern societies, and intentional, future-oriented aspects of learning in this broader context.

In this exploratory case study of police students' learning in community placements, drawing upon a sociological framework, I consider whether and how five students, and their project of becoming a police officer, changed as they dealt with the risks of unfamiliar situations in the light of their intended career. My guiding assumptions about selves and learning are that both need to be viewed multi-dimensionally. Selves, and therefore learning, involve temporality, embodiment (senses, actions, feelings and thoughts), language, relatedness and situatedness.

Using a variety of analytical and interpretive strategies, in an iterative and hermeneutic process, this thesis examines the recorded experiences of the students during their four-week placement. Records such as these are considered particularly useful for exploratory case studies, because of their capacity to reveal self-positioning and concrete socio-historical conditions.

The results were that, although learning could be stimulated by the immediate context, it was also channelled by the students' wider social and temporal context. Unfamiliarity was only a potential starting point for learning, critically influenced by factors such as learners' understandings of their situation and of their future as a police officer, their values, skills and self-confidence, their emotional responses to what they encountered, and the types of guidance available. Students responded creatively to the risks of the new work environment, thereby creating new situations that also demanded action, in an ongoing process of *bricolage*. In so doing, they drew on resources in their private lives as much as they did those at work. These interactions did not always change a student's self-positioning, nor, therefore, did they necessarily lead to learning or to a changed perception of the future. The study suggests the potential value of further

exploration of sociological understandings of selves, particularly an ecological approach, in extending our understanding of adults' learning in everyday life in contemporary society, as well as our understanding of intentional, future-oriented aspects of learning.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 The Question Game

The Surrealists used to play a game (the ‘question game’) in which they provided the answer to a question before they knew the question. In this case, it might be thus:

- Assertion 1 putting selves before learning (ontology before epistemology) provides new views of how people learn at work, *and*
- Assertion 2 establishing the place of work in people’s lives in the late modern context is the precursor to understanding how they might be learning at and through work, *and*
- Assertion 3 learning through experience towards a desired future can be characterised as a form of craftwork in which materials (social and natural) that are to hand are drawn on to fashion that future.
- Question For policing students, what are the learning processes that underpin becoming a police officer when they undertake a community placement¹?

Whereas the Surrealists used the lack of coherence between answer and question to stimulate creativity, in this thesis I will be *developing coherence*, by tracing out the path I have trodden between the question and the three assertions I have made. This path will be located against the backdrop of my thesis, which is that the negotiation of projects in workplaces alters the projects and repositions, and therefore changes, selves.

This, then, is an exploratory case study of learning in the workplace, and the relationship of this learning to selves. I canvass the implications of an ecological perspective on selves for understanding learning at and through work. More specifically, I aim to find out how student police officers’ projects of becoming police officers are affected by their experiences during a community placement, when

¹ This placement was with a community agency, not in a police station.

processes of learning are seen as interactive and intimately connected to selves, when individuals' experiences at work are understood as merely a part of a wider constellation of experiences, and when the future is viewed as significant to learning.

In treading the path between question and assumptions, I examine how five selected policing students piece together (if they do) the events and interpersonal contacts of their everyday placement experiences to modify, or confirm, their understandings of themselves. My study explores the processes of negotiation and shifts in self-positioning as recorded by these five students: how they responded to the activities and the people with whom they were involved in the light of their projects and intentions; what they found problematic, and how they dealt with this; and what guidance or support they were given. Examining their experiences allows for the questioning of the assumptions with which I began this research, and the opening up of some new ways of looking at learning at work.

This chapter introduces the thesis from three perspectives. Firstly, I consider the genesis of the research question itself, and its embedding in various themes that have been of interest to me over several decades, as well as its location in the immediate context of my work. I go on to outline the aims and argument of the thesis as well as its theoretical underpinnings. The third section describes the content of the various chapters in the thesis, and how they contribute to the development of my argument. In the fourth section I go on to establish the value of this study, before defining key terms I have used that relate to my theoretical assumptions, and concluding with a discussion of the scope of this study and its limitations.

1.2 Personal background

There are four main strands of my experience that have been drawn into this thesis: a long-term interest in the mutability of selves; an even longer-held interest in diary-writing and personal accounts of experiences; the use of ideas drawn from the sociology of knowledge to inform ways in which I approached experiential education and the teaching of adults; and almost fifteen years of experience in police education. The following sections outline these influences.

1.2.1 *The mutability of selves*

Given the prominence of questions of identity in this thesis, it is important to position myself in terms of contemporary debates. My interest in this area needs to be set against my early (negative) reactions both to psychological notions of identity that saw identities as fixed and as undergoing a conservatively structured maturation process, as well as to analyses by post World War II French theorists of gender differences in identity (Irigaray 1985; de Beauvoir 1972 [1949]). I had been surprised when friends had seen themselves as fixed personalities, and disinterested by theorists postulating a process of maturation in adulthood based on conventional male life patterns (Ladbroke 1981, cited in Harvey et al. 1982; Gould 1978; Levinson et al. 1978). I had rejected de Beauvoir and Irigaray as reacting to the stifling conservatism of French society and as drawing a long bow on patriarchy respectively. Over 40 changes in homes since the age of thirteen (including migration), new friendships and relationships, different occupations with different foci (teaching pre-school children and French, promoting non-sexist education and the de-institutionalisation of disabled people, researching caravan living by families, developing Equal Employment Opportunity policies and procedures in hospitals, and positions in staff development and police education), and post-graduate research in sociology at a time when phenomenology (as expressed in the sociology of knowledge) had not quite been dumped by the wave of postmodernist theories, have all had something to contribute. While the rifts and metamorphoses in my several lives may have contributed to my understanding of selves as ever changing, they have also been underpinned by a sense of continuity, in which today's events have links and connections with what has now gone.

My interest in the mutability of selves has persisted following my first encounter with the field in the late 1970s, when I was researching the social construction of gender identity and its susceptibility to change, drawing on the work of Berger and Luckmann (1985 [1966]). The danger in my long-held interest in a constructivist approach to selves is that I may attempt to answer questions that have been dismissed in some quarters as irrelevant (Sheridan 1980: 5), or as so commonplace that they are no longer worth considering (Furbank 1999). However, it seems to me that the dominance of psychology in learning theory has meant that several potentially fruitful sociological approaches, now re-emergent in ecological perspectives on selves, have only rarely

been used to study adults' learning, and that such frameworks may have a particular contribution to make in the area of learning from experience.

I suggest this because the question of the relationship between the self and the social was central to the contributions of the Chicago School a century ago, the same period and tradition in which Dewey focused on experience and learning, and in which personal documents were seen as *the* best site for sociological research (Thomas & Znaniecki 1974: x [1918]). Engulfed by the tide of scientific approaches in the 1940s, selves were stripped of the social, learning of its context, and personal documents were replaced by approaches in which quantitative measures predominated. Nowadays, in the rejection of essentialism and scientific generalisability, the turn has been towards anthropological understandings, towards interactivity and relationships, and towards the recognition of difference – but not towards sociology.

Having come to this research with a holistic perspective on learning from experience, and a constructionist view of selves, I eventually chanced upon Burkitt's (1999; 1991) writings, and drew on his sociological articulation of an ecological perspective in developing the study. A risky choice, I was to discover, as there is scant empirical work from this perspective, despite the several calls for taking individual *and* contextual aspects of learning into account (Caffarella & Merriam 1999; Boud, Cohen & Walker 1996; Tennant & Pogson 1995; Jarvis 1987).

1.2.2 *Personal documents*

I have a long-held interest in diaries and first person accounts. As was the case for many girls of my generation, the stimulus for my own diary-keeping was *The diaries of Anne Frank*. I still possess the now rather embarrassing 'thought books' I kept spasmodically between the ages of sixteen to twenty three, and twenty nine to thirty five, in which the problems I faced in negotiating difficult life situations are recorded. Most are free-form, but the last of these diaries is more structured, after my attendance at a weekend journal workshop, based on Proffoff's (1975) work. The pattern of diary-writing reflects whether or not I had companions with whom I could talk about what was happening in my life, so, when I had not, my 'thought books' were my confidant.

A less common pastime was the type of literature that I was reading for pleasure before I even hit my teens – accounts by a surgeon, George Sava, of patients he had treated. Written in the first person, they probably offered the ‘spurious relation of intimacy and trust between writer and reader’ that Carter describes as being typical of ‘down-market womans’ magazine fiction’, in which the ‘I’s are a homogenous, upper-working, lower-middle, socially cohesive mass’ (Carter 1997: 455, 458). Whatever their shortcomings, they contributed to my interest in accounts of experience, particularly when they concerned problematic situations.

Thus my engagement with personal accounts was twofold: the articulation of experience *and* the opportunity for vicarious experience. In this study, my focus is far closer to my earlier interest in personal accounts than it is to current educational understandings of journals as sites for reflection. I go *behind* seeing journal writing as a reflective process, which is how the diaries were conceptualised by those who developed the subject, to look at the bearing that the learning experiences and interactions recorded have had on students’ projects and intentions², and vice versa.

1.2.3 *Teaching against resistance*

My history as a teacher is somewhat fragmented, with an early start aged eighteen as a teacher’s assistant in a pre-school, when my first attempt in dealing with a physical education class on my own ended in chaos, and later casual and part-time jobs teaching French and English conversation. These experiences formed the building blocks for later work in staff development (topics such as equal employment opportunity, staff selection and occupational health and safety), in police teacher education (how to facilitate learning using adult learning principles), and police education itself.

The most significant influence on my approach to teaching adults lies in the period when I was promoting non-sexist education in schools, and I needed to find ways in which teachers and Parents and Citizens groups would ‘hear’ what I was saying, without rejecting the arguments out of hand. The approach I developed was based in a combination of psychological theories of attitude change (Jahoda & Warren 1966), and

² The distinction between these terms is provided under ‘Definitions’ on page 26.

Schutz and Luckmann's (1974) view of the ways in which people dealt with problematic experiences. When running sessions, I presented myself in ways that were difficult to categorise negatively, and drew on my early experiences of teaching as an *assistante anglaise* in a French *lycée* (1967-1968), when, with no curriculum to follow, I had spontaneously used experiential strategies to interest the students in English language and culture. Later still, working in Equal Employment Opportunity, it seemed to me that the existing training made appeals on moral and rational grounds that were insufficient to effect change, and I instituted experiential approaches. Working collaboratively with qualified teachers showed me that there were languages other than the sociology of knowledge in which to express what I was doing. Using games and simulations that led to people questioning their assumptions in a light-hearted way became the central strategy I used across a wide spectrum of courses – and led me back into higher education.

My experiences of teaching, and my studies in adult education, have meant that an interest in how experiences can destabilise taken-for-granted understandings has been integral to my work, and this interest laid the groundwork for my consideration of students' responses to the unfamiliar context of the work placement.

1.2.4 *Police education*

It was as a stranger to police work, and the organisational framework in which it took place, that I began work with the New South Wales Police Service in 1989. My childhood experience was confined to Noddy books and the adage, 'If you want to know the time, ask a policeman'.

Already involved in work centred on social change, I was enthused by the ferment of activity that was in train in police education. Bradley & Cioccarelli (1989), Bradley (1987a, 1987b;) and Cioccarelli (n.d.) were calling for changes heralded in the Lusher Report of 1981 to be more fully implemented. They suggested that it was time for policing, given the complexities of contemporary society and the degree of discretion exercised by police in their everyday duties, to abandon the craftwork, 'limited expert' model of training, and to adopt a professional model of education. They sought curriculum changes (from drill and rote learning of the law to studies encompassing the

social sciences) and teaching changes (from militaristic bastardisation and didactic methods to experiential and problem-based methods). I took up a position as a 'non-police academic' at the then NSW Police Academy (now College³), with the role of changing teaching methods, and developing the final phase of the recruit education program of that period.

My sketchy stereotypes of police rapidly gave way in the face of the diversity of the people with whom I came into contact, and my assumption of uniformity crumbled as I encountered wildly divergent views about what best to do. Thus it was that, in 1992, when asked in a lecture to draw the organisation as animal, I could not come up with any beast that suited. Rather, this was my description: that, from the outside, there was a massive, slow moving, warty and unattractive lump, a unified force moving inexorably across the landscape, crushing what it rolled over in its own concern to achieve its ends. From the inside, however, it was all made up of random props and shafts, held together with 'blutak' and sellotape. There *was* no-one guiding it, they were all in there fighting each other over a vast array of different matters. Whilst the lecturer who initiated this drawing postulated that unhealthy, unbalanced organisms die, this organism, and the battles it contains, rolls on, and even renews itself, regardless. My perception is, perhaps not surprisingly, that my fourteen-year-old image is still a fair depiction, given that it turns out to be remarkably similar to Giddens' (1991) description of the 'juggernaut of modernity' as:

[...] a runaway engine of enormous power which, collectively as human beings, we can drive to some extent but which also threatens to rush out of our control and which could rend itself asunder. The juggernaut crushes those who resist it, and while it sometimes seems to have a steady path, there are times when it veers away erratically in directions we cannot foresee. The ride is by no means wholly unpleasant or unrewarding; it can often be exhilarating and charged with hopeful anticipation. It is not an engine made up of integrated machinery, but one in which there is a tensionful, contradictory, push-and-pull of different influences. (Giddens 1991: 139)

Between 1998 and 2001, the Diploma of Policing Practice, a police recruit education course jointly delivered by the NSW Police and Charles Sturt University, included a subject *JST121: Police and Society*. This subject was undertaken by distance education, and involved students in spending four, or later three, weeks in an agency that provided a service to people who were in some way disadvantaged. At this stage of their studies,

³ In 2001, the NSW Police Academy was re-named the NSW Police College.

students were still civilians aiming to attain employment with the NSW Police⁴. During this placement, students were required to make daily entries about their experiences in their 'Student Notebooks', as well as complete a range of analytical and reflective activities, in addition to being assessed against a learning contract developed with their placement supervisor. It is upon the Student Notebooks that this research is based.

The image of the juggernaut lumbering and lurching into the future sets the scene for considering how, in the face of such diversity and conflict within the then Academy, students' intentions might have been played out in their community placements. The divisions within the Academy (discussed in greater detail in chapter 2) seem more complex than the clinician versus academic split evident in medical and nursing education (Melia 1987; Becker et al. 1992 [1961]), and the likelihood of choice and difference inevitably increases because of these alternative and competing viewpoints (Bourdieu 1981).

1.2.5 *Assessing the influences*

The preceding sections delineate the various strands of my life that have been drawn into, and drawn upon in, this research. Many themes are woven into its fabric, held together by a focus on the learning processes that follow a problematic experience, when projects are rendered fragile in their interface with complex situations. The use of these themes was not a matter of an initial, well-articulated design: In sum, as in any other artefact or experience, I arrived at this thesis through a series of coincidences (Becker 1994; Giddens 1991). Then, too, how I have understood the issues has changed with the journey. Terrain I thought was uncharted turned out to be peppered with established towns (the need for learning to be situated); areas I got bogged in (the link between identity and learning from experience) turned out to be part of parallel universes, each with clearly marked roads.

⁴ A more thorough description of the course, its aims, and the subject itself, is provided in Chapter 2.

1.3 Introducing the research

1.3.1 *Aims of the study*

My thesis is that projects and intentions (to be a person of a particular sort, in this case, a police officer) are not easily sustained intact in the encounter with unfamiliar experiences, as in community placements, but must be negotiated, *and that these negotiations reposition selves*. I argue that, in addressing what they find to be problematic, students reposition themselves vis-à-vis others in the placement, and, sometimes, others outside of the placement situation, and that this repositioning, cognitive, behavioural or emotional, constitutes a change in selves. Rather than being a solely retrospective process, as narrative approaches would indicate, the building of identities is also, and significantly, a prospective process (Calderhead & Shorrocks 1997). Moreover, as neither the natural nor social environments are completely pliable, the process is one of negotiation and exchange. Each resulting modification builds trajectories, that is, the ongoing re-positioning of individuals in a particular context. The study explores the interplay between present and future, and the ways in which selves are negotiated, and, perhaps, change, *in situ*.

My theoretical perspective on selves is an ecological one, as articulated by Burditt (1999), where the interaction of bodies/minds in socio-natural environments means that each has effects on the other, with the impetus for the interactions lying in the survival of the ecosystem at the macro level⁵. Selves cannot be separated from this complex interplay. I base my view of learning on the holistic approaches to learning from experiences delineated by Boud & Miller (1996) and Boud, Cohen & Walker (1996), although my focus is on prospection (looking to the future) rather than reflection (working from the past)⁶. I suggest that students' interpretations of, and actions upon, experiences in community placements are intrinsically oriented towards futures, rather than towards setting past experience to rest, or towards gaining personal insights,

⁵ The approach is described further in section 1.3.2.1. Specific issues raised by Burditt (1999) form part of the argument in Chapter 3.

⁶ This is an intentional aspect of learning from experience which has not received much scholarly attention.

through reflection. In the middle of their experiences, learners are inevitably *bricoleurs*⁷ (Denzin & Lincoln 1998a, b &c: 3), improvising their way through experiences and interactions with the tools they have to hand and in the light of the possibilities they perceive as being available to them and the futures they desire.

Although intentions are recognised as having an important role in learning from experience (Bowden & Marton 1998; Beatty, Dall’Alba & Marton 1997; Boud & Walker 1996), and the future perfect tense of being and doing (‘I will have become’, or ‘I will have finished’) has an important role in everyday understandings of the world (Scribner 1997 [1986]; Schutz 1980 [1932]), these issues have not attracted empirical investigation in their own right. Given an intended outcome, in this case, passing a subject and progressing towards the goal of becoming a police officer, this thesis addresses the question, *what are the learning processes that underpin becoming?*

Whilst taking a theoretical position that the process is an holistic one, involving multiple dimensions of experience and action both within the individual and amongst actors in a particular community placement context, in this study I focus on individual learners’ written accounts of their experiences and responses to those experiences. My approach is a naturalistic, interpretive one, focused on discovering the contextual conditions, ideas and meanings that students held, as reflected in their diaries and in their records of their actions as these occurred over time. I could also have selected my own diaries, published diaries, interviews with students, or even refined the survey processes being used at that time within the subject in question. Each of these alternative approaches was inadequate, either because they dealt with longer term problematic situations (my own and other diaries) or retrospective accounts (interviews), none of which would generate the breadth, the depth, or the flux and unpredictability of immediate experience that I required, or because my presence (as interviewer or survey instrument designer) would have inappropriately restructured the spontaneous and emergent subjective processes I was seeking. In taking this approach, I acknowledge that my appreciation of the students’ learning is indirect, and that the

⁷ A *bricoleur* is the French term for a handyperson, someone who pragmatically selects the tools at hand in order to accomplish a particular task, even making them if there is nothing that quite fits the purpose (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: 3). The use of the term in this thesis is expanded under Section 1.7.

interpretations offered reflect my subjectivity as much as they do that of the students (Schutz 1980: 8)⁸.

1.3.2 *Theoretical background*

My thesis lies at the intersection of debates about learning in communities of practice/professional education, learning from experience, and sociological understandings of selves. There are commonalities and tensions between these three areas, the commonalities lying in pragmatist philosophies⁹ that underpin sociological understandings and theories of learning from experience, views of practice/praxis as central in anthropologically-based studies of communities of practice and the ecological approach, and the use of Russian theorists of development in the latter two fields. The tensions between these perspectives arise more from the types of work they have spawned than from their premises, for example, the focus on reflection in the literature on learning from experience tends towards the past, although the five assumptions (Boud & Miller 1996; Boud, Cohen & Walker 1996) underpinning this approach are in tune with ecological understandings. The tension is far greater between the approaches I have selected and psychologically-based theories of identity. However, my denial of dualism means that, of necessity, I end up drawing on different disciplines (Burkitt 1991: 3), despite these tensions.

My research links two distinct theoretical areas, theories of selves and theories of learning, through its recognition of the role of the socio-natural environment as delineated above. Both areas of thought have been affected, and challenged, by a paradigmatic shift from individualism towards the social, from unitary perspectives towards difference and multiplicity, from predictability towards uncertainty, and from generalisability to uniqueness and difference. This shift is fundamentally one away from scientific and psychological interpretations of the world towards assumptions of relatedness and situatedness respectively. The ecological approach combines

⁸ Although lived experiences cannot be captured directly through text (Denzin & Lincoln 1998a, b & c: 21), texts, and their interpretation, provide finger-print-smudged windows into subjectivities (Jahn 2002).

⁹ The American pragmatist philosophers believed that the test of ideas lies in their practical consequences (Flaherty & Fine 2001: 147). It is based in a neo-Darwinian naturalistic conception of the mind, with thinking as an activity aimed at ameliorating the circumstances of and for action, with forms of thinking changing according to changing conditions (Cosser 1977: 348-349).

relatedness and situatedness with recognition of the role of continuity, which has receded into the penumbra as a consequence of the shift in paradigms.

1.3.2.1 Questions of identity

The psychological position on identity has been one based on two premises, these being essentialist and developmental, both of which have been set against post-Enlightenment understandings of individualism and individuation and traditional male life patterns. Since the 1970s, there have been many criticisms of this viewpoint. Of importance to this thesis is the critique of the essentialist view, and the resulting emergence of a relational view of selves. From this new perspective, selves are embedded in social relationships, a product of specific interactions, although the way in which this occurs is accounted for in several different ways. One of these is the feminist approach, whose origins lie in Freud's accounts of development, and in which it was originally asserted that women's development was built around relationships and caring, not autonomy (Abel & Nelson 1990; Gilligan 1982), a position that itself can be critiqued as essentialist (Mackenzie & Stoljar 2000). As the latter authors also point out, feminist accounts have forced a focus on finer-grained and richer accounts of the concept of agency, demanding that social and historical context, feelings, embodiment, desire, creativity, rationality, memory, imagination, dispositions and attitudes be taken into account (Mackenzie & Stoljar 2000: 21). Another challenge to essentialist and autonomous views of identity arises from French thinkers of the late 1960s and early 1970s such as Derrida and Lacan, and is based in linguistics. From this perspective, identity is a linguistic fiction, one of many possible narratives we carry with us into the multitude of life situations we encounter, giving a false coherence to the different selves that are called out in interactions with others.

A third relational approach to selves, used in this thesis, is in the work of Burkitt (1999). Burkitt asserts that the effect of the Cartesian separation of mind from body is compounded by the self-regulation of disciplined bodies, to create a *felt* separation of the 'real' I from the self presented to others (Burkitt 1999: 19). Rather than accept this distinction, a *multi-dimensional* perspective is required, thus avoiding the pitfalls of approaches which reduce all human experience to language (and which deny physical

space and time), as well as allowing for the physical powers of embodied agents in relation to the social and natural world (Burkitt 1999: 37; 65; 83).

Burkitt argues that human culture should not be understood in terms of ideas that can never be verified (such as in Foucault, Nietzsche and Freud), but should, as Bourdieu identifies, be understood in terms of artefacts (Burkitt 1999: 27-33). Objects and artefacts¹⁰ in the environment have 'affordances' (Gibson 1979) that invite and sustain certain bodily actions, and 'crystallise' social activities, which we appropriate (Burkitt 1999: 35-36).

It is our intentional activity, using social and natural artefacts, that forms the sensory and neural functions in the body (Burkitt 1999: 33-34; 75). It is in the possibility of action, the 'I can' of Merleau-Ponty (1962) that the *sense* of 'I' is located (Burkitt 1999: 76). The notion of experience, although problematic, is a reminder of this active, bodily relation to the world (Burkitt 1999: 20).

Repeated actions form the *habitus*, that is, durable patterns of being in the world which can be reproduced and adapted in appropriate circumstances (Burkitt 1999: 76, 85-88). People's understanding is constructed in joint practices and everyday face to face communication, and personal identities are taken on through bodily presence in overlapping networks of relationships (Burkitt 1999: 20). In this way, material contexts, including work, do not go unrecognised (Burkitt 1999: 72).

Burkitt's ecological understanding of the body/self is of particular relevance to this thesis because it combines the multi-dimensionality of human experience (thoughts, feelings, actions, and relationships) with a grasp of the importance of the future in everyday experience. This whole-of-system perspective, when linked with Giddens' (1991) outline of the nature of modernity, overcomes the limitations of a situated understanding of identity (arising from its basis in small-system anthropological studies), in its failure to identify the very complex situatedness of work itself in people's lives in late modern societies. Work may be a primary source of identity for

¹⁰ Words, too, are artefacts.

some, but there are other concurrent self-making processes in play in this era, several of which are likely to be far more significant than work.

1.3.2.2 Questions of learning

Psychological approaches to learning have dominated the field of education, embracing Piaget's developmental approach, and behaviourist, psychoanalytic, and humanistic models (Tennant 1988). Piaget's (1967) work forms a link between the developmental theories of selves sketched, in brief, above, and views of adults' learning as involving a process of maturation along a predetermined track. His work has also, importantly, contributed a focus on cognition.

The challenge to psychological models has been slower in taking hold in adult education than has been the case for theories of identity, perhaps partly because of the wealth of alternative psychological perspectives. The challenge to psychological understandings largely has its origins, at least in terms of learning at and through work, in anthropological theories, in which the importance of social practices are emphasised, through the work of Lave and Wenger (1991). This stance has combined with earlier studies by Chi, Glaser & Farr (1988), and Scribner (1997 [1986]), etc., who were examining practical knowledge (situated cognition). These situated learning theories emphasise a combination of sociality and practice. Billett (2001: 19), for example, drawing on Lave & Wenger, Vygotsky, Leonteyev & Scribner, sees learning in working life being a product of everyday thinking and acting through practices at work, with the quality of the learning contingent upon the types of activities, interactions and affordances of the workplace. A central issue in this is the match between the individual's beliefs, values and norms, and the culture of the workplace: if norms and values are antithetical, people may *disidentify* rather than identify with their work (Billett 2001: 21, 31). As was described for the new theories of identity, learning cannot be separated from its social context.

This interconnectedness assumes greater significance when universities increasingly use work placements (Boud & Garrick 1999: 3), or, as in the United States, service learning approaches (Wolfson & Willinsky 1998), in their courses. Work placements are intended to counterbalance the problem created by professionalisation, which is that

aspirants, through lengthier training, have an ever less accurate picture of what the work involves (Becker et al. 1992 [1961]). While not all workplace learning experiences live up to their potential (Bowden & Marton 1998: 137), a study of course-based service learning and self-initiated community service using pre-tested measures by Astin et al. (2000) found that there were significant positive effects on all measures, and it is these sorts of findings, along with the need to have students practice their profession, that is fuelling increased interest in such placements.

1.3.2.3 Questions of time

Dewey (1975 [1938]: 20-22, 44) argued that experience must be seen as both longitudinal (the principle of continuity) and lateral (the principle of interactivity). The time dimension, whilst not being heavily pursued, is occasionally recognised in the literature on discursive views of identity (e.g., Clandinin & Connelly 2000: 155; Davies and Harré n.d.). Many social scientists have seen space and time as simply facets of nature, not realising their importance for the ways in which we might conceptualise self, interaction and society (Flaherty & Fine 2001: 158).

Learning cannot be separated from its temporal context. Time is the passive background against which change occurs, but the experience of it is complicated, flexible and multiple (it slows when we are bored, is fast when we concentrate, and so on) (Pollack 1999: 4-5). Time is integral to practice, partly because our experience of practice is of uncertainty as to the outcome (Bourdieu 1981: 8-9), and there is simply no possibility of collecting all of the information one might need to predict an outcome (Becker 1994: 4).

It is against this background of uncertainty that we trust that our knowledge is valid for the future, including in terms of being able to repeat past successful acts (Schutz & Luckmann 1974: 7). People typically interpret stimuli (form working hypotheses) before choosing their responses, the results of which show the correctness or otherwise of the interpretation and the action. The initial definition of a situation projected by an individual, likewise, tends to provide a plan for activity, including the presentation of self, that is, communicating as a particular sort of person who ought to be treated in a particular sort of way (Jenkins 1996: 22; Eggins & Slade 1996: 8; Goffman 1976: 24),

as well as involving foresight of the consequences of certain actions (Dewey 1975: 67). Learning, in this view, is forward moving, driven by curiosity about the present and anticipation of the future (Kolb 1984: 132), and the intention to become, for example, a police officer, necessarily acts as a partial determinant of the environments in which one will act in the future, shutting out other options (Scribner & Beach, cited in Billett 2001: 21; Bowden & Marton 1998: 38; Dewey 1975: 37).

1.3.3 *Learning selves*

Although it is increasingly untenable to conceptualise selves or learning as separate from the environment, and there is an ever-increasing body of literature based on the importance of the connection between the two, there is not yet a large body of research that recognises the interplay (Connelly & Clandinin 1999; Caffarella & Merriam 1999; Casey 1995). As research that aims to encompass learning and selves ('learning selves') I am therefore traversing relatively uncharted ground.

As mentioned earlier, the perspective that best recognises the interplay of these two factors, and which, besides a concern with action (practice) also draws in the importance of corporeality and time, is an ecological one. It is the implications of this framework for our understanding of how selves might be learned that I discuss in chapter 3.

1.4 **Methodological issues**

This research is a naturalistic, interpretive case study of students' learning, based on the work of twenty three policing students, and on an intensive examination of the writings of five of them. Cresswell (1998: 15), Miles and Huberman (1994: 6) and Garman (1996: 28) variously list the characteristics of this type of (qualitative) research as including intensive personal contact with everyday life situations, an inductive analysis of subjectively meaningful phenomena, the capturing of people's perceptions through deep attentiveness and empathetic understanding and writing in ways that foster a similar approach in the reader, as well as attention to particulars, and to routine and problematic moments, in order to provide the flavour of the context and to build a complex, holistic picture. They also mention that the qualitative approach allows for the

preservation of the chronological flow of events (Miles & Huberman 1994: 1; Yin 1994: 113). The data that result can be used to illuminate or explain, not verify, what is happening (Garman 1996: 22).

Methods of qualitative analysis are not well-formulated (Miles & Huberman 1994: 2), and this includes the analysis of case studies (Yin 1994: 19, 102). Studying cases can assist in the identification of new leads, and the extension of knowledge, as well as bridge existing areas of knowledge, reinforce main trends, exemplify important themes, qualify or refine existing knowledge and define parameters for follow-up research (Miles & Huberman 1994: 31). Yin emphasises their value in situations in which the context is relevant, and Holzner (1978: 309) called for detailed descriptive case studies of how identities are negotiated.

Cresswell (1998: 130) considers journals to be a popular choice for case studies, and Berg (1998: 188-189) saw them as particularly useful, because, typically, the writer's own definitions of the situation emerge. They can reveal deeper, more tacit aspects of cultural life that can be difficult to fathom through, say, observation (Holliday 2002: 96). Lieblich, Tuval-Maschiach and Zilber (1998: 7) describe journals as the clearest channel for accessing the inner world of others; they provide 'an irresistible glimpse into the private thoughts of the writer' (Coare & Thomson 1996: vii). Accounts of everyday reality can have a 'ring of truth' about them, with their validity generalised through the reader's own experiences (Schostak 2002: 147). Importantly for this study, journals potentially concern the future (Boud 2001: 12).

Although this is not true of language learning and literacy studies, personal documents such as journals are not as frequently used as other qualitative techniques such as interviews and observations (Nestor 2001: 58; English & Gillen 2001: 3). Documents came to be controversial, ironically (given the approach was initially a reaction against science as a model for studying the social) because of debates about their capacity to meet the criteria for scientific inquiry (Manning & Cullum-Swan 1998: 246-247; Madge 1978: 84). They are 'mute evidence', which sits uneasily in the interpretive stance, because of the importance attached to speaking subjects (Hodder 1998: 110, 121). To use such documents also risks objectifying the informants, by drawing on a one-way process where information is elicited but not given (Oakley, cited in Smith &

Watson 1992: 5). Hodder points out, in defence of documents, that even interactionist researchers must decide whether or not to take comments at face value, and that the ways to confirm interpretations are coherence (arguments do not contradict one another, and the degree to which the interpretation matches the theories used) and correspondence (consistency amongst the conditions) (Hodder 1998: 125).

In this study, I have worked almost entirely from documentary sources – the ‘Student Notebooks’ written by policing students over the four weeks of their placement. These notebooks were in three parts: a daily diary of events and experiences; twenty activities that aimed to link these events and experiences to the theoretical underpinnings of the subject; and two reflections, one after 40 hours (one week’s work), and the other at the conclusion of the placement. The work had already been marked and returned to students when I requested their resubmission for this research, and about 10% of the cohort in question kindly agreed to participate. I also attended one briefing and two debriefings, and, later on in the life of this subject, marked well over 1,000 notebooks written by other students.

The major methodological issues raised by my choice of method arise, therefore, from my choice of drawing on the students’ diaries almost to the exclusion of any other data source. Importantly, another concern is that these are student diaries, in which the assessment context will have affected what they did. In my defence, the approach I have selected has a particular affinity with my theoretical orientation to learning and to selves. The pragmatists all shared an interest in experience and subjectivity, and were the developers of personal document methods (Plummer 1983: 51-53; Madge 1978: 82-83). Plummer suggests that there are three dimensions to the affinity between personal documents and theories that are indebted to American pragmatism, and these are the concrete experiences embedded in problem-solving, dialectical relationships between body, mind, context and society, and emergent perspectives in conditions of precariousness and flux (Plummer 1983: 53-55). In such contexts, the routes into learners’ experiences are their words and acts (Marton & Booth 1997: 16). Becker makes a case for personal documents as touchstones for theory, allowing for

diachronic¹¹ work, and moving the interpreter towards the subject's perspective (Smith 1998: 208). As Berg notes:

In some instances, unobtrusive indicators provide access to aspects of social settings and their inhabitants that are simply unreachable through any other means. (Berg 1998: 177)

1.4.1 *Accessing the learning of selves in an assessment context*

Diary-writing is a process that occurs over time, and is intrinsically about subjective perceptions of events and experiences, involving the selection (from myriad events) of experiences, feelings, and thoughts either deemed worth recording, or capable of being recorded. When the writing includes people in one's environment, these records are likely, as with a face-to-face conversation, to position people in relation to those others, and to allow for the identification of any changes occurring.

In an assessment context, questions of audience, which are always present even when diaries are intended to be kept private, are likely to predominate. Students who have experienced the negative consequences of sharing their uncertainties, realities or passions with teaching staff (Berlin, cited in Grimm 1998: 1; Boud 1998, 1996) are likely to limit what they write. Those who suspect that their views might not be acceptable may also choose to limit what they record. Whatever the student's views, tailoring what was written to meet the imagined marker's interpretation would be in-built.

Despite this being the case, the diversity in the diaries submitted indicates that the students had widely differing responses to the assessment context. Some tried to write their diary as an academic piece of work in its own right, and others used the diary as a very personal record: both types of choices were explained to the imagined marker. Still other students left the reader of the diary guessing where they stood. Perhaps this diversity was because students had only the relatively vague guidelines provided in the subject from which to work, in a study context of considerable complexity as to the balance between academe and practical police work?

¹¹ The use of the term 'diachronic' – across time – has expanded from its original linguistic domain (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner 1994).

Importantly, the focus of the students' writing was to be upon their experiences of and with other people in a context of action over time. This type of temporal data, unless students' contacts with others were fleeting or highly routine, allows for the identification of changing views of self and others, should these occur. It was therefore highly unlikely that I would be unable to obtain data with which I could work.

1.4.2 *Analysing the empirical materials*

When working with documentary materials there are two essential components that require analysis, that is, as de Saussure (cited in Jahn 2002) described it, the *what* and the *how*. I am working on the *what*, within the sociological tradition of textual analysis, in which the text is a window into human experience, rather than using a linguistic focus on how the language used creates the meaning (Tesch 1990, cited in Ryan & Bernard 2000: 769). When considering several narratives, as am I, the most appropriate approach is considered to be content analysis (Lieblich, Tuval-Maschiach and Zilber 1998: 13). Nonetheless, some of the changes, and the self-positioning that is the focus of this research, may also be embedded in the *how* of students' writing. The use of expletives, capital letters, or the third person will be important indicators of how students are responding, or whether or not their understanding of the teacher/student relationship could be affecting what they write, and therefore some attention is paid to these matters.

In analysing these materials, I have used a variety of strategies broadly drawn from constructivist and interpretivist traditions. I read all of the diaries several times, abbreviating some that would not be heavily drawn upon, and having the remainder transcribed to allow for the next stage. With this level of familiarity, I selected five of the diaries for intensive study. I then drew on the coding and sorting capacities of the qualitative analysis software program, N-Vivo, to examine the materials and to identify the themes in these diaries. This process provided me with materials categorised around student-generated themes (bracketing), and I then worked deconstructively, revisiting the diaries, this time seeking out any content related to the theories upon which I had been drawing. Sacks (1992, cited in Silverman 1994: 81) explored how we could make inferences from statements such as 'The X cried. The Y picked it up', and from the choice of category used in descriptions (a 'thirty year old lawyer was robbed'). I have

had to rely, in the absence of any opportunity to clarify students' words, on this type of inference-making. To assist the reader in undertaking a similar process, I have used the students' words whenever possible, and used thick descriptions (different and complex facets of the various phenomena) (Holliday 2000: 80). In addition, I have developed data displays ('diaryscapes'¹²) using 'Microsoft Excel', which allow, as Miles & Huberman 1994: 40, Reinharz (1992: 154) and Smith 1975, cited in Berg (1998: 224) suggest, consideration of patterns of experiences, their types, durations and frequencies.

The two processes of bracketing and deconstruction formed the framework for interpreting the diaries. To triangulate this data, I also drew on my attendance at one briefing and two debriefings about the placements, and my own later involvement in marking students' work in this same subject. My subsequent analysis of these other two sources of data were analysed and interpreted in a similar fashion to the diaries.

1.5 Organisation of the study

Police education is unfamiliar territory for the majority of the population, including those involved in adult education. As a consequence, the study starts, in chapter 2, with an introduction to the debates about how best to develop policing, set against the recognised understandings of how police work shapes identities. I then go on to consider how these debates have shaped police education in New South Wales, and delineate the various stages in the development of education for policing as a profession since the early 1980s. In this second chapter, I identify five different models that have framed the educational endeavour, to locate the experiences of the students in this study against what has been a complex backdrop. I also detail the genesis of the community placement, including its aims and the work that the students were required to undertake as part of their studies. Drawing on unpublished research about the history and effectiveness of the placement by Bowles et al. (2000), I then provide more detailed information on the variety of community placements that were undertaken by almost 3,000 students between September 1998 and February 2002. The second chapter therefore contextualises the study.

¹² An explanation of the term is provided on page 107, chapter 4.

In chapter 3, I discuss the theoretical issues that underpin the question of how people might be learning selves in the late modern context. In using an ecological perspective on selves, in combination with a holistic perspective on learning from experience, I have been faced with a complex array of factors, each of which was composed of its own complex array of factors. To reduce this complexity, and target the questions driving this research, I do not provide a traditional literature review. Rather, based on the work of theorists such as Burkitt (1999; 1991), Giddens (1991), Schutz and Luckmann (1974), and Boud et al. (1996; 1993; 1991; 1985), I attempt to describe ways in which the contemporary separation of space and time might affect the construction of selves when they are conceptualised ecologically, and to suggest ways in which people might encounter and learn from their experiences when the focus is on the future rather than on the past.

This research is exploratory in more than the theoretical sense, because the decision to work primarily from documentary sources, using diachronic data, has meant there were no models that could easily be followed or adapted for the empirical study. In chapter 4, then, I liken my situation to that of the Fool in the tarot, stepping off the edge of the precipice in a voyage of discovery, carrying with me a bag of tools that may or may not be useful (Gearhart & Rennie 1977). In this chapter, I outline the methodological issues underpinning my inquiry, paying particular attention to the problems of relying on 'mute evidence', of how to access context through such accounts, and, in this etic study, of how to deal with the students' writing with due respect for their voices. I also review the types of information that can be elicited from personal documents, before going on to describe the iterative and hermeneutic processes that drove my interpretations and analyses. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the limitations of this case study, and of the trustworthiness of my interpretations.

Chapter 5 briefly introduces the twenty three informants who participated in this study, and the organisations in which they were placed. I attempt to provide rich descriptions, drawn from the students' accounts, which clearly illustrate the diversity amongst, and the tensions between, the ways in which those in the community organisations understood their task and their relationship with their student. The learning contexts for the twenty three students show considerable differences, some of which appear to have been based on the degree of professionalisation / voluntarism within the agency, with

State Government agencies appearing to offer greater depth of experiences than either the religious organisations or community groups, both of which were heavily reliant on volunteers.

In the next chapter, chapter 6, I go on to examine the learning experiences of five of the twenty three informants. Selected for their differences, and the interesting questions their work raised, these five students include two women under twenty (Annabel¹³ and Brittany) and three men between the ages of twenty five and thirty five (Denis, Hector and Kelvin). The facets of each diary I examine are the student's project of becoming a police officer, the level of unfamiliarity with which these informants were faced, how they responded to this, and whether or not they changed their self-positioning. Each student is dealt with separately, with the youngest students being presented first. The differences between their experiences are significant, and make for some compelling reading, at least in their original form.

In chapter 7, I step back from the attempt to present the students' experiences in their own voices, to consider the extent to which what I have gleaned from analysing the diaries has answered my research questions. I conclude that my lead assumption can not be sustained, that is, *the long-term project of becoming a police officer was not necessarily modified by being in the placement*. On the other hand, for these five students, it was possible to identify differences in the ways in which they understood the project of becoming a police officer, how testing they found the unfamiliar aspects of the placement, how they responded to the problems they faced, and the extent to which, and arena of their life within which, they changed their self-positioning.

The final chapter moves a further step away, and it is here that I consider what I have learnt from undertaking this study and working with the students' diaries. I take these personal changes as indicators of gaps that others, too, might be identifying in the literature both on the process of research and on learning at work. These insights are related to the value of the ecological approach to learning in its recognition of interactivity between person and context, the importance of *bricolage* to understanding this interactivity, and the ways in which broader aspects of a person's life have a place

¹³ Informants' pseudonyms are in alphanumeric order, with the youngest (those under 20 years) having names beginning with 'A', and so on. An age profile of the informants is provided in chapter 4.

in learning at work than are currently recognised in the literature. Following an assessment of the strengths and limitations of the study, I conclude with a reflection on my research journey.

1.6 Pedagogical value of the study

There is a dearth of work on the nexus of personal experience with context, yet the connection between one's own background and understanding is clear (Boud, Cohen & Walker 1996: 1, 4). Most studies of learning ignore context (Boud 1997; Wildermeersch & Leirman 1988, cited in Mezirow 1991: 161-163), but there has been increasing interest since Vygotsky, and later Marton (Matthews & Candy 1999: 50-51), which has come into its own with situated learning studies. This latter literature focuses on the context, and, although it acknowledges the effects of contexts on selves, learners' perceptions and interventions are not closely scrutinized. Studies that are based on the learners' perspective yield very different information to exploring teachers' understandings of what is happening (Dahlgren 1984: 13). Smyth (1996: 48-49) argues that we should give primacy in the reform of teaching practices to the problems faced by students. It is particularly important that student voices are heard, given the ethical considerations implicit in placing students in situations where they are far from Faculty, and it may be too risky to share what appear to be private troubles.

The primary value of this study lies in the window it provides into students' perceptions and experiences during the course of their community placement. It shows how it is a mistake to view the situatedness of learning at work in terms of the workplace alone. The workplace can generate problems that are addressed outside of work, in discussion with more significant others, and/or it can be the site in which problems from other life spheres find a solution. Tennant (2000: 133) argues for the development of a pedagogy that focuses on situatedness but goes beyond it through exploring other contexts, other stories, broader interests and places. Daley (2000), in a study of lawyers, adult educators and nurses, recognised the importance of interactivity in workplace learning, and incorporated the political domain, but did not address the personal. I believe this study illustrates how important it is to conceptualise learning at work in far more holistic terms than has been the case to date, and that such a conceptualisation allows

for more realistic expectations of students and their learning in community placements than would otherwise be the case.

My secondary justifications for this study are linked to the above theoretical values, and concern the practical implications of conceptualising identities as negotiated (*in situ* and towards the future) for those involved in the design and delivery of field placements. Framing these is an ethical concern: that of social justice, in both providing a forum for those students whose placements were distressing or highly problematic, and the contradictory aim of arguing for the importance of these types of placements for generating improved communication between police and members of disadvantaged groups. These aims, I contend, transcend the questions about the validity of etic research.

My concluding assertions are that, although complex, an ecological, holistic approach does indicate the critical dimensions that may be present when studying how people might be learning from their experiences in everyday life, and that this has implications for the ways in which field-based learning is designed and assessed. I also assert that it is *bricolage* that underpins the ways in which people deal with problematic and unfamiliar experiences in everyday life. Finally, I assert that situatedness should be seen in terms of the individual experiencer and their life-context, not solely in terms of the workplace. It is where the relationships in the workplace fit in the individual's life-world that contribute to or detract from learning.

1.7 Definitions

Distinguishing between 'identities' and 'selves'

The postmodern position on identity is framed around difference and fragmentation. Interestingly, it is difference that lies 'at the heart of individuation, according to Luckmann (1977: 9-10). Individuation, he asserts, is only possible in a species with extraordinary behavioural variability, and presupposes a capacity to detach from the immediacies of the environment and self (that is, some form of reflective consciousness), to delay or suppress responses for some anticipated or desired ends, and to recognise oneself in the behaviour and actions of others. Stable socialities

stabilise identity because kinship, social, political and economic systems all intertwine, and modern society is unusual in its disjunctions and lack of capacity to provide a firm basis for identities that provides a consistent principle of organising one's life (Luckmann 1977: 26-34). Flax argues that post-modern accounts of selves are as individualistic as the essentialist view, and that selves must be located in concrete social *relationships*, with understanding of self emerging through them (Usher & Edwards 1994: 23-25; Flax 1990: 229). Some approaches to identity, such as the outline provided by Symes & McIntyre (2000: 12) mistakenly view identities as things which can be managed or fashioned – mistaking front work (Goffman 1976, 1972) as the whole process.

In my view, close attention to dictionary definitions of the terms 'identity' and 'self', based in psychology and philosophy respectively, offers an avenue for distinguishing between essentialist conceptions of identity, and perspectives which take account of the socio-natural context, and it is these distinctions that are used in subsequent chapters. These distinctions are drawn because there has been a tendency, in negating the notion of identity as developed in psychology, to disregard earlier literature on the social nature of selves. It is this tradition, with Mead's work 'generally undervalued and widely misunderstood' (Burkitt 1991: 25), which informs Burkitt's (1999) ecological view of selves.

Identity, in psychological terms, is 'the condition or fact of remaining the same person throughout the phases of existence' (Simpson & Weiner 1989). The emphasis is on continuity over time through some known stages, that is, 'identities' are inherently unitary and developmental. In contrast, a self is 'a subject with successive and varying states of consciousness'. I use this adaptation of philosophical definitions, as described in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) (Simpson & Weiner 1989), and certainly evident in sociological conceptions of selves¹⁴, because it combines notions of consciousness, time, and change. By incorporating the term 'subject' in the definition, I intend to create a link to the social nature of selves, and the ways in which selves are always positioned in relation to others (Davies and Harré 1990). In using the term 'self'

¹⁴ Berger (1976: 124) calls the continuity of selves 'a fond presupposition', arguing that it is 'a process, continually created and re-created in each social situation that one enters', 'held together by the slender thread of memory'.

rather than 'identity', I also link my work to the American pragmatist tradition (the bridge between Dewey and the symbolic interactionists, upon whom my work also draws).

Following on from this distinction, a 'sense of self' is defined here as a person's orientation in socio-natural space and time, one's positioning vis-à-vis worlds of practice and relationships, one's past and one's future. It is revealed in statements about the social world (Eggins & Slade 1996; Davies and Harré 1990), and about oneself in that world (Jahn 2002), as well as through acts and omissions. Self-positioning is both linguistic (brought into play by the use of certain categories such as male/female, student police officer/client or offender) (Davies and Harré 1990: 48) and corporeal (sitting behind a desk or executing an arm-lock), and can be interactive (the consequence of others' linguistic or behavioural interventions) or reflexive (one's own interventions).

Projects, intentions and motivations

Giddens (1976) distinguishes between *projects* (the plan, in this instance, to become a police officer) and *intentions*, which he also calls *purposes*, acts one believes will result in a particular outcome, and in which this belief is used in order to produce, not always successfully, that outcome (Giddens 1976: 75-76). Intentions are not necessarily conscious or valid, nor are they necessarily clear-cut (Giddens 1976: 76, 81). They are manifested '*in the continual successful 'monitoring' by the actor of his [sic] own activity*' (1976: 82) [Giddens' italics]. There is a concurrent hierarchy of purposes, always available in any situation, but mostly in stasis.

Intentions and projects are similar to desires and fantasies in that there is an emotional component – for example, pride or pleasure will be attached to success, and shame, sorrow or anger to failure. *Interests* are outcomes or events facilitating fulfilment of one's *wants* (Giddens 1976: 85). Because we cannot always appreciate our *wants*, nor even our *interests* in a particular situation, intentions do not always address our wants or interests. Purposive acts are only grasped reflexively by actors or isolated conceptually by other agents (Giddens 1976: 82). While projects may be mentioned in

informants' diaries (and, when this is the case, can be identified unproblematically), intentions can only be inferred from actions.

As to motivation, a notion tied closely into psychological understandings of selves, I do not use the term in this research. Schutz & Luckmann (1974) describe the way in which people address unfamiliar events, objects and experiences as being framed by the 'pragmatic motive', that is, people go as far with problem-solving as they need to in the light of their immediate circumstances. To highlight the immediacy involved, and to emphasise the relationship of the problem-solving to action towards the future, I have rephrased their term as the 'pragmatic imperative'.

Intervention, interactivity and negotiation

Intervention, interactivity and negotiation all relate to action, with the two latter terms incorporating reciprocal action. An intervention, following Boud and Walker (1990: 73-74) and Boud (1994: 52), is defined as any act or omission, whether or not it is noticeable by others, that affects the learner or the environment, sometimes as a consequence of conscious intent, but more often an improvisation based on partially formulated responses to the immediate demands of the situation as it is perceived. In other words, the definition encompasses acts and omissions arising out of *habitus* and out of reflection. It should not be forgotten that sometimes the intervention is the raw response, the non-verbal indication that there has, indeed, been a response (the bobbing of an Adam's apple, a curled upper lip, or a gasp).

Interactivity refers to the ongoing processes of mutual calibration that occur between the person and the social and natural environment. Each acts on the other. An individual's interventions do not determine outcomes, as their effects may be resisted, ignored or denied by the action or inaction of other people or things. Interactivity is the basis upon which processes of negotiation are built.

Wenger (1998: 53) uses the term negotiation not just in its social sense, but also to capture continuous interaction, as in 'negotiating a bend'. Negotiation originally involved 'managing to succeed in crossing, getting over, round or through some type of obstacle through skill or dexterity' (Simpson & Weiner 1989), but came to include

interaction, communication in a context of mutuality, compromise and reciprocity, and, on occasions, with a particular purpose in mind. At its heart lies a demand that people *actively* work at ongoing interaction with other people and things.

Bricolage

Bricolage and *bricoleur* are French words denoting, respectively, handiwork and the handy person. The term *bricolage* is used to describe the processes involved in developing research methods tailored to a specific problem (Denzin & Lincoln 1998a, b & c: 3; Denzin 1998: 315). As used in this thesis, the terms draw together the preceding definitions of projects and intentions, drawn from Giddens (1991), linking them with the role of improvisation (Wenger 1998) to describe the way in which students address the problems they face in community placements.

Intentions, the immediate, spontaneous responses to the demands of the present, based in personal experience and the *habitus*, are realised in, and inferred from, improvisations. I use the term *bricolage* to incorporate these immediate improvisations as well as to add the conscious problem-solving (which still has an improvisational quality in that it draws, for the most part, on what is immediately available or easily accessible) that occurs when people are working towards the achievement of a project. This distinction should not be seen as a quasi-Cartesian one, because improvisations and conscious problem-solving alike are structured by intuitions, capacities, senses, feelings and values, and overlaid by denial, projection and so on.

In any work situation, newcomers may be improvising when they have a fair grasp of what is happening around them, but, should the situation present some challenge to their taken-for-granted understandings, the process is more likely to be one of *bricolage*. Beckett & Morris (2000), in their study of carers' learning, found that the ways that carers dealt with challenging situations was to try a solution (if pressed for time) (improvisation), to guess what the problem might be (once they got to know the patient), and to show someone else the problem if they could not solve it. These creative attempts to overcome a 'disrupted context' (Dewey, cited in Beckett & Morris 2000: 3) constitute *bricolage*.

Unfamiliar

'Disorienting dilemmas' (Mezirow, 1990), 'inner discomforts' (Brookfield, 1989), or a 'state of perplexity, hesitation and doubt' (Dewey, 1933) are seen as the starting point for learning in the field of adult education (Boud, 1999: 123). These are uncomfortable sensations. The term which best expresses the nature of the type of problematic experience faced by students in their community placements is that of the 'unfamiliar'¹⁵, which indicates that there is no immediately perceptible link with known categories and collections (to use Sacks's 1972 terminology, as cited in Silverman 1993), and there is an uncertainty about how to make judgements, or about how best to act. The individual's response to the difference is left undefined. As such, I am recognising that the response to unfamiliarity may be not even seeing the new thing (Kuhn 1975), or could be delight as much as it is confusion, discomfort or doubt.

1.8 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study are threefold – theoretical, methodological and practical. They are based in the attempt to use a holistic stance on learning, the reliance on student diaries without access to the students who wrote them¹⁶, and the status of the subject in which the research is founded.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, taking a holistic and ecological stance on learning and selves means that intentions and associated experience-filtering processes do not stand alone, but are part of ongoing negotiations between the individual and particular social and natural contexts. A significant problem in taking this holistic stance is that the account I generate is unlikely to cover the whole to which I lay claim, or the overall sense of what is happening for the learners (Mannion 2001: 100-103). There may also be many gaps derived from the differing theoretical premises and different approaches and contexts in the literature on which the framework for this thesis is built, where some areas are treated in great depth and others have scant coverage. Nonetheless, the attempt to capture context, interaction and reaction in the light of students' projects is

¹⁵ The term is linked to 'family', of which the OED definition is 'A group or assemblage of objects, connected together and distinguished from others by the possession of some common features or properties' (Simpson & Weiner 1989). The 'unfamiliar' lacks, at least temporarily, a family.

¹⁶ My role as Head of School at the time meant that all identifying information on students' diaries was removed, lest I was later involved in any decisions as to their progress in the course.

of value because it recognises the complexities involved in learning, and addresses them from the perspective of the learner who is, at the very least, juggling the factors that *can* be captured.

The second limitation of this research is its reliance on one main source of data (students' notebooks, and particularly their diaries), albeit supplemented by participant observation of some of the contextual features and my own marking of the students' work in this subject between 1999 and 2002. While these issues are fully discussed in chapter 4, the approach can be justified in two ways. In the first place, diaries provide a level of access to subjective perceptions of events and relationships over time and across public and private domains that cannot reasonably be obtained by any other means. Secondly, any contact with students during their placements would have changed the nature of their experiences, and have distorted research that has aimed to access spontaneous experiences and understandings. While it would have been beneficial to discuss with the informants matters such as their later perceptions of the experience, and how they viewed my interpretation of their work, the context of the data collection rendered this impossible.

The last limitation has been the consequence of the passage of time. This research began in late 1997, when the parameters of the course in which the subject was located had already been established. The subject, and its associated community placement, were unexpectedly discontinued in early 2002, after Commissioner Ryan's departure from the New South Wales Police Service, and the appointment of a new Minister for Policing, Michael Costa. Therefore, the assumption that the research would make a direct contribution to ongoing improvements in the subject was nullified. Fortunately, there is no lack of other placements in which at least some of my findings will have resonance, including the remaining police station placements.

1.9 Summary

In this introductory chapter, I have aimed to provide an overview of the path I have taken between my research question and my three assertions, and some glimpses of the terrain that will be traversed. As such, this first chapter has laid the foundation for my thesis. I have introduced the research problem and justified it in terms of its potential theoretical, ethical, and practical implications. I have briefly described and justified the

methodology, outlined the thesis, and provided definitions of key terms matching the assumptions underpinning this research. Finally, I provided a brief overview of each of the chapters to follow, as well as a delineation of the limitations of the research. On these foundations, the thesis can proceed with a detailed description of the research, its context and findings.

Chapter Two

Context of the study

Professionalising the NSW Police

Most of the change we think we see in life
Is due to truths being in and out of favour
(Robert Frost 1875-1963)

2.1 Situating the community placement

Those outside the juggernaut of policing might imagine the process of professionalisation to be a relatively unproblematic one of adopting strategies successfully used in other occupations (as did I, initially). On the contrary, the significance of police forces to democratic societies has ensured that there has been ongoing debate not just about police methods, but about how to educate police to best serve the democratic process. This has involved a considerable amount of stringent criticism, which forms the substructure of the community placement and of students' experiences in that placement.

Field placements are seen as an induction into the world of the professional and to a professional identity. Unusually, in police education in New South Wales, placements in health, welfare and community organisations ('community placements') were used, in part, to develop a professional identity¹. The aim of the community placement was to reduce an assumed 'them' and 'us' divide between police and members of the public, an attempt to reduce the insularity of the organisation, and to stimulate the development of new police identities as required by the Wood Royal Commission (1997). Underlying these goals were assumptions that police culture has a relatively uniform impact on those who join the Service, unaffected by the multiple perspectives that individuals might bring with them, or the varied experiences they might have in the job. That is, theories of occupational socialisation (where selves are moulded by

¹ These placements can be seen as similar to 'service learning' placements, which have a significant presence in US secondary school and tertiary education.

institutions) tended to predominate, bolstered by the appearance of uniformity of a quasi-military organisation, and the perceived similarities between police 'training' and Foucault's (1979) account of the forming of disciplined bodies.

This chapter considers how the community placement came about, and why it is that, rather than foster a professional identity, it tended to leave space for individuals to work within their own understanding of what it meant to be a police officer, or a university student, and what, therefore, they did to move towards their goals. I firstly deal with the substrata of pressures to change policing – international concerns about the need to professionalise the police – and then go on to consider how these influences have affected the education of police in New South Wales over the past three decades. The focus then narrows, to examine the characteristics of the subject in which the community placements were a component. More specifically still, I describe the scale and general impact of the subject on community organisations and the students.

2.2 Professionalising police

This section establishes the history of the debates about professionalising the police, debates that form the framework for the community placements and of students' learning experiences within them. It shows the contested nature of the terrain.

Notions of professionalism were at the centre of 1930s critiques of policing in the United States. August Vollmer and O.W. Wilson, both police officers, wished to raise the status of a group that had been maligned, partly because of its close links with corrupt local governments (Bittner 1999b [1970]; Barker, Hunter & Rush 1994), and partly because its work involved close contact with socially undesirable people (Linn & Raffel Price 1994; Shearing & Powditch 1992). Drawing on understandings of professionalism developed by Weber and Parsons, Vollmer and Wilson were aiming to create professional police officers 'equal in education and status to professionals in other professions', working in a well (and scientifically) administered organisation in

which 'the very best manhood in our nation would be happy to serve' (Barker, Hunter & Rush 1994: 191).

Ironically, the focus on 'cadres of personally incorruptible snappy operatives working under the command of bureaucrats-in-uniform' (Bittner 1999b: 171) created and perpetuated many of the problems it was designed to eliminate. The version of a military 'esprit de corps' was one which, while it appeared to be a uniform 'buddy system', could generate an infinite variety of conflictual relations, pitting one group of officers against another, based on unionism, orientation to reform agendas, success or rank, age, education, ethnicity, religion, and interpersonal or divisional issues (Manning 1997; Blumberg 1994; Bittner 1980, cited in Berg 1999; Alderson 1979).² These conflictual relations have not been static, as high attrition rates tend to generate rapid shifts in the balance of power (Manning 1997: 138), and the variety of battles to be fought, including different orientations to reforms and competition for promotion, have meant that different alliances have been needed on an ongoing basis.

Each of the struggles for the definition of the proper direction for policing has contributed to the stability of instability in police organisations world wide, as they try and encounter new and slippery problems in the light of their particular histories. In their attempts to deal more effectively with the problems they faced, many have trodden the path of professionalisation, with little discussion or consensus about what the term might mean, and, indeed, often a definition which does not conform with the general view.

In New South Wales, the call to professionalism started with Commissioner John Avery (1981). In setting a framework for recruit education, Bradley (1987a) suggested that the

² Types include 'gung-ho' crime fighters uninterested in paperwork but interested in serious crimes; social agents who focus on service; tough-guy law enforcers who enforce all laws (however minor); those who choose keeping the peace over enforcement; 'professionals', who use any of the above approaches according to the situation; 'reciprocators' who have difficulties with the use of their powers; 'avoiders' who stay in the station; 'idealists' who sincerely believe that law, human rights and education do offer solutions; 'realists' – the cynical; 'optimists' who see themselves as making a difference; and 'knowledge workers' who spend most of their time in the office producing knowledge for internal management purposes (Ericson & Haggerty 1997; Broderick 1987; Muir 1977).

'professional officer' needed to acquire a variety of complex personal, interpersonal, social and technical skills; to develop values and attitudes which would allow self-monitoring; to be empathic towards and tolerant of a diverse range of cultural and ethnic groups; and that all of this should be underpinned by a commitment to professional service and adherence to personal standards of truth, honesty and impartiality. Cioccarelli (n.d.) relied on Greenwood's consideration of the professionalisation of social work. Cioccarelli's approach was to examine the ways in which policing could be seen to exhibit already the characteristics of a profession, with autonomy as the only problem.³ These were the theoretical positions that underpinned developments in police education in New South Wales throughout the eighties and nineties.

Empirically, in New South Wales, Wortley and Homel (1995) found ethnocentricity amongst junior police. The Centre for Applied Research in Education (CARE) showed that proper procedures, as taught to recruits, were replaced by conventional shortcuts in the field, reflecting traditional views of policing, and that the Academy was undermined as 'Bullshit Castle', peddling an 'Alice in Wonderland' curriculum, and, indeed, that the place was 'an academic conceit within a police station mentality' (McDonald et al. 1990: 32, 55, 127). Wood (1997: 275), in concluding his Royal Commission into systemic corruption in the NSW Police Service, considered that recruit education needed protection against the organisation that created it.

Over this period, increasing fiscal control by government in Australia, in a context of managerialist reforms, had been eroding the autonomy of police (Dupont 2002). The increased accountability that resulted had been exacerbated, and paradoxically obscured, by the findings of various Royal Commissions, including Wood's (1997) into systemic corruption and the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (Johnston 1991), about the inadequacies of investigation and the negative impact of police culture on police/community relations. What these twin forces meant for police

³ Whereas Bradley does not mention autonomy, Cioccarelli argues that police are no different to other professionals who work in bureaucracies.

education in New South Wales was, for a period of about twenty years, an increasing role for non-police academics at the decision-making end of the bureaucracy.

Non-police involvement in police education was not without resistance from within policing itself. Those who had most to lose fought the changes. Bourdieu's (1981) competitive analogy of the game is useful here, as each goal kicked by one 'side' (each change of educational model) was responded to by a series of strategic moves that meant the goal was equalised. Whereas the debate, as outlined above, was about professionalisation, the *action* was about who took control and whose view of the educational needs of police was correct, occurring out of sight of the main game. Nonetheless, ideas about professionalisation constituted the battle arena for, and contributed to the many rapidly implemented changes in, police education in New South Wales over the past two decades.

2.3 Police identity

While, as indicated in section 2.2, there have been many battles about the direction of policing, there has also been a relatively consistent appreciation in the literature (at least in the Anglo-Celtic world) of the impact of police work on those who become officers. Discussions of the police occupation, and how it affects the individuals within it, are most commonly framed in terms of police culture, police personality, and police identity. Manning and Van Maanen describe the culture thus:

The occupational culture constructed by the police consists of long-standing rules of thumb, a somewhat special language and ideology that help edit a member's everyday experiences, shared standards of relevance as to the critical aspects of the work, matter-of-fact prejudices, models for street-level etiquette and demeanour, certain customs and rituals suggestive of how members are to relate not only to each other but to outsiders, and a sort of residual category consisting of the assorted miscellany of some rather plain police horse sense. (Manning & Van Maanen 1978: 267)

Life-threatening dangers inherent in the role of officers, along with their authority and mandate to use coercive force, are said to lead to a 'working personality', where suspicion is endemic and self-isolation a consequence (Skolnick & Fyfe 1993; Skolnick 1986). Skolnick and Fyfe (1993: 91) consider that arguments about whether policing

qualifies as a profession are irresolvable, but that there is no question that it is a 'defining identity'. Shearing & Powditch point out that:

Entering into the street culture of rank-and-file officers is a form of conversion in which what is at stake is the very being or identity of the recruit. What recruits learn in and through their exposure to the police culture is how to see the social world of the police and how to act in it. Here too the focus is on the recruits' inner being. What is being created is a person who will be a reliable partner, with whom one can face the uncertainty of the world that is to be policed, and who will cover for one in dealing with superiors. (Shearing & Powditch 1992: 26-27).

The police personality is generally seen as being composed of a desire to be in control of situations, assertiveness, cynicism, an authoritarian attitude, a wish to be aloof from those who are not police, an increased solidarity with other officers, a certain machismo, and a tendency to be physically aggressive as officers encounter the worst aspects of humanity and the failings of the system (Berg 1999: 297, 320; Reiner 1998; Niederhoffer 1969, as cited in Berg 1999). Marshall and Rossman (1999: 93) quote Manning (1972: 244) on police, writing that the occupation attracts 'men [*sic*] who are apparently deeply ambivalent about the law, politically conservative, perhaps reactionary, and persons of lower- or lower-middle-class origins with high school or less education'. They are part of a 'male dominated structure which is based on hard, tough, controlling forms and symbols' (Young 1984: 85). Two virtues are essential to being a good policeman [*sic*]: the intellectual grasp of the nature of human suffering, and the moral resolution of the contradiction of achieving just ends with coercive means (Muir 1977: 3).

Duprez (2000: 4) argues against the Anglo-Saxon literature to assert that there is *not* a uniform professional police culture, and that French studies indicate diversity, pluralism and heterogeneity. Monjardet (1987: 9-10) comments that internal differentiation between ranks and jobs, intense rivalries and conflicts, and pluralism in values and interests mean that it is very difficult to get a handle on what the policing profession is. Even English police see the organisation as possibly 'a collection of individuals randomly drawn together by a common definition, location and lifestyle' (Callan 1975, cited in Young 1984: 67). Most recently, Chan, Devery & Doran (2003: 4) found, in a longitudinal study of NSW Police Service recruits, that developmental

paths were not uniformly towards cynicism, and that police culture was not as homogeneous and resistant to change as had been assumed. Moreover, Duprez writes that professional identity cannot be understood solely in work terms, and that personal backgrounds need to be taken into account (Duprez 2000: 4-5). These views of multiplicity are in accordance with my 'insider' perspectives.

None of this would be particularly remarkable – all occupations have tacit practices which structure what it is possible to do or to be – if it were not for the critiques described above concerning the particular cultural configuration of policing in relation to the powers police have over citizens' lives, the ongoing disputes about how best to address this, if at all, and the influence of rank upon practices in policing organisations (McNamara 2000; Bittner 1999; Reiner 1998; Skolnick 1986; Shearing & Powditch 1992; Cioccarelli n.d.; Niederhoffer 1985). The most stringent critiques, according to Blumberg (1985: 21), have come from the police themselves⁴. These criticisms have led to managerial, administrative, legal and educational reforms.

2.4 Police education in New South Wales

The Police Academy in New South Wales has been the focus of conscious attempts to reform policing from force to service (and, now, back again), and from disciplined obedience to professional problem-solving (Chan, Devery & Doran 2003: 81). In the period since World War II, there have been six main phases, each featuring a different model of educational provision. Each model has carried with it elements of what has gone before, as the personnel implementing changes have been, largely, the people responsible for the preceding model, who were themselves trained under the first model, that of the 'limited expert'⁵. The first model is not dissimilar to that found in

⁴ Blumberg (1985: 13) sees much of the research on police culture and personality as based in ethnographic models of 'savage discovery', where police are examined as an exotic species rather than an occupation which shares many features with other occupations (a risk I face as an outsider inside). Aspects in common with other occupations include solidarity; common hazards; respect for power and authority accompanied by systems of patronage; bureaucratic demands for secrecy; military and medical demands for loyalty; a sense of being a member of a minority group; political conservatism; cynicism; suspiciousness (ironically the domain of sociologists); social isolation; and pressure to produce.

⁵ In making this point it must be remembered that the forces for change also have emerged from this background – previous practices create possibilities as much as they constrain – and it is the dynamics

other police services; the rest represent different attempts to professionalise or control the NSW Police Service.

2.4.1 *The 'limited expert' model*

The first phase of training (from immediately after the Second World War to the late 1980s) has been described as the 'Limited Expert Model' (Bradley & Cioccarelli 1989). This is, perhaps, a kindly phrase to describe a brief and sometimes brutish process. As Bradley and Cioccarelli (1989: 3-5) describe it, the Limited Expert Model denoted the work of the uniformed patrol constable, a jack-of-all-trades artisanal job, rough but respectable craft work. Skills were seen as mainly technical, the formal preparation or training given to recruits was short, sharp, highly didactic, highly practical and procedural, and the police just needed to be fit and large, sober and of good character. Most of what was to be learned was out there, in the 'real world', where all that was needed was quick-thinking and assertiveness in dealing with members of the criminal classes and decent folk. This educational model, despite its drawbacks, was nonetheless sustainable until the early eighties.

The pathway into policing was most commonly via teenage cadetships: the attraction for boys from poorer families (as for girls going in to nursing at that time) was the early receipt of an income - recruits received 90% of the 1st year constable's salary (Lusher 1981: 394). Attrition rates were very low (1.6%) (Lusher 1981: 380): as employees, recruits had the union to support them in turning to the industrial courts should there be moves towards their dismissal. Importantly for later developments, as the most junior paid employees, they were seen as having to be supervised and tasked for the full length of the training/working day.

Amongst other findings in a 1981 Commission of Inquiry into Police Administration⁶,

within the field of interaction which will affect the progress rates of any changes. Many of those trained in the earliest phase were the dynamic leaders of subsequent models. Chan, Devery & Doran's (2003) study of socialisation processes at the Academy in 1996 attests to the diversity of views in policing, amongst teaching staff, field operatives and students alike.

⁶ Lusher reported that teachers had no training (in subjects or in teaching) and were largely from the same cultural backgrounds. Neither courses nor subjects had specific objectives: of those he gleaned from

Lusher saw the curriculum as seriously deficient in addressing the social background to legislation, and in how to address the range of reactions likely in policing situations. He concluded that a high degree of professionalism was required, and internal training could not solely produce this. The expertise in these areas had to be drawn from the field of education, and applied to police training with the assistance and cooperation of police (Lusher 1981: 398).

2.4.2 *Foundational studies model – Police Recruit Education Program (1)*

The second model of police education, inspired by Avery, and recommended by Lusher, came to fruition in early 1988 with the creation of the Police Recruit Education Program (PREP) (Bradley & Cioccarelli 1989: 16). It was organised around a concept of police-related disciplines, with eight core subjects taught by staff in eight Schools. Five non-police academics were appointed to teaching positions in these schools, and a new industrial Award was created for Student Police Officers (i.e., they were still employees). A program of eighteen months duration, with five phases combining Academy-based learning and field experience, and culminating in a Certificate of Policing (awarded by the Service), was established. It was in this period that I was appointed to develop teaching skills, although the structures necessary to support this were absent, and in which I contributed to the design of, and staff training for, the final, fifth reflective phase.

Only two years into the program, in 1990, the CARE team found that PREP was unrivalled in the world in terms of its aspirations, but that there were educational and managerial problems. The student week was structured around 50 minute ‘lessons’; staff with no teaching experience were placed in classes on their first day at work; and there were intakes of three hundred recruits every three months. Foundational studies (sociology and psychology, in particular) were disliked as ‘warm and fuzzy’, and teaching methods, whilst far more advanced than in Britain, were fundamentally

discussion with trainers, one was ‘to develop an appropriate attitude to the Police Force including a sense of discipline and loyalty to the organisation’ (with anecdotal evidence that this was instilled by bastardisation). A summary of the curricula provided by the Academy showed that almost a third of the time was spent on drill, and less than 5% on socially oriented material provided by external lecturers.

authoritarian and didactic, other than in the final phase. The evaluation team wrote, 'Our evidence suggests a continuity of police culture in the organisation that tends to absorb, nullify, or even ignore the injections of the academic resource, whilst bearing it no ill-will or even disrespect' (MacDonald et al. 1990: 96).

2.4.3 *Problem-based learning model – Police Recruit Education Program (2)*

A new, integrated PREP was designed in late 1990 by a team of sworn police curriculum writers, as strongly based on case-study and problem-based learning as was possible within the three month time-frame for curriculum development. The resulting course involved students in 25 hours of face-to-face work per week during residential phases. Every session had defined objectives and approaches, and each police and civilian tutor was supplied with session plans. This was necessary because so few staff had been involved in designing the course, and a new management structure had been created, where Schools were disbanded, and multi-skilling was required. The various safety nets for inexperienced staff, along with the influence of some of the senior experienced teachers, sessions on problem-based learning, and the more interesting teaching approaches, all generated much commitment to the new program.

However, a lack of attention to the CARE recommendations on organisational climate and educational ethos precipitated a crisis. Major rifts had developed within the Academy, and staff had complained about management styles, with the Academy being reported in the local and State press as being a 'fear factory' (Lagan 1995; Walker 1994). All of this contributed to a business-oriented, rather than an educationally oriented, review by a Police Academy Review Committee (PARC) in 1995.

The implementation of the PARC recommendations in 1995/1996 took place in a complex environment, with Wood's Royal Commission into corruption in the NSW Police Service under way, a new Reform Agenda requiring resources, and senior staff still in crisis management mode. Ten civilian academics were recruited, as the original six had now dwindled to two (I was one of those who had left, joining Charles Sturt

University, which ran a continuing education program on campus at the time). Teachers of recruit education reluctantly had to re-orient themselves back into a School structure.

In 1997, Justice Wood produced his Final Report, which included findings on police education (1997: 207-217). Well-intentioned approaches risked domination by an attitude that education was by the police for the police, and the broader community had little to contribute. The executive had failed to recognise the breadth of the change to attitudes and culture that was required; had failed to call on external providers; had failed to consider how the change might impact on the rest of the Service; and had failed to involve the membership. The Service had demonstrated its inability to effect change either because it was blocked from within, or because it had not understood what was required.

Wood (1997: 276-279) suggested a pre-entry tertiary education model to ensure that the entrenchment of negative culture was limited by factors such as exposing policing students to students in other disciplines; encouraging the notion of professionalism through linking entry to a tertiary qualification; postponing the age of entry; and giving greater prominence to civilian education in all but core policing skills. A small team led by Rod Parker, a retired Superintendent, and in which the most consistent contributors were Sergeant Bernie Henderson and myself, was established in September 1996. Our focus was the future direction of police education. It was felt that, at last, organisational certainties were sufficiently destabilised to allow for wide-sweeping changes to be made. Many of the changes were to focus on changing recruit education from the institutional socialisation model described by Chan, Devery and Doran (2003) towards a model of education more typical of a university, in which limited time was spent in classrooms, there was an expectation of independent learning, operational tactics were supported by theories of communication and negotiation, and so on. These discussions formed the framework for what was to become the Diploma of Policing Practice.

This review process led to the tendering of recruit education by the Police Service to tertiary education providers in September 1997. The tender document specified that the

focus of the Diploma of Policing Practice was to be professional police practice. It outlined the requirements, in terms of overall content (an increased focus on investigation, ethics, communication and working with members of minority groups), structure (two years of trimester-based study, with Trimesters 1 and 3 at the Academy), delivery and assessment (a balance of responsibilities, with a university taking on assessment, and joint delivery), and the entry and status of students (not recruited until one year of study had been completed). The university would be responsible for negotiating work experience placements during Trimester Two with the student. In April 1998, Charles Sturt University (CSU) was notified that it had been the successful tenderer, with the program to start in May 1998.

2.4.4 The Collaborative Model: Diploma of Policing Practice/Constable Education Program

With a School of the CSU Faculty of Arts already on campus, Rod Parker, the retired superintendent who had shaped the new course, took up the position of Course Co-ordinator with CSU, to guide the implementation of the program. Teams of staff able to contribute to curriculum development (that is, university staff and police staff eligible for university accreditation as Associate Lecturers) were formed for each subject. The early focus was on fleshing out the bones of the program described above. The time-lag involved in recruiting university staff meant that, other than for ethics subjects, police staff predominated. All the differences of opinion about how best to respond to the Royal Commission, and about the most appropriate way to educate police, that were already present in the Academy were evident in curriculum development meetings, chaired by the Course Co-ordinator, and with my presence as Acting Head of School.

At the time of collecting data for this thesis, the Diploma had had several intakes, and pockets of resistance to the focus of particular subjects, to the perceived meddling of non-police, and to a university perceived as a predator, were emerging. Some police staff revised the subjects they taught to follow what had been done in PREP. Differences of opinion were made known to students.

It is at this point, then, that I return to the image of the juggernaut, and the fights the seeming impenetrable hide conceals. Battles were being fought around all of the issues identified in overseas studies of policing, as well as battles specific to the Academy arising out of the allegiances to different models of the education process, and to different players. For students encountering this field of interaction in their first trimester of study, the concept of what it meant to be a professional police officer would have been clarified by the contrasting perspectives (at best), or, at worst, thoroughly distorted by some of the hostilities of this period. After this first trimester, the students' next step was undertaking two distance education subjects, each of which was delivered in conjunction with a field placement. One of the placements was in a police station, akin to PREP Phase Two, but without employee status or uniform, and the other in a community agency. It is to the latter, the specific site of this research, I now turn.⁷

2.5 The community placement: JST121 Police and Society

Field placements⁸ have long been used in police recruit education in New South Wales. Indeed, the second year of study in the Diploma of Policing Practice is spent entirely in the field, as a Probationary Constable, whilst studying relevant subjects via distance education. This reflects tradition, rather more than it does any of the premises outlined below. At the same time as being generated by profession-specific concerns, and following practice in Sweden and Ireland, the creation of a community placement reflected an increasing trend within the university sector to incorporate field placements (practica) and service learning in professional education.

In section 2.2, professionalisation was shown to be a continuing theme in developments in police education. Education for the professions tends to include agendas about what

⁷ The fifth model of education, '*Buying back the farm*' (a term used sufficiently frequently in policing to have been included in Burnard's (1999) unpublished glossary of police terms), was developed early in 2002 in response to Ministerial interventions and a change in police leadership. This model reduced the length of the course, and removed the community placement. The sixth approach, 'The integrated model', is only just being finalised. Neither the fifth nor sixth model is discussed in this study.

⁸ The term 'field placement' is used in this thesis to refer to placements in the field of practice of the profession.

it is to *be* professional in a particular socio-practical context (Carr 1996; Bowles 1993; Barrows 1985). Field placements are used in education across areas of professional practice such as social work, education, psychology, ministry, law, and management⁹. Diverse rationales are employed: to introduce students to the domain of practice and its variations; to generate direct engagement, and hands-on, experiential learning; to allow students to learn how to become a professional worker in the relevant field; to increase sensitivity to individual and cultural needs; to apply theory learned in the classroom to practice; to test the theories being learnt; to encourage reflection upon practice; and to foster self-knowledge.¹⁰ There are institutional benefits, too, for universities can gain information about current practices and dilemmas of practice, and the agencies in which students are placed obtain knowledge of current thinking to which they might not otherwise have access. As such, placements can enhance partnerships between academia and the community. Preceptors, mentors and partnership frameworks underlie the placement structure (Pimple, Schmidt & Tidwell 2003; Mayne & Glascoff 2002; Myrick & Yonge 2003; Bryant & Williams 2002; Diebold, Chappell & Robinson 2000). In such placements, the learning process is variously viewed as modelling (by students in Melia's 1987 study of nurse training), reflection in and on action (Lankard 1995; Schön 1987, 1983; Zeichner 1982; Walker & Boud 1984), or immersion in a community of practice (Billett 1999). Of these perspectives, the first and the last emphasise the social, particularly the ways in which those already in the organisation influence learners, over the individual.

Nonetheless, questions have been posed about the potentially negative influences of field placements and work contexts on learning (Billett 2001, 1999, 1995; Down and Hogan, 1999; Eraut, cited in Scribner 1999), and some of these questions remained unanswered for a considerable time (Zeichner 1982). It has been identified that what is

⁹ A brief scan of the Web indicates the diversity: University of Albany, Public Health; Flinders University and University of Western Australia, Social Work; Charles Sturt University, Applied Science (Parks, Recreation & Heritage); University of Michigan, Education; Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Humanitarian Response; John Hopkins University, Psychological and Brain Sciences; Suffolk University, Law; Humber College, Human Resource Management; and so on.

¹⁰ A scan of four course descriptions on the Web (Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology; Columbia University; University of Wisconsin; and Southern Cross University) showed these to be the rationales in use (Accessed 19th March 2001).

learned in field placements is often confined to survival strategies rather than full professional practice (Becker et al. 1992 [1961]; Fish 1989; Melia 1987; Zeichner 1982). These problems in developing a professional identity have been evident whether or not the learner was in situations where s/he had ready access to guidance, overt or tacit.

On the other hand, U.S. studies of the impact of service learning suggest several changes are likely to occur: students tend to express values consistent with advocacy and empathy for disadvantaged populations, especially when they feel that what they have done has made a difference (Astin *et al.* 2000; Giles & Eyler 1994; Batchelder & Root 1994). Astin *et al.*'s national review of service learning shows that the single most important factor is the degree to which the service is related to the students' major field, and, for students of policing, the question of relatedness is likely to be a significant issue. Four types of learning outcomes are facilitated, they claim: an increased sense of personal efficacy, increased awareness of the world and of one's personal values, and increased classroom engagement. Even 20 hours over a semester may affect personal values and orientation (Markus, Howard & King 1993). Integrative activities are required to encourage the relating of academic materials to experience (Eyler 1993).

Between 1998 and 2001, the Diploma of Policing Practice included a distance education subject, *JST121: Police and Society*. This subject, in its early years,¹¹ involved a period of four weeks spent in a community agency that provided a service to people who were in some way disadvantaged. At this stage of their studies (Trimester 2 of 6), students were still aiming to attain employment with the NSW Police.

In the review discussions that underpinned the placement, we were primarily concerned with how to limit the early adoption of media-inspired or 'macho' views of policing that were evident amongst recruits under PREP as soon as they donned their uniform early in the first session. We thought that, if early education centred on the civilian status of the student, with a gradual entry into skills training in trimester three, students

¹¹ In order to preserve the anonymity of the informants in this study, precise dates are not being provided.

would have developed a more realistic understanding of policing before being given their uniforms and adopting potentially inappropriate policing roles.

Concerns were also expressed at these meetings about the Academy/field division, and its implications for the support of students, who would not be police, when they undertook field experience and the projected community placements. Whatever system was put in place, it would need to be one which provided adequate liaison between all players, and which fully supported the students. It should be noted that field experience tends to be treated as peripheral to academic course work in police education, with its benefits accepted at face value (Eijkman 1992: 1), and that the need to balance educational and operational requirements was not understood in New South Wales (MacDonald *et al.* 1990: 135).

Charles Sturt University (CSU) had a particular strength in the organisation of field placements for social workers in a distance education context, and this expertise was drawn upon in developing the community placement. There was already a pool of suitable agencies in which students could be placed, and a system for allocating and supporting students was developed. Although it was seen as desirable to schedule the community placement as the first of the four-week experiences, the numbers of students (almost 3,000 over the life of the placement) and the complexity of the task (negotiating placements for approximately 300 students every four months, and then supporting them, and keeping in contact with the agencies in which they were placed) meant that half of each cohort attended the police station placement first.

Prior to undertaking the placement, or on the first day, each student negotiated a learning contract with their principal supervisor in the placement. The learning contract had certain key areas of performance specified: it was how they were to be achieved that was negotiated. Supervisors had resource packages, outlining their roles and responsibilities, to support them through the student's placement.

The organisation of community placements was undertaken on the Wagga Wagga campus of the University. At the Academy campus, in Goulburn, the subject profile most closely matched the interests of a civilian academic employed by the NSW Police, Dr Eric Heller-Wagner, and Dr. Christine Jennett within CSU. The subject was seen to incorporate and enhance the sociological component of recruit education, and as allowing 'the student to experience social problems from a community perspective' (Heller-Wagner, pers. comm. 2002).

The aims of the subject were to increase students' capacities in social observation (in Boud & Walker's 1996 terms, their capacity to *notice*), and to modify taken-for-granted assumptions about the uniformity of values and opportunities across class, gender and ethnicity (in Brookfield's 1996 terms, paradigmatic assumptions). The broader aim was that students would come to *critically* reflect, that is, reflect on the impact of power imbalances in society (Brookfield 1996: 8). The information about the subject provided to the students was that the aims of the subject were:

(1) for the student to gain understanding of social inequality and power in Australian society within the context of policing, and (2) for the student to practice basic skills in social investigation. Various dimensions of social inequality and their impact on policing including class, status, gender, education, employment, family, locale, ethnicity and aboriginality are surveyed. Social investigative skills include observation, interviewing, reflection and critical analysis. (CSU 1998)

The ways in which they would demonstrate these capacities were through the completion of a 'Student Notebook', which was to contain three sections. The first was a daily log (what I am calling their 'diary'), with entries completed using the police notebook format (date, location, time, account of the day, ruling off). The second was twenty activities, a list of which is provided in Appendix 1, and the third, two reflections, one at the end of 40 hours (one week's work), and the other at the completion of the placement (160 hours).

2.6 Community organisations

A wide variety of agencies across New South Wales were involved in the program. Participating organisations were large and small, bureaucratic and collective, charitable and empowering, and dealt with a broad spectrum of social disadvantage. The tasks students undertook, and the opportunities that they had to contribute, also varied widely. Over the three years of the subject's life, there was an increasing trend towards placements in government agencies, but, at the time of data collection, the voluntary sector predominated.

Students were briefed about the placement in relatively large groups, and they did not necessarily know at the time of the briefing in which agency they would be placed. They had been able to select the location, which was either near their home or the home of a relative. Table 1, overleaf, adapted from an unpublished paper by Bowles *et al.* (2002), provides the profile of the agencies, their target groups, and the numbers of students placed over the life of the subject.

A total of 2,833 students were placed in 678 organisations over eleven trimesters (3.3 years). The majority of agencies (42%) catered for clients of diverse socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, although the need that was being addressed may have been very specific (for example, assessing and medicating schizophrenia patients, or rehabilitating drug addicts). Agencies catering for youth and for disabled people were the next most common (19.9% and 11.8% respectively), and placements with agencies working with men or ethnic/cultural groups were the least common. The distribution of students across agencies was largely proportionate to these figures. However, aged care facilities (4.9% of participating agencies), children's services (2.8% of participating agencies), services for disabled people (11.8%), and for men (2.7%) took proportionately larger numbers of students than did other agencies. The majority of students were the only policing student in the organisation at the time (80%), with 14% having one fellow student, 5% having two, and very few with more (Bowles *et al.* 2002).

<i>Agency Type</i>	Total Agencies Used		Total students Placed by agency type	
	No.	%	No.	%
Multi-purpose ¹²	285	42.0	1108	39.1
Youth	135	19.9	496	17.5
Disability	80	11.8	380	13.4
Women	35	5.2	118	4.2
Aged	33	4.9	230	8.1
Family	30	4.4	110	3.9
Indigenous	28	4.1	90	3.2
Children	19	2.8	145	5.1
Men	18	2.7	111	3.9
Ethnic/Cultural	15	2.2	45	1.6
TOTALS	678	100.0	2833	100.0

Table 1: Student and agency profile: number of Diploma of Policing Practice students placed September 1998 – February 2002, by number of agencies and target groups.

Agencies in which students were placed gave very positive feedback about the program, and about 50% of the students found their placement to be a worthwhile experience (Bowles *et al.* 2002). The agencies Bowles *et al.* surveyed had a clear understanding of the program's goals, their own roles and responsibilities, and over three quarters (78%) saw benefits to their organisation, to the organisation's relationship with police, and to client perceptions of police. A student representative (March 1990, pers. comm.) said that four colleagues had described the difference between these students and those from the previous recruit program as being that 'they had more empathy'.

Bowles *et al.*'s data reveals that two fifths of participating agencies (40.7%) were only used once. Possible reasons include the agency identifying that it was not in a position to offer the required learning experiences, students' homes being in country towns from which no other student had originated, or student or marker recommendations that the agency was in some way unsuitable.

¹² The term 'multi-purpose' is used by Bowles *et al.* (2002) to include agencies such as community centres, drug rehabilitation providers, methadone clinics, psychiatric outreach services, DOCS and so on, where clients were of diverse ages, ethnicities and classes.

The evaluation form which students completed upon their return to the Goulburn campus included a range of open questions, the answers to which indicate the ways in which students perceived their learning in the community placement. Those in Bowles *et al.*'s sample clearly showed a) that the students could articulate purposes for the subject that reflected the subject aims; b) that the students saw developing target group empathy and experience as being relevant to policing practice; c) and that the learning outcomes identified included developing positive community/police relationships, skill development and experiencing conflict resolution (Bowles *et al.* 2002).

2.7 Summary

Chapter 2 has provided the context for examining the ways in which students might be negotiating selves in the light of their project of becoming a police officer. It has shown that students were entering heavily contested terrain at a very early stage in their studies. It has also shown that participant organisations believed that the subject had benefited the students, the organisations and police-community relations, and that the students were generally able to articulate the aims of the placement. The next chapter focuses on the research issues underpinning the study, that is, how students' intentions of becoming police officers might have involved 'learning' new selves.

Chapter Three

Research Issues:

Being and becoming

Future, n. That period of time in which our affairs prosper, our friends are true and our happiness is assured (Bierce 1993 [1911])

The kind of work we are doing is a measure of our progress against our aspirations
(Ransome 1999: 168)

3.1 Key questions

My thesis is that the project of becoming a particular type of professional is not easily sustained in the midst of unfamiliar experiences, and must be negotiated *in situ*, thus re-positioning (and therefore re-creating) selves. My approach is based in an ecological framework (Burkitt 1999), in which the assumption is that selves can and do change, and that this change is related to relationships, events, information, actions and interactions and experiences in socio-natural environments. This position stands in stark contrast to the Western tradition of an essential self, and is consistent with post-modern conceptions of the ways in which identities are anchored in, if not constituted by, the social, practical, historical and discursive environment.

The key questions on which I am focusing in arguing that processes of becoming are critically affected by the demands of present circumstances are fourfold. Firstly, I am interested in *the ways in which students have understood the learning situation*, how they think their project of becoming a police officer needs to be operationalised as revealed by their actions. Secondly, because of the centrality of context, it is important to grasp *what students understood as being the affordances* in their placement. Thirdly, because of the risks of action and inaction in unfamiliar circumstances, I need to consider *how the students responded to the immediate demands*, and *the extent to which their original project had any place*. Finally, I need to examine the outcomes, *if and how students' self-positioning changed* (that is, examine their trajectories). Thus, the research issues that underlie these questions concern the nature of projects and intentions, the individuals' perspective on the situatedness of learning (the affordances they perceive in the environment), and the range of responses there can be to unfamiliar situations that may affect students' self-positioning.

3.2 The project of policing

3.2.1 *What is a project?*

In this research, I draw on Giddens' (1976) distinction between the longer term plan (the project of becoming a police officer, in this instance), and the short term interventions and adjustments that are made *in situ* by individuals in order to achieve their project – their intentional behaviours. Intentions and projects, like any other facet of experience, are multi-dimensional phenomena that reflect the individual's conscious and unconscious desires, their will and beliefs about their capacities, the histories that underpin these dimensions, and the possibilities the individual understands to be present in a particular situation, as well as the ways in which these can be negotiated in the workplace. The social dimension of projects and intentions is based on the possibilities that contemporary society offers to members of certain populations, as well as the ways in which these possibilities and the actions which arise from them are read. The situational dimension encompasses the characteristics of the activities in which people are involved (particularly novelty and challenge), and their ongoing experiences as they engage in these activities.

Projects and intentions can be about doing, relating (with natural and social phenomena) and being. They can be vague (intending to benefit from being in the placement) and very precise (to observe what is happening before intervening). They can reflect the known (that, say, one has a relative who has progressed satisfactorily up the ranks in policing), or leap outside of the realm of the routine and predictable (aiming to become a member of the police band). They are intrinsically about the future and the possibility of things being different to what they are at the present moment, as well as about having different types of relationships with people or objects in some future moment.

For the students in this study, the initial project will have centred on becoming a police officer. It is uncertain how this overarching project might translate in the context of the policing placement, both because of the ethos of the then Academy, and the diversity of the student cohort, and because of the findings of early studies into anticipatory socialisation (Becker *et al.* 1992 [1961]; Melia 1987). These studies suggest that

immediate demands over-ride long-term projects. Becker *et al.* (1992) thought that anticipatory socialisation (developing selves on models provided by accomplished professionals) would be a factor in medical education, but this long-term future orientation was not found, rather, students focused on, and were constrained by, their immediate circumstances¹.

Policing students' knowledge of the rationale for the placement was limited to a briefing and perhaps conversations with more senior students or with staff, or inferred from their knowledge of the Wood Royal Commission (1997). Within the Academy, there was much anecdotal evidence to suggest that the desire to become a police officer (or the anxiety about acquiring the skills needed as a police officer) was such a dominant concern that areas taught by non-police, or which concerned issues *surrounding* police practice (rather than the skills that would be immediately drawn on in the thick of practice), did not have a high priority for students. This single-minded attention to police practice had been evident under PREP, a period in which the majority of recruits were in their twenties, but, with the Diploma, the age profile, and therefore the learning experience-base of students, shifted considerably, with the majority of students being over the age of twenty five, and many over thirty. Students may have retained a unitary purpose, or may have had other complementary or competing projects as they contemplated their second trimester of study, and made their first contact with their placement organisation.

3.2.2 *Projects in temporal, spatial and personal contexts*

3.2.2.1 Projects and (social) time

Projects are possible when a future is assumed: they are therefore intrinsically temporal phenomena. The lived experience of time and its role in our understanding of our present and our futures is considered by some to have been rather neglected (Symes 1999; Flaherty & Fine 2001). It is a central notion in any study concerned with projects and intentions, because these assume a gap between the present and a (desired) future. According to Sève, people's use of time (*l'emploi du temps*), as framed by their social

¹ These studies excluded students who did not conform to the main trends in shared situations, whereas individual responses, actions and negotiations in diverse contexts lie at the heart of this study.

and biological heritage, is the basis of biography (Burkitt 1999). Bourdieu's (1981) work suggests that time is important both in terms of tempo and trajectory.

I take the position that the time into which we are born is *social* time. Time, like social space, is a social construction, differently experienced not merely across age and broad cultural groupings, but also across class, education, and other factors (Symes 1999; Macey 1994). Whereas agrarian and Eastern societies have a seasonal, or carnival (Burkitt 1999), understanding of time (where time is cyclical, built around the collection of this or that crop, or life cycles), in the West, the notion of time incorporates concepts of causation, and, importantly for this study, *intentional concepts that rely on causation*, such as prediction, personal ability to calculate risks and influence the future, and readiness to act (Koehler 1996; Cronk 2000; Giddens 1976).

The basis for prediction is the past. People draw on their past experiences in dealing with the present, and with the future. Much of the process of doing this is captured in narrative concepts of the self. Narrators are understood to be looking towards their pasts as they construe their presents, and, sometimes, their futures (Tennant 2000; Connelly & Clandinin 1998). Bjerrum Nielsen (1996) draws on Freud's (1925) description of the subject as a 'magic writing pad', to suggest all previous inscriptions are still potentially present, although sometimes they are only visible in the right light.

The past limits the ways in which the future can be understood, through mechanisms such as language, structures of domination and technologies of power. For Foucault (1988, 1979), the trap was the technologies of power operating in contemporary society through rationalisation, where technologies of surveillance (from confessions to the panopticon) led both to individualisation (the creation of 'subjects' that could be assessed and distributed) and to self-monitoring. Language is another trap. Individuals position themselves and are positioned in multiple ways within discourse, discourse being the way in which knowledge and power relationships are established through language, and solidified in institutions, as well as the differing legitimacies of languages used by people with different positions in the social structure (Boje 1990: 57-58; Foucault 1986: 155). Hager (1999: 78) suggests that there are three perspectives on the role of language, each of which has a slightly different orientation to time. Firstly, selves, including projected selves, do not exist outside of language (the past speaks us);

secondly, we can only know or experience ourselves to the extent that there is language for this (the past constrains us); and, thirdly, because all we know of the world (and ourselves) is through language, we can never be certain of our knowledge (the constraints of the past render past, present and future uncertain).

People do not perceive time as such, but events in time, so that the perception of time is tied both to memory (Le Poidevin 2000) and to novelty (Mead 1936, as cited in Flaherty & Fine 2001). Memory is a re/minder that the present self cannot be held apart from past or future, although my understanding of the situations in which I find myself is limited by my perceptions, thoughts and experiences to date (past time), and all of my actions have unacknowledged conditions (pasts and presents) and unknown consequences (futures) (Giddens 1979). While the past (both personal and collective) is always open to reinterpretation, and conditions rather than determines the present, the future is finite for each individual, and yet replete with possibilities. Each moment as it is lived, whilst it immediately becomes part of the past, is oriented towards the future: at its most basic, 'What shall I do?' Indeed, Evans (1995) suggests that a person's ability to act may depend on their belief in whether or not they have a future (Koehler 1996), and Mead asserted that selfhood is lost if the choices in the present towards our futures are not identified (Cronk 2000).

3.2.2.2 Projects and (social) space

Social projects, such as those of becoming a police officer, intrinsically reflect contemporary (and global) social and economic conditions. Economic, technological and political changes have had widespread effects. In Australia, changes in income, the desire for political freedom, education and economic development (Langlois 2001; Burbidge & Finnie 1999), relativities between countries and rural and urban locations, and the impetus for communities to regroup with others of like origins in new countries or cities (Boncompagni 2001) have meant ongoing geographical mobility². Alongside privatisation, the devolution of governmental core functions such as employment services to religious organisations, and an increasing neo-liberal demand for individual choice of privatised facilities, there has been a growth of community groups based in

² One third of Australia's population growth over the last century is attributable to migration and to the children born to migrants (ABS 2002).

identity politics. In this flux, there is a trend towards increasing job mobility, making involvement in work over a life-time 'a composite of experiences' (Brown 2000: 1), often involving job-to-job transitions, or being the consequence of organisational downsizing, outsourcing and restructuring (Brown 2000; Bernhardt *et al.* 1998; Brown 1998). As each year more than a quarter of full-time workers can expect to change their job, and another quarter a year later (Booth & Francesconi 1999), the likelihood is that not only will migration feature in the lives of some of the students (either local or international), but some students may well come to their studies with considerable work experience in diverse work contexts, including part-time and volunteer work³.

Information about, and experiences of, these changes, as well as dramatised versions of peoples' lives in the 'juggernaut of modernity', are easily accessed through the media, with reflexivity contributing to ongoing change (Giddens 1991). The increased complexity of the political, social and economic context, and the availability of information about this, has meant that there are many shifting fields of interaction that are part of a person's taken-for-granted environment, and which they could potentially make part of their lives. While the project of becoming a police officer may have been what, from the perspective of this research, tied the students in this study together, and what brought them to the Academy, the evidence is that there has been considerable diversity amongst them, and amongst the organisations in which they were placed (Bowles *et al.* 2002).

What the presence of multiple fields of interaction means for identity, and therefore projects that concern who we are and what we do, is, according to Giddens (1991), that there is choice as we traverse our many intersecting worlds. This choice is limited by, for example, the immediate context, the various forms of capital (social, economic and cultural) at our disposal in particular fields (Thompson 1990; Bourdieu 1981), and non-cognitive aspects of being, as well as the assumptions we hold about ourselves. Immersion in particular sets of relationships allows for the positioning of selves within those relationships, and the register of participation inevitably shifts with any move

³ In Australia, in 1993, almost a quarter of all workers worked part-time, up from just over one tenth in 1973 (ABS 2001), and in 2000, almost one third of the population gave unpaid help in the form of time, services or skills through an organisation or group, up from one quarter in 1995 (ABS 2002). Students of policing came from occupations as diverse as dressmaking, engineering, sales, journalism and volunteer work.

from one set of relationships to another. The ongoing subjective presence of alternative or previous definitions of selves (self as teacher while on sabbatical, or when working in an environment radically different to that for which one was trained) may be seen as confusing and problematic (Connelly & Clandinin 1998). On the other hand, the previous or alternative definition may be preferred, so that the immediate one can be dismissed in its favour.

It is in the selection of projects, and in the processes of becoming, that any limitations on individual choice will be played out. Having a strong accent, being colour blind, or failing to lose the necessary weight have all affected policing students' chances of achieving their goal. Similar factors may well be at play when they are in community placements.

3.2.2.3 Projects and the personal world

The question of projects and intentions in learning is closely tied to the psychological, and therefore individualistic, foundations of much educational theorising, where the approach has been that of the now somewhat dated concept of 'motivation', an 'internal process that gives behaviour its energy and direction' (Kleinginna & Kleinginna 1981). As Burke (1995, cited in Chen & Darst 2001) points out, this definition reflects the way in which motivation and task have been separated, with tasks unquestioned, and any failure to learn them located in problems with the student's motivation. This essentialist tack has failed to capture the interplay of motivation and situation (Ng 1998: 3). Related approaches, at least in terms of the focus on the individual, albeit with reference to the learning milieu, would have projects based upon conscious reflection⁴ as well as unexamined assumptions about the student's own capacities or the context in which s/he is acting. This individualistic approach is evident in the literature on policing, although the impact of experiences within policing is also acknowledged: a key driver for joining the police has been described as a 'sense of mission', a personal desire to contribute to the community, one that gets eroded into bitterness and cynicism, most significantly by the police management style, but also by the failings of the criminal justice system (Reiner 1998). There is therefore an uneasy recognition of the

⁴ This is the case in theories of learning from experience (Kolb 1984; Boud Cohen & Walker 1993; Boud, Keogh & Walker 1985: 24; Boud & Miller 1996; Dewey 1938).

longer-term impact of participation, set against the assumption that entry to the police is a question of individual motivation, even a calling (as a potential student described it to me).

The recognition of the role of context in framing people's aspirations and projects, rather than seeing these individualistically, is fully articulated in the situated learning literature (Wenger 1998; Greeno 1997; Lave & Wenger 1991; Brown, Collins & Duguid 1989) and in distributed theories of cognition (Pea 1993; Salomon 1993), in which knowledge cannot be divorced from context (Barab & Kirshner 2001: 5). Rather, the context provides a dynamic arena in which participation creates learning and trajectories (a series of self-positionings) alike (Barab & Kirshner 2001: 5). The project students had of becoming a police officer, or a particular type of police officer, may have been based, according to Wenger (1998), on one of three types of relationship: on *engagement* in previous work or their community placement, *imagination* or the values-based category of *alignment*.

Based upon *engagement*, projects may build upon the past. For example, a student might aim to do better at an activity than he or she has done previously, or aim to re-employ skills he or she has used in a previous job. Then, too, the placement context may render the original aims irrelevant, so that alternative projects emerge from participation.

Projects may also be generated by immediate circumstances that are out of one's control (for example, the *disengagement* of being retrenched), and this is where *imagination* and *alignment* come into the picture. *Imagination* overcomes the potential limitations of immediate engagement (the narrow focus and insularity that sustain a particular self), as, by extrapolating from their own experience, people can imagine what their own and the lives of others might be like, and other sorts of things they could make or do (Wenger 1998: 175-176). Imagination draws on a wider web of social possibilities than the realm of immediate engagement, from direct contact with people in other professions, through to the vicarious experience of a particular type of work on the television. Thus a student may have been able to imagine themselves as an officer through actual or vicarious contact with police prior to the placement, or a policing

student in the community placement may imagine him or herself dealing with a particular client as an officer, rather than as a student.

Alignment involves coordinating one's energy and activities so they fit within the broader social structure, either in the immediate context or through mediated contacts (conforming to fashions or laws, for example) (Wenger 1998: 178). A person may decide that he or she wishes to become a police officer like the sergeant of his/her childhood, or a particular type of nurse (Scarlett n.d.). A student might decide to stop smoking marijuana, because s/he sees the avoidance of drugs as typical of a professional police officer. Deciding that a particular person is a good role model has a component of intention built in - we want to present a particular side of ourselves to the world, and get particular sorts of feedback from it. This realm of aspirations is the one in which our values are clearly in evidence.

The project of policing is to be seen as the over-riding framework for the informants in this study, whatever their reasons and assumptions about the nature of their choice, with an intermediate goal of passing the Diploma. The immediate task for each student was to pass the subject, by performing adequately within the placement, as assessed by their supervisor, and in the required activities. In this case, one of the questions for students will have been how the two projects linked, how the placement might assist them in performing well as a police officer, or in gaining the skills they needed to that end.

3.2.3 *How do projects guide action?*

Projects act as touchstones for experience, helping filter out those things to which one must pay attention, and those that are irrelevant. However, the filtering process is by no means clear cut. The aspects that need talking about here are, firstly, that how students deal with the learning situation is likely to be strongly related to their initial assessment of the placement's relevance to their overall project and what they might learn from it, and the extent to which they feel they already possess the types of knowledge that are required (Ng 1998: 4-5). The decision is not purely cognitive, as the project may have a considerable amount of emotional energy behind it. Thus it can be that an individual's assumed, imagined or desired trajectory may mean that disconfirming experiences are

negated, and original projects remain unchanged⁵. Projects may also be, perhaps as a consequence of this, very sustaining, by assisting students in tolerating short-term unpleasantness, as Damasio (1996: 175) suggests.

As outlined earlier, the students' project is played out in a social/educational context, and is therefore the arena for negotiation. Imagination and alignment have some drawbacks when it comes to projects. As Goffman (1976: 15) shows, in encounters we rarely have conclusive information about others' 'real' attitudes or intentions. Students will have had to act, intentionally or unintentionally expressing themselves, hoping that they managed to guide and control the responses made by the others who were present either in the immediate environment (placement personnel and clients) or the mediated environment (academic staff marking their work). It is in this negotiated and unstable fluidity that their projects will be played out.

Little negotiation – or give – may be needed in some learning activities, such as officer survival, or the policing placement, but the match between project and placement could be far more tenuous. As Chen & Darst's (2001) study of learning tasks showed that it was the learning tasks themselves that had motivational effects, not what the student brought to the situation, there remains the possibility that the project was subsumed by the demands of the placement, or vice versa.

While the project provides the rationale for being in a particular situation, actions are required for the project to become a reality. For the students in this study, the immediate demand is that of engaging in the community placement. Although the situated learning literature (in particular) emphasises the importance of the learning context, and the opportunities for learning that are built into relationships and work processes in communities of practice, what is most important for this research is how the individual student might engage with the context. How people act in a situation that opens out into the future can be seen as a matter of the 'affordances' within that situation (Burkitt 1996, drawing on Gibson's theory of perception). Affordances are the opportunities for action that available natural and human resources provide. A stone can

⁵ A study of teenagers 'mothering' an infant simulator doll showed that they concluded that their real-life experience would be less stressful than their three days and two nights with the doll (Krawelski & Stevens-Simon 2000). Wenger's definitions of imagination and alignment provide one explanation of the processes underlying this.

be used for grinding, as a missile, or for skipping across water in play. Different work environments contain different possibilities for action, but what is done with the affordances that these environments provide will depend upon a person's projects and intentions. If a student perceives the environment as offering few opportunities that relate to his or her goals (that is, the affordances are limited), then creative use of (or, in Giddens' 1976 terms, intentional behaviours drawing on) the available resources is/are unlikely.

Students may have understood the affordances of their learning situation in very different ways, affecting the types of strategies they drew on in progressing towards the achievement of their project. Gibbs (1992, cited in Beatty, Dall'Alba & Marton 1997) suggested five *learner orientations*. Beatty, Dall'Alba & Marton (1997) extend these to six (in relation to a highly circumscribed reading task), expressed here in terms of students' placement experiences and of orientation to their associated studies. Learners may have focused on:

- increasing their knowledge (seeing what was available in the community for members of disadvantaged groups, or how others understood the policing of disadvantaged groups);
- memorising and reproducing (following the placement protocols, or summarising readings in the activities);
- applying (for example, skills or knowledge acquired earlier in their studies);
- understanding (what it might be like to be disadvantaged);
- seeing something in a different way (seeing social problems through police eyes, or through the eyes of the disadvantaged);
- changing as a person (behaving as they believed they would need to when they became a police officer).

Some of these orientations are short term (an increase in knowledge, memorising and reproducing, and applying), whereas the other three have clearer long-term implications. Of these, 'memorising and reproducing' is the approach least likely to involve active exploration of the affordances within the community placement. All of

these orientations concern what the learner sees themselves as needing to do in order to achieve their aims, and all have affective components (Berman Brown 2000).

It is not solely how students understand the project that is at issue here, but also the ways in which they understand their progress towards dealing with the project. Ng (1998) found that students' records of their experiences of mathematics lessons over a 6 week period included remarks about their own relations to the lessons, what he called 'self-structures'. These he classified as relating to *efficacy* (needing to study, or finding revision worthwhile), *mastery* (enjoyment of a particular task, or unfussed performance of it), *interest* (either boredom or challenge), *personalisation*, which included the sub-categories of self-reinforcement (noting one knew how to do something), self-regulation (noting the need to practice or work hard), and self-evaluation (the extent to which one is making progress), and, finally, *other selves* (a category used to cover remarks about tiredness, lack of concentration, feeling angry, and so on, which affected the way in which a lesson was viewed). All of these concern the on-going monitoring of one's own responses to events and experiences, with the last of these indicating that at least some experiences are influenced by experiences outside of the immediate task.

To return to the interactions inherent in project realisation, for students the focus will not solely be on the set tasks but also be on the social environment. Concepts such as 'learner orientations', and 'self-structures', because they have been developed around specific verbal and mathematical tasks, may largely exclude the social actions that are central to self-positioning and to trajectories (Billett 2001a, 2001b; Davies & Harré 1998.; Wenger 1998; Lave and Wenger 1991; Bourdieu 1981; Cooley, as described in Coser 1977; Goffman 1976, 1972). It may also be that the learner orientations and self-structures identified by Beatty, Dall'Alba & Marton (1997) and Ng (1998) respectively do have a presence in students' diaries, partly because the diaries were an assessment task, but also because of the degree of self-monitoring that is considered to be at work in social situations (Goffman 1976, 1972; Mead 1987; Cooley, as described in Coser 1977).

There is one other, related, key issue for students in this study – they are in transit, rather than intending members of the community in question, and not necessarily sure of the relevance of the placement to their long-term goals. Furthermore, whilst in the

placement, they may suffer from a lack of the legitimacy afforded to students from the relevant occupational group, or the legitimacy and protection of a uniform in dealing with public hostilities towards police should these emerge⁶. Whereas apprentices can see their future clearly in the people around them (whether or not they quite match their initial expectations, or choose to pursue that future), students of policing have to bridge an inherent disjuncture in the community placement. Learners react to the learning environment as they *experience* it (Bowden & Marton 1998: 8), and this must be seen as related to the kind of explicit or implicit contract that exists between the students and others in their learning environment (Boud & Miller 1996: 4). Meanings will not have been off-the-shelf.

3.3 Learning milieux

The literature on learning has historically been tied to the education of children and to the discipline of psychology. As such, the focus has been on the individual learner, and only occasionally did works emerge that looked at the contribution of the learning environment to the learning (for example, early critiques such as those of Illich 1971, Holt 1964 – and Dewey). More particularly, until the last decade or so, very little was known about, and very little research was conducted into, how people learn, or do not learn, what would be helpful to them at and through their experiences at work (Pogson & Tennant 2000: 28; Tennant & Pogson 1995: 62; Boud & Walker 1991: 9), or, by extension, experiences in field placements (Walker and Boud 1994), and service learning situations (Wolfson & Willinsky 1998). Reasons given for the relative neglect of learning at and through work include that the research did not sit comfortably within existing discipline areas (Boud and Garrick 1999: 7); that there were questions about the value of workplace learning as set against that provided in tertiary institutions (Billett 2001); that the focus was on outcomes rather than learning processes (Wolfson & Willinsky 1998); and that the experience-based learning that underpins workplace learning was not amenable to sets of strategies and formulae (Andresen, Boud & Cohen 2000).

⁶ Some staff and clients could be angry at perceived injustices at the hands of local police, and, upon discovering that the students were to be police, used the opportunity to express their dissatisfaction.

The increasing demand for ongoing learning for adults, as the pace of technological and social change has intensified, has been paralleled by a developing interest amongst adult educators into how adults learn (from Knowles onwards), and, in the last two decades, how adults learn at work (from Schön's 1987 concept of reflection in action, through studies by Chi, Glaser & Farr 1988, and Scribner 1997 [1984] and so on), of novice and expert practitioners, and, most recently, studies inspired by Lave and Wenger's (1991) account of situated learning or by Vygostky's and Leontev's views of the interaction between the learner and the environment (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder 2002; Billett 2001a, 2001b; Pogson & Tennant 2000; Lave 1999; Tennant 1999; Wenger 1998; Wolfson & Willinsky 1998; Tennant & Pogson 1995; Lave & Wenger 1991; Chi, Glaser & Farr 1988; Scribner 1997 [1984] and so on).

Leaving aside the questions of adult learner characteristics and of reflection that stimulated the first debates, all of the other approaches emphasise, at the very least, the dependence of the learner on the culture of the immediate work context (occupational socialisation studies and early situated learning literature), and, more recently, the *interaction* between the learner and the learning milieu (people, artefacts and processes) (later works by Wenger and Billett, for example, as well as Chen & Darst 2001, and Ng 1998). What this literature points to, in examining how students' intentions and learning might be played out in community placements, is the need to take the learning context very seriously indeed, and not see any changes in learner understandings and skills as purely the consequence of the individual learner's intellectual capacities or orientation to the placement experience. A whole range of factors need to be kept in mind, whether or not they are evident in the students' written work.

These factors can be clustered around two main threads, the social context and the practice context, and the way in which these interweave. The influence of the social context is the primary factor in occupational socialisation studies, such as the seminal works on the medical profession, where the training involved work on the wards as well as academic studies (Becker *et al.* 1992; Melia 1987). Current interest in questions of agency and difference have rendered these studies less useful than they once were, even though they provide key pointers to the role of power imbalances, and of the impact on learners of differing workplace and academic views of what needs to be learned, about

which more recent situational approaches make reminders (Billett 2001; Wolfson and Willinsky 1998).

3.3.1 *The social context*

Situated learning studies have shown that the social processes associated with active engagement are most important for assisting novices with tasks, for resolving problems, and for building an image of possible futures (Wenger 1998; Billett 1994)⁷. Many writers in the field of adult education point to the importance of social support to learning (Billett 2001; Tennant 1999; Boud & Miller 1996: 15; Boud, Cohen & Walker 1996; Boud & Griffin 1988; Knowles 1980; Rogers 1983, 1967), and to the need to foster self-esteem (Boud, Cohen & Walker 1996: 15-16). Confidence in one's own capacities, awareness of the context of one's actions, direct guidance from credible sources (it is, according to Volkoff 1996, the workplace learner who determines who is a credible source of knowledge), and indirect guidance from the things which are happening around one are seen as the critical components of workplace learning (Billett 1999, 1996, 1994).

In stable, small-scale societies (such as those common in some of the anthropological studies described by Lave & Wenger 1991), the possible types and levels of relationships in which one can engage are immediately present and relatively easily comprehended, and the negotiation of positions and trajectories is within a known 'game'. Nonetheless, even in these circumstances, people will be living in a complex pattern of recognitions and non-recognitions, with every person they associate with entailing an identity, and every identity requiring specific social affiliations for its survival (Berger 1966: 119).

The social context for the community placement extends, for each of the students, well beyond the boundaries of any one of the participating agencies. There are fields of interaction in which they may be engaged without being aware of the play. These are not 'communities of practice', for they are neither communities nor transparent arenas of practice. For example, Jamrozik & Nocella (1998) point out that most of those

⁷ The knowledge sources which Billett found workers used included other workers, hints, reminders, explanations, observations, listening, dealing with authentic problems, and their personal history.

concerned with ‘social problems’⁸ are unaware of the political field in which they play, concentrating on the ‘deviant’ population rather than the source of the problem. People simply do not see how their own actions contribute to the game played by others in the social system, thus perpetuating the injustices they are attempting to address.

Thus, in contemporary society, there are many ‘games’ in play, from engagement in communities of practice (domestic, school or work-based), to the vicarious participation in international affairs by watching the news, and unintended contributions to ongoing social injustices. Each entry into a new field brings new demands, as well as the requirement to become familiar with those demands and find a place – and, in some cases, a trajectory. The negotiating of a trajectory will inevitably involve balancing the characteristics and demands of the situation, and those that one brings to the situation. For example, there is evidence to suggest that orientations to the demands of professional work environments may be fundamentally different for women and men, with men seeing the games, and their effects, as just part of the games, and women, more tentative about the levels of acceptance afforded to them, experiencing the games as personally harmful (Gersick, Bartunek & Dutton 2000). These orientations affect what is actually possible and what people feel to be possible, as well as the sorts of relationships that can be developed.

People enter workforces with different opportunities for engagement related to their location not just as newcomers or people with expertise, or of a certain gender, but also in terms of age, ethnicity and class. These power effects form an integral part of the social processes of self-construction and of the playing out of intentions in a particular field. In some cases, there will be considerable tension and ambiguity. This may relate to broad cultural positioning (being a woman in a traditionally male occupation, or being old in an economic downturn), but it may relate to very specific articulations of power in particular workplaces (Ransome 1999: 174-182). Thus a person with a

⁸ Defined by Jamrozik & Nocella (1998: xi) as ‘a form of “negative residue” that logically emerges from the everyday pursuit of dominant values and interests’, a condition which has an identifiable social origin, threatens, or is seen to threaten, certain values or interests, and is amenable to attenuation or solution (1998:2). Politicians depoliticise these issues by translating them into technical problems addressed by economists and administrators, acted upon by operatives who, in face-to-face interaction, remove the problem from the public sphere and deal with it as personal pathologies (e.g., those unable to manage meagre finances must accept financial counselling to obtain emergency relief) (Jamrozik & Nocella 1998: 49-50).

doctorate may enter policing, but the status system within policing, which affords status to those with considerable experience in general duties and/or investigation, means that their cultural capital may be unrecognised or dismissed – and their assumption that they will make rapid progress through the ranks on the basis of their qualification proves incorrect.

Irrespective of such ambiguities, the extent to which any experience of another person will present a significant challenge to established understandings is partly related to questions of social intimacy and distance, and the relational affordances of a particular environment. In any milieu, there may be choices or requirements as to who we interact with most, and, in service professions, this may mean being closer to the client than to our colleagues, or vice versa. While face-to-face encounters proceed with reciprocal mirroring of the immediate experience of the other (a ‘we-relation’), the many other people of whom we are aware have differing degrees of anonymity, on a continuum from past actual encounters (relatively detailed and content rich), through functionary types (bosses, or police) to social collectivities (such as parliamentarians, or, more distant still, ‘terrorists’) (Berger & Luckmann 1966). Berger and Luckmann (1966: 44-48) and Schutz and Luckmann (1974: 80-85) point out that those not immediately present are understood as ‘types’ with typical virtues and characteristics. The anonymity of the type depends on whether or not the relationship can be changed into a ‘we-relation’. When differences between people are observable, integration is unlikely (Brickson 2000: 2), and close contact will only entail changes when commonality can be established.

Various studies indicate that sensitivity to the subtleties of what is acceptable and unacceptable often guide interaction as people negotiate where they stand in the unpredictable pathways of talk and participation in practice (Barnes, Palmary & Durrheim 2001; Eggins & Slade 1996; Morgan & Krone 2001; Mascitelli 2000). The monitoring of communication is most clearly evident in formal situations, where specific styles of communication are encouraged to create and maintain the appropriate level and type of professional distance (police officers are to be assertive, and doctors to cultivate a ‘bedside manner’). A study by Morgan and Krone (2001) indicates that, for the most part, in medical environments, professionals actively limit improvisations that go outside the demands of social and emotional detachment. The implication is that

the more 'professional' the environment, the less the opportunity for the student to allow their intentions free rein, and the more they will have recourse to temporary forms of compliance.

Fringe dwellers (students in community placements) in such environments may be acutely aware of the possibility, and negative consequences, of transgression, when they have insufficient status to carry their blunder. In less formal circumstances, there is greater opportunity for all participants to improvise and engage in the 'creative dialogue' (Walker & Boud 1994) that allows for learning. Indeed, casual conversations, including gossip, are considered critical to negotiating dimensions of identity such as gender, age, sexuality, class, ethnicity, and subcultural affiliations (Hayes & Nutman 1981, cited in Ransome 1999: 172; Eggins & Slade 1996; Berger & Luckmann 1985). Individuals position themselves in multiple ways within these various discourses, developing subjectivities consistent with and in opposition to those assigned to them. Hofstede, according to Earley (1997: 87), suggests that there are five value dimensions that characterise organisational cultures, which will affect the degree of fit between a newcomer and existing staff, and form the framework against which support is provided and trajectories are defined⁹. The implication of these studies, for students, is that those in less structured environments are more likely to have a trajectory of positions than those in highly professionalised contexts.

Whatever the type of workplace, there can be problems that create risks for individuals and agencies alike (Billett 1996). Typical problems include conflicts around new and old-timers, full and part-time workers, teams with different roles and standing, personal and vocational goals, and institutional arrangements (Billett 2001a: 24), as well as other broader, previously mentioned, social distinctions such as gender, age and ethnicity. Reynolds, Scott & Austin (2000: 7-8) draw attention to studies which demonstrate that empathic responses to clients will not occur if the work environment, either because of heavy workloads, staff shortages, or transient client contact, is not supportive of this.

⁹ These are: 'power distance' (the extent to which members accept inequalities between those with more or less power); 'uncertainty avoidance' (the degree of emphasis on ritual behaviours, rules and labour mobility); 'individualism' (self-interest and competition as opposed to collectivist values); 'masculinity/femininity' (an emphasis on gender differences and the world of work/minimal gender differentiation and quality of life); and 'Confucian dynamism' (a focus on time as linear and on the future as opposed to connections with the past and the reciprocal causation of events).

3.3.2 *The practice context*

Becoming a police officer involves learning how to participate in a limited but complex range of activities and practices in relation to certain ‘clients’ – offenders, victims, witnesses, court personnel and the like. *Practices* (active and related knowledge) are the central consideration at work and in other environments¹⁰ (Wenger 1998: 45; Burkitt 1999: 74). Practices include the explicit and implicit; what is said and done and what is not; what is represented and what is assumed; language, tools, documents, images, symbols, roles, criteria, procedures, regulations, but, also, subtle cues, rules of thumb, sensitivities, and shared world views. The possibility of the mutual shaping of participants’ experiences of meaning, and, therefore, the building of identities related to and inherent in those practices, characterises participation in practice (Wenger 1998: 56).

People give form to experience by producing ‘things’ (laws, procedures, and tools), and others appropriate social meanings in using these artefacts (Burkitt 1999; Wenger 1998; Berger & Luckmann 1985). Most human activities leave traces that can be ‘read’ by others, and these traces can take many forms, from guns to scalpels, laws to exercises. They shape experience, both in very concrete ways (the word processor changes the way I write), or more abstractly (fat as a measure of self-worth does not make me heavier but can weigh heavily on my sense of future as a police officer). Nonetheless, such traces do not provide ready answers for every situation: neither the social nor the natural world is totally compliant with people’s needs (Burkitt 1999: 72).

Practices also involve shared repertoires¹¹, based on local resources for negotiating meaning (the pile on the desk equals the work to do today, seating in the office and tea-room represent relationships and managerial reactions to those relationships) (Wenger 1998). Repertoires have two characteristics that make them a resource for negotiating meaning, their reflection of a history of mutual engagement, and their inherent ambiguity. They form a regime of mutual accountability, covering what matters and

¹⁰ The origins of theories of practice lie in anthropology and sociology, through the work of Bourdieu and of Giddens, and have been adopted in situated learning theory (Strohman 1993). The premise is an understanding of human activity as ‘regulated improvisation’, where activity occurs within structure, but is not determined by structure.

¹¹ Wenger uses the word ‘repertoire’ to emphasise its rehearsed character and its availability.

what does not, what is important and why, what to do and what not to do, what to pay attention to and what to ignore, what to talk about and what to leave unsaid, what to justify and what to take for granted, what to display or withhold, when actions are good enough or need work (reified or not).

Work environments may involve more or less complex sets of practices, many or few opportunities for negotiating meanings, and more or less opportunity to safely acquire the relevant repertoires. In terms of the practice context, situational factors identified as important in fostering learning are described by Billett (2001b) as the 'invitational' aspects of work, which include effective access to what is to be learned and the physical layout and the culture of work, which together enhance or constrain participation by opening or closing opportunities for observation, talking, mentoring, guidance and collaborative work (Lave & Wenger 1991). Studies also emphasise the value of relevant settings and strong goals for learning, of engagement in work tasks of increasing accountability, of access to the outcome of one's work (so that one sees the basis on which one's work is judged), and of close guidance of other workers and experts (as a joint activity) (Billet 2001a, 1999, 1994¹²; Tennant 1999; Lave & Wenger 1991). Non-routine work activities are seen by Billett (1996) as particularly problematic for learning, especially where the knowledge is not observable. Lave and Wenger (1991), and Billett (2001a, 1999) emphasise access to practice over instruction as a resource for learning, and the joint provision of models and cues; the need for learners to do the thinking, and to receive direct guidance from credible experts. Any or all of these factors can enhance an individual's capacities to reach their intended goals.

In certain jobs, effective guidance will be particularly critical. Jobs such as policing and nursing involve a structured transgression of social conventions about proximity, which can be a challenge to the newcomer, and guidance will be needed on how best to handle this (Scarlett n.d.; Hall, cited in Polhemus 1978). Effective learning is, Billett (1999) suggests, really hard for those working alone, working with supervisors who fear being displaced, or in workplaces where there are no experts or, in Dewey's view, where the quality of practice is insufficient (Dewey 1974 [1895]: 201). Accidents of geography, attrition of experienced staff, financial constraints, gender imbalances, and high levels of non-routine activity can mean that there are no credible experts, putting learners and

¹² Dewey, long before, suggested these too (Dewey 1926, in Archambault 1974: 150).

their projects at risk. Studies of the development of expertise suggest that the critical difficulty for novices is their lack of familiarity with the specific constraints and possibilities in a work environment, which means that all they can do is adhere rigidly to the algorithms provided (Pogson & Tennant 2000; Tennant & Pogson 1995; Scribner 1986). These algorithms may take students' attention away from their main goals, as they struggle to survive with limited resources and/or support (Zeichner 1982).

The novice/expert literature tends to obscure the extent to which people may bring different sets of skills to various work practices as they move from one work environment to another. Part of what is negotiated in and through practice is the extent to which pre-existing knowledge and capacities can be used in the new work environment, for example, whether or not it is possible to use sociological terms when working in staff development, or whether one can deal with a disorganised communication system by adapting one from a previous workplace. The impact of relative power (which includes matters such as gender or age, down to how, for example, sociological terms are viewed) on performance within specific contexts cannot be ignored.

Engagement in work practices, then, is closely linked to relationships, positioning, and trajectory, where the following of routines, and the undertaking of tasks with more or less expertise, can influence how students are viewed, how they view themselves, and how far they feel they are progressing towards their goals. They may find that, because of the way they are perceived, as woman or as non-police officer, work practices and the relationships around them do not provide them with images they accept or like. They may turn to alternative worlds, relegating the practices in a particular work environment to meaningless chores with no particular significance for the way in which they understand their future or themselves.

3.4 Encountering and addressing the unfamiliar

Thus far, I have focused on the desires and assumptions students brought with them into the placement, and on the ways in which the students' perceptions of the affordances in the community placement might support or inhibit their learning and the achievement of their project. I now turn to the inevitable disjuncture between students'

expectations and experiences, inevitable because projects are based on a gap between the known and the unknown, and the present and the future (Bowden & Marton 1998: 27).

People exist, as active and animate experiencers, in the present. The experience of the present is what Dewey identified as an experience of a 'specious' present (Flaherty & Fine 2001; Le Poidevin 2000).¹³ The specious present is defined by Le Poidevin as 'the interval of time such that events occurring within that interval are experienced as present', during which, according to Mead, people interpret the situation and consider various responses (Flaherty & Fine 2001). Delays in perception mean that all experience is of a past event, and experience of the present is composed not of one event, but of many micro-occurrences which reach our perception at different rates. Not that this matters as we live the present, the moment where the pressure of the thumb is shaping the pot on the wheel (relations of production), where we see the eyebrow lifting in response to the comment we have made (relations of communication), where the staff mutter in the tea-room about an edict of a supervisor (relations of power), or where we recognise that we are struggling to grasp a complex concept (thinking/reflecting/judging). The 'specious' present can extend over a considerable period to encompass a situation which is ongoing and which is viewed as having an end-point, for example, experience on the wards in medical education (Becker *et al.* 1992; Melia 1987), or community placements in police education.

Most importantly, the present is the site of ongoing experiences. Although the notion of experience is problematic in that it is a cultural understanding, like identity, it usefully expresses some of the ways we are positioned as individuals within social relationships (Burkitt 1999: 20). There are multiple dimensions involved: 'experience' encompasses personal observation, encounter, undergoing, and feelings (over time), and the outcomes, explicit or tacit, of this process (Simpson & Weiner 2000).¹⁴ Associated terms are **experiment** (test, trial; action undertaken to test or trial something), and

¹³ A term coined by the psychologist E.R. Clay, and used by William James (1890) and G.H. Mead (1938) (Le Poidevin 2000; Flaherty & Fine 2001). Philosophers argue that the present is specious because it is an interval and not a durationless present (Le Poidevin 2000). Physiologists argue that because perception inherently involves time delays, all we perceive is the past.

¹⁴ This goes beyond the distinction that Kolb (1984) drew between 'concrete experience' (the direct personal encounter) and knowledge about something, 'abstract conceptualisation', to incorporate the outcomes of concrete experiences when these are tacit rather than explicit.

expert (trained by experience), through the etymological root, *expiriri*. A closer look at this etymological origin (Onions 1967) points to links with learning now largely lost in everyday use of the word, and of considerable significance in exploring the ways in which intentions might pan out in everyday working life. The central component of the word is derived from *periculum* – experiment, or risk, which survives in contemporary English as peril (Skeat 1974), the feeling component. There was, then, originally an element of risk implicit in the concept, largely lost in the contemporary use of the word. It is evident in Dewey's conception of experience, as he saw it involving active exploration and response to 'the ambiguities of the world by seeking to render the most problematic of them determinate' (Thomas 1987: xiii).

3.5 The project of becoming a police officer in the face of problematic situations

Projects, such as the project of policing, are tied to past and future by a person's *habitus*. As indicated earlier in this chapter, identities and the knowledges that sustain them are socially and personally distributed (Davies 1989; Berger & Luckmann 1985; Bourdieu 1981; Schutz 1966, 1964). People take it for granted that their understandings, and ways of responding and relating, are reliable, but challenges to these constructions are always on the horizon. In every moment of their conscious lives, according to Schutz and Luckmann (1974: 100-102), people find themselves in situations that, in terms of their content, are endlessly variable (because they are the product of all prior situations, and because they are relatively open - that is, risky). What stabilises this variability are the assumptions embedded with the *habitus* that any challenges can be easily explicated (Bourdieu 1981; Schutz & Luckmann 1974: 9, 11). To use Bourdieu's metaphor, when people are native players of a particular game, their knowledge of the moves in the game being played means that, in a very practical sense, for the most part, they can anticipate the future in the present (Osburn 1999; Scahill 1993; Bourdieu 1981).

Although some aspects of the placement experience were likely to follow familiar patterns in tune with the students' *habiti* – initial meetings with managers and staff, orientations to the type of client, the services provided, and so on – underpinning the placement was the assumption that there would be at least some disjuncture between the students' *habiti* and the world of the community placement. Disjunctions between

the expected and the experience are seen to play a particularly important role in learning (Teekman 2000; Billett 1996; Mezirow 1990; Brookfield 1987; Kuhn 1975; Dewey 1974).

When people encounter objects, events or people which they have not previously encountered, the experience may be of the 'new' (another manager, with an as yet unknown style of management) or of the 'novel' (an experience unlike any other previous experience: what is this feeling?), a helpful, if, in English, somewhat artificial, distinction drawn by Schutz & Luckmann (1974: 142-144). In the encounter with the 'new', existing categories suffice, but may undergo some modification as the idiosyncrasies of the particular instance become clear (Sachs 1992, cited in Silverman 1993: 81; Schutz & Luckmann 1974). In the encounter with the 'novel', in Schutz and Luckmann's (1974: 11) words, 'the taken-for-granted explodes'.

There are competing models of how people might respond in situations of uncertainty such as this. The ecological perspective would suggest that the primary response to this uncertainty is an holistic and interactive one, that of whole of system or of personal survival, involving social, rational and emotional capacities (Burkitt 1998; Fenwick 2001). Situated learning theorists would suggest observation and imitation of others (Billett 1999, 1996), and psychology (through Kolb) that there would be either reflective observation or active experimentation. Weber (2000) proposes that people may respond in a naturalistic way, based on their past experience of similar problems (the 'recognition' mode), or on their feelings. How people might evaluate the outcomes of decisions in risky situations would be on the basis of what they think might happen, how desirable (or otherwise) these outcomes are, and how likely the outcomes are. Maudsley and Strivens (2000: 7) remarked that the way in which problems can be solved is very difficult to characterise, probably because they are so tightly interwoven with the situations in which they arise.

In this section, I discuss those orientations to problem-solving, and, therefore, to learning from the encounter with the unfamiliar, that concern encounters with the unfamiliar in everyday life, excluding those which are taught (such as the hypothetic-deductive model that underpins problem-based learning, or techniques such as brainstorming). These are unsuited to the evanescence of everyday experience, where

consideration of how to respond occurs with extreme rapidity, often as 'educated guesses' arising out of one's *habitus*, intimately connected with the practical demands of specific situations.

3.5.1 *Risks and uncertainties*

Unfamiliar experiences carry an element of risk, as possibly useful recipe knowledge may be insufficient to meet the demands of the situation or of the student's self-image as competent. Moments that are resistant to easy categorisation represent a zone of anxiety, where all that one has learnt is insufficient to deal with the new situation in a taken-for-granted way, as the impact in terms of others' responses, how this reflects on one, or affects potential actions, are unknowns (Dewey 1974: 243).

Three types of uncertainty are currently commonly recognised as relevant to deciding what best to do, initially described by Friend & Jessop (1971, cited in Hall 1982). These are uncertainty about everything surrounding the immediate situation that might have a bearing on the action (external influences, such as resource availability or political shifts); uncertainty about the behaviours of others in the field of interaction; and uncertainty about the value judgements that others are likely to be making. Friend & Jessop's second and third types of uncertainty concern what others might be doing, and value judgements that others may make about one's actions.

It is these forms of uncertainty, and the desire to manage them, that Goffman considers in his dramaturgical description of selves. It is a particularly potent anxiety when in an unfamiliar situation, as there may be unknown differences between the new group and those people previously encountered. Schutz and Luckmann (1974) would suggest that the first guarantee that any improvisation is correct is social (perhaps, as Kurt Lewin and others would identify, through support and reassurance). A key filter will be the values that students hold, and the people to whom they turn for reassurance that their responses are appropriate, and that their intentions are not at risk. Lazarus & Folkman (1984) described the process that ensues following an encounter with something unfamiliar as one of primary risk appraisal – does this situation present a risk? – and of secondary appraisal – do I have the resources to cope? If a person feels they have the

resources, the unfamiliar event or experience will be seen as a challenge, and if not, a stressor.

3.5.2 *Feelings in unfamiliar situations*

Unfamiliar experiences have, above all, a strong affective component, because of the risks they pose to presumed futures and self-positionings. Until recently, there has been very little about feelings in the adult education literature, 'culturally ignored key pointers to both the possibilities for, and barriers to, learning' (Boud, Cohen & Walker, 1996: 2).

Feelings are inherently carnal and visceral (Damasio 1996; Postle and Brookfield respectively, in Boud, Cohen & Walker 1996: 33, 21). Margaret Donaldson's (1992: 12) view is that we experience emotion only in regard to that which matters. Mulligan (1996) identifies feeling as one of two major ways of making judgments about the world, locating this as an extension of the pleasure/pain response. Boud, Cohen and Walker (1996) saw two key sources of influence on feelings, past experience and the support (or absence of support) of those present, as crucial to self-confidence and to the use of new knowledge (1996: 15-16).¹⁵ Several contributors to Boud and Miller's edited volume on working with experience identified the importance of fear in distorting learning (1996), and Boud, Keogh & Walker (1985: 22) describe the interference to learning that prior unpleasant experiences may present. More recently, Brookfield (1994: 13-17) identifies five clusters of feeling commonly identified in the literature on adults learning in the formal education context: inferiority, loss, incompetence, uncertainty, and the pleasure of learning alongside others. Of these various authors, two raise issues related to self-positioning (Boud, Cohen & Walker 1996, and Brookfield 1994).

¹⁵ An example of the impact of lack of confidence is provided by (Scarlett n.d.) 'Mechanically and slowly the first bed was made and the patient repositioned and still safely in bed! It was then that I looked into his face and realized that I had actually touched someone and made his bed without hurting him. That someone was my first real patient, a person who was ill and who I could help if only I could overcome the fear of failure and not doing things perfectly. I looked into his face, he reminded me of my adopted grandfather who was very frail but also very friendly. I wondered about this old man's family and friends. Where did he come from and what kind of life did he have? Why was he here? Was he going to live? It was too soon to speak with him, I was too nervous. All the communication strategies and skills I learned in class vanished. My head was empty of anything intelligible, hence it was appropriate to speak as little as possible.'

Research attempting to articulate the role of affect in guiding judgements and decisions has been conducted in social psychology (Slovic *et al.* 2002). These researchers suggest that experiential thinking is intimately associated with feelings. Similarly to analytic thinking, experiential thinking exhibits forms of rationality, and both analytic and emotional thinking continually interact, with affect essential to rational action. There is also some interest in, research on, and confirmation of, Damasio's neurophysiological exploration of the role of emotions and feelings in making rational decisions when dealing with risky situations (Batson, Engel & Fridell 1999: 9; Peters & Slovic 2000: 9)¹⁶. Damasio, in his study, argued that an inability to recognise emotional responses meant that the risks of daily living would be very poorly handled. The advantage of awareness of emotional states in feelings is 'an enlarged protection policy' (Damasio 1996: 132-133): if I *know* that Kerry frightens me, I have two ways of behaving, the first innate and not person-specific, and the second based on my experience and specific to Kerry. I can plan and predict, generalise to others who I see as similar to Kerry, exploit their weaknesses, and so on. Bodily reactions can subsequently be experienced merely by thinking about Kerry or people I see as like Kerry, because I have formed a connection between this sort of person and the reaction I originally had to Kerry. Damasio posits that these connections are retained as 'somatic markers', and that, when in a situation where we need to choose what to do, the possible outcomes of different courses of action unfold rapidly in our minds, with the feelings attached to past outcomes fleetingly raised. Actions with negative outcomes can thus be rapidly rejected, and those with positive somatic markers can be pursued.

Unlike those with relevant prior experiences, students may have emotional responses to the situations in which they find themselves, but not be able to recognise what their feelings are. This is a significant component of being disoriented. Psychoanalytic approaches to the role of feeling in learning would suggest a range of mechanisms may come into play that reduce the impact of the encounter, and, concomitantly, the learning. In this view, the disconfirming information that the unfamiliar represents is

¹⁶ Damasio posits that *feelings are experience-based and socially constructed*. The essence of emotion is in the bodily changes (which can be perceived by an observer - we flush, we slump, we grimace); the *experience* of the change in juxtaposition with specific mental images he calls feeling (Damasio 1996: 145). In new situations, then, where we face unfamiliar problems, there will be emotional responses (bodily changes) as well as feelings (mental images).

not in itself enough to generate learning, because it can be denied, ignored, dismissed as irrelevant, seen as others' fault or as fate. To engender learning, from this perspective, disconfirmation must arouse 'survival anxiety', the feeling that if one does not change one will fail to meet one's needs or fail to achieve some goals or ideals that one has set for oneself. However, an associated feeling is 'learning anxiety' – the feeling that if one admits one needs to learn, one's effectiveness, self-esteem and even who one is will be lost. Unless this defence mechanism is countered, any disconfirming information will be denied, and no survival anxiety will be felt – and no learning will occur. The starting point for learning (that is, the intention) is, in this view, anxiety reduction.

Students in community placements may find themselves immersed in complex and difficult situations which neither they, nor the staff around them, can satisfactorily address. There can be particularly dark shadows where work demands include inherently difficult or unpleasant work (Scarlett n.d.). According to Cowin (2000), Madjar (1997) points out that graduate nurses' initial employment is characterised by emotional exhaustion, a sense of inadequacy, frustration and a loss of ideals. Hirschhorn (1992) concluded that organisations often had institutionalised defence mechanisms which workers adopted to avoid direct and painful encounters with the emotional significance of what they were to do. Lofland & Lofland (1995), referring to the work of Smith & Kleinman (1989), point out that medical students, in their encounters with the human body, experienced a variety of uncomfortable feelings, including embarrassment, disgust and arousal, and identified a range of strategies that were used to alleviate or eliminate these¹⁷.

Having become aware of their feelings, students are likely to seek models of how to handle these feelings from those around them. They may do this directly, by questioning, but they may also do this by observing and listening (Billett 1999). These forms of observation and listening concern subjectivities. Van Manen provides an

¹⁷ They identified the following strategies:

- avoiding the contact (controlling the visual field, skipping or abbreviating certain examination procedures);
- using the patient (focus on their feelings, either empathically or blaming them for having inappropriate emotions);
- laughing about it (transforming discomfort by laughing about the situations);
- transforming the contact (from cadaver or patient to a medical or analytic problem);
- accentuating the positive (once it's defined as a problem of science, excitement and other positive feelings over practicing 'real medicine' result).

example of the role of observing others in considering one's own situation from Carol Olson's account of her experience of kidney failure. He writes that, in Olson's words:

I saw Jim leaning against the wall, gasping for air. He was hunchbacked and barrelchested with bone disease. I could see the pain vibrating in him, burning him. And darkly, the fatigue circled his eyes. Staring at him, I feared my pain. [...] Then he smiled at me. And in his eyes, I saw how strong was this suffering man; how strong, his kindness towards me, how strong, his dignity. I believed that if he could live, so could I. I came away from this encounter with new courage. (Van Manen 1998).

Such projections, untested by action and feedback on that action, may not lead to new skills in managing a situation, as more than observation is needed to develop skills (Boud & Walker 1990: 74). Nonetheless, these imaginings, based on one's observations, would seem to be of great importance selecting from possible futures (Mackenzie 2000), that is, in the fostering of projects.

It is not just the emotions that are stirred in the midst of a problematic experience that need to be taken into account. Anticipated emotions play a part in the decisions people make (Mellers & McGraw 2001). Mackenzie (2000: 4) suggests that feelings are closely tied into the imaginative processes that she suggests may be integral to reflection, deliberation, and action. Knowing they have a community placement, students are likely to try and imagine what their first day will be like, and mentally prepare for what they may encounter. A focus on the pleasure of being one step closer to their goal of becoming a police officer may mean negative experiences in the placement can be set to one side.

3.5.3 *Addressing the unfamiliar and risky*

Were students to encounter unusual circumstances, one could not assume that a clearly defined, placement-focused and logical problem-solving process would be set in train. Each component of knowledge has fuzzy horizons, so our areas of knowledge do not form a logically articulated system (Schutz & Luckmann 1974: 14), and any approaches we take will reflect the various idiosyncrasies of intentions, relationships, personal experience, values, skills and focal awareness at play in that situation. On the one hand, this may limit either what is noticed or what is drawn upon in seeking a way through the unfamiliar. Immersed in our own situations, with an intimate knowledge of their dynamics, we may touch on the boundaries of other life-worlds, but not enter them

unless there is some chance conjunction of events that brings the adjacent world into focus¹⁸. On the other, the boundaries between identities and areas of knowledge may prove irrelevant, because these can move with us across all of their life situations. Cultural divisions between work, study, and private life, between thinking and feeling, or between the tacit and the conscious (for example), should be seen as analytical distinctions rather than necessarily a part of lived experience (Beckett & Morris 2000).

Importantly, it must be recognised that there is no unchanging logic of enquiry indifferent to subject matter, rather, thinking is a *process*, that is, it occurs in and across social space and social time, and is constantly in change as people think through the specific problem. At every step it remains tied to the focal issue and the context, because it is in these that the problems and potential courses of action lie (Ng 1998: 4; Paris & Turner 1994, cited in Ng 1998; Schutz & Luckmann 1974: 12). Also, at every step, the thinking is tied to past experiences, and to imagined futures and possible consequences, which means that neither the affective dimension, nor any physical reaction, can be ignored.

The ‘interruptions’ posed by unfamiliar events and experiences in the community placement to students’ taken-for-granted understandings may be so small that students merely remark them and resume what they were doing, or so challenging that they cannot comprehend them (Kuhn 1970)¹⁹, and still others may lead to new knowledge, new self-positioning, or to a modification of the student’s original project. Highly problematic situations can reveal how a person’s relatively coherent constellation of meanings and relationships can be fractured – the risk of the experience is that it challenges the *habitus* (and, most particularly, what Dewey called the ‘principle of continuity’, which lies at the heart of *habitus*). Studies of illness narratives (Rimmon-

¹⁸ Finlayson (2000), an experienced medical practitioner, outlines how his understanding, and treatment, of patient pain changed as a consequence of a motor cycle accident – adjacent worlds had become shared worlds.

¹⁹ Bruner and Postman’s 1949 study of perception of anomalies, using short and controlled exposure to playing cards in a pack which combined normal and anomalous cards is cited by Kuhn as a significant example of what happens when world views are challenged. Most participants, after some hesitation and confusion, managed to adjust their categories and identify the strange cards that had initially been totally unrecognisable. A few never made the adjustment, and typically experienced acute personal distress, even doubting their capacity to identify a normal card. Kuhn concludes that ‘novelty emerges only with difficulty, manifested by resistance, against a background provided by expectation’. (Kuhn, 1975:63-64)

Kenan 2002) and of teachers' stories²⁰ (Connelly & Clandinin 1999) show the confusion that results. When, for example, life-threatening illnesses are diagnosed, it is the configuration of the *future* that changes, affecting the ways in which the present can be lived, and the ways in which projects (which are based on the principle of continuity) can be played out.

It is my assumption that the impact of problematic events and experiences is related to the importance of the future in everyday life. This, I suggest is where the *telos* of existence lies: Burkitt's reframing of the *cogito ergo sum* as *possum ergo sum* ('I can [do], therefore I am') can be extended into the future, as *potero ergo sum* ('I will be able to, therefore I am'). Scribner (1997 [1984]) found that, in technical tasks, the desired end-point came before the problem-solving. This is what Schutz 1968 described as the future-perfect tense of experience – 'I will have done/made x'. As every moment in the present opens towards the future (Cronk 2000), survival is fostered by taking account of the potential consequences of one's own and others' actions.

During the experience, students will have been responding according to their existing repertoire of behaviours and any available models (either *in situ*, or from past direct or mediated experience). This means that the students' project of becoming a police officer may not have a significant place during encounters with unfamiliar experiences, or in the way in which they reposition themselves as a consequence of the experience. Fuhrer (1993), referring to research on group socialisation and on occupational socialisation, looks at the kinds of behaviour evoked in (perilous) new situations. He suggests *at least seven approaches* are possible, including: not knowing what to do; recalling corresponding activities in similar settings; taking actions which place us nearer to or further from our goal; feelings of confusion, as the senses are inundated with unfamiliar cues; self-conscious sensitivity to the impression being made; avoiding the danger of being seen as a non-member of the setting; and embarrassment and anxiety as a consequence of performance deficiencies. In all of these responses, the long-term project of being, or being recognised as, a particular sort of person is not to the fore, although it may contribute to the confusion inherent in the encounter.

²⁰ Clandinin & Connelly question whether they are still teachers when on sabbatical, a problem that arises when Dewey's two principles are separated out. The question may also reflect the unique characteristics of sojourns rather than long-term stays in non-routine contexts.

There are many ways, as suggested in section 3.5.2, in which the response can be a form of denial. Students may convert the unfamiliar experience into a state free of contradiction by bracketing (seeing the contradiction between their expectation and the situation as unimportant), by annulling (by presuming that they were mistaken), or by ‘solving’ the problem (Schutz & Luckmann, 1974: 158). This may include jumping to conclusions, following biased preferences, or turning attention elsewhere, doing something else, and therefore being left with unconnected fragments of ideas, stirred emotions, and failed actions that may resonate at a later stage (Mason 1996: 115). In these circumstances, their incapacity to cope will be revealed in a variety of psychophysiological changes, such as a loss of appetite, feeling anxious or angry, worrying about failure or looking ridiculous, and busy work to displace the anxiety temporarily (Ramsay 1997). In other words, active problem-solving is only one of several options, dependent on the ‘horizon of meaning’ at work in the experience.

Kemmis (2003: 9) quotes Reid (1978) in explaining the characteristics of situations that involve ‘practical reasoning’. These are, firstly, that they are situations requiring action (even if the decision is to do nothing). Then, the grounds on which decisions are to be made are uncertain, because there is a historical undertow that cannot be ignored, and because the situations have unique contextual and temporal dimensions. Finally, the choice of action is between competing goals and values, when, albeit unpredictable, the outcome is that which is seen as favourable. Schutz and Luckmann (1974: 11) and Klein (1993, cited in Oranasu & Martin 1998: 100) suggest that problem-solving in everyday life tends to be short, rather than long term, structured around arriving at a sufficient answer for the specific problem relevant to one’s needs at the time. For example, in identifying a mushroom, one would only pursue a check on its toxicity if one were intending to eat it. It also follows that some immediately problematic experiences are simply not pursued, or not pursued in any great depth.

It is unlikely that students will have responded to any problematic experiences in the placement in the form of a relentless pursuit of a single and unchanging goal (Schutz and Luckmann 1974: 126-134). Sometimes one problem will have been *overlaid* by another, with new goals taking precedence as the students were doing something. The first thing they did, say, had unforeseen consequences, and the means became the end,

or the original goal was seen as the means. The steps they foresaw turn out not to be feasible, or everything was achieved as intended, but the results were not as anticipated. Some students may, if the problematic experiences are those of lack of fit with their project of policing, have seized whatever opportunity presented itself that appeared to offer an opening towards their desired future, with only a rudimentary analysis of the risks (Lofland 1969, cited in Wright & Decker 1994: 200). There would also be temporary interruptions, such as sleep, loss of concentration, or spatio-temporal constraints. These interruptions are, so to speak, 'imposed', and may carry with them extra pressures, or some relief. There are also motivated interruptions: students may have decided to drop an activity for the time being. In this case, the problem did not disappear, it was 'neutralised', relegated to the horizon of attention whilst some other activity was undertaken.

Much of the 'problem solving', in such circumstances, is through processes of association. Association is seen by some as one of the central features of learning (Mezirow 1991; Norman 1972, cited in Boud and Walker 1991: 21; and Ausubel, Novak & Hanesian 1978), and it lies at the heart of improvisation. In community placements there may not only be different dimensions of experience being associated, there may be multiple, interlinking categories, some of which may involve what Damasio (1996) called 'somatic markers'²¹.

Aristotle proposed that three principles underlie association: contiguity, similarity and contrast. Contiguity refers to the way in which objects or concepts that normally occur together in sensory experience become associated with each other (bread and jam, for example, or being able to conjure up the several characteristics of a piece of fruit that draw on different senses, such as colour, texture, or weight) (Gray 1994: 348). While some associations may be buried in individual experiences of, for example, a particular frightening animal in particular circumstances, in Schutz & Luckmann's (1974: 148) terms, 'accidental' associations, others will be cultural -- the association of bread with water, sausage, religious ceremonies or wartime queues, rather than jam. The principles of similarity and contrast suggest that, if two things are similar, the thought of one tends to trigger the thought of the other, but the encounter with an object of a particular sort

²¹ The term denotes the emotional traces left by previous experiences that guide, outside of our awareness, our action choices.

may also trigger thoughts of its opposite (Boeree 2000). Again, these associations reflect both idiosyncratic and shared cultural experiences. It follows that perceiving a situation as similar to previous situations can lead to ineffective judgements about what best to do when there is an absence of variation in a student's experience base (Bowden & Marton 1998: 57). Boud & Walker (through free association!) arrived at some ways in which associative processes might be blocked. They suggested that having blind spots, defining the problem as unshareable, lacking skills or techniques, having friends who maintain the status quo, being too happy and having no time were likely candidates, with personal distress linked to the mostly unconscious behaviour of others as underlying many of these (Boud & Walker 1996: 78-81).

If, however, students' linguistic categories or their unconscious associative efforts do not account for the new experience and they need some sort of answer, then they may search their memories for some extra cues, attribute a possible cause and work from that basis, actively seek further information (using, one presumes, Scribner's law of least effort), or experiment²² (Schutz and Luckmann 1974: 8-15). Any one, or several, of these avenues may be pursued until a sufficient solution is arrived at, which does not mean that all new knowledge arising out of a new situation is examined, only those aspects which are seen as relevant to the particular problem. The practical and positional imperative in the encounter with problematic experiences, and the possibilities for varied interpretations of another's actions, mean that the questioning of assumptions, such as that required by the study materials, should be seen as a measure of last resort. Only when other experiences cause students to turn to reference schemes that did not seem relevant at first, can they then become aware of the incompatibility of the reference schemes and begin 'theoretical' thinking – checking understandings, rather than information. This type of thinking, in the absence of any guides, is likely to take quite some time, or not occur at all (Teekman 2000).

In the meantime, students are in situations in which they are required to act, whether or not they feel at ease, and whether or not they understand what is needed, or the context in which they are acting (Kemmis 2003). Their self-positioning will therefore remain tentative until, as Boud & Walker (1996: 83) would see it, their answers are validated in

²² Beckett & Morris 2000 find this to be a commonly used strategy by nurses working with disabled adults.

experience. This means that a key aspect of the way in which students will handle any problematic aspects of their placement is through the impact of the actions that they take – their improvisations, interventions, and negotiations. Improvising and intervening involve ongoing ‘creative dialogue’ (Walker and Boud 1994: 7) between the person and the environment, as resistances are negotiated, possibilities experimented with, and interests explored. The action results in a change of some sort (Boud 1994: 52), which will either generate further action or inaction. The type of intervention will depend upon the attitudes, desires and intentions of the actor, and the demands of the specific context to which the intervention relates. Feeling inadequate or embarrassed can limit interventions, whereas confidence and the capacity to experiment can generate their own momentum (Boud & Walker 1990: 75). Helping communities that foster peer-to-peer connections or innovation will foster improvisation (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder 2002: 76-77).

Importantly, it is through action (independently initiated or as part of reciprocal processes and negotiations) that students will obtain feedback on their understandings of the situation, either consolidating their perceptions or providing a further challenge. Much of this feedback will be in the form of others’ improvisations, tentatively, confidently, aggressively or supportively provided, dependent upon their position in, and interpretation of, the situation. Sometimes feedback may be masked, because of social norms about the appropriateness of challenging others, or because of defensiveness and competitiveness (Argyris in Boud & Walker 1991: 44). In Goffman’s view, this masking is largely about face (which is composed of the requirement to maintain self-respect and, at the very least, the appearance of consideration for others) (1967: 11). In face-to-face situations, this is an ongoing dance, with each person’s responses affecting the moves the other makes. In mediated interactions, such as students writing a diary to be read by a lecturer, as in this research, the responses of the other are interpreted on the basis of far fewer cues, with a greater margin for error as a result.

3.6 Summary

First and foremost, the placement context provides the framework of possibilities in which intentions are played out. Students, with very different *habiti*, will have very

different experiences in very different contexts. Just as intentions to become a police officer are formed in complex social and practical contexts, they are elaborated or diminished in still other complex and practical contexts. The myriad possibilities in terms of fields of interaction, relationships, activities and power all mean that the ongoing negotiations and interactions that are integral components of everyday working life will have impacts on intentions.

As interaction between the self and the socio-historical environment is the central issue, I argue that it is important to recognise the role of the experienced and experiencing body (active, sensate, responsive, creative, volitional, communicative and speculative) in conceptualising selves, including when it comes to the consideration of how intentions might change in the crucible of everyday life. Selves are interactive, and there is choice, opportunity and resistance to be negotiated. Having made a choice to become a police officer entails engaging in a formal learning process, and intentions that must be sustained over a considerable period and in the face of a variety of risks.

The inherent uncertainties of dealing with unfamiliar experiences will require people's active engagement, as set against their unique past, and will involve cognitive, conative, affective and psychomotor processes as well as socio-cultural constraints. Choices of what to do will be affected by the socio-emotional context. Students may not be able to make much sense of it at all, particularly in the midst of major transitions as old 'games' disintegrate in their contact with the new. Thomas & Znaniecki (1974 [1918]), in their seminal work on the experiences of Polish peasants in Chicago at the turn of the century, argued the experienced loosening of normative constraints resulted in 'deviant' behaviours by some. In such circumstances, the rules people have learned no longer have any currency.

Experience carries with it an element of anxiety, and so, in unfamiliar situations, we will not merely undertake a problem-solving process as structured by our past experience, and the field of interaction as we understand it, we will also engage in a process of risk assessment as part of that problem-solving. This risk assessment process may differ not only in terms of personal styles, but also according to the situation. Sitting alone in an office will permit very different forms of problem-solving to those available to students of policing located, for example, in a juvenile justice correctional

centre or a drug rehabilitation service. In the latter situations, the sense of personal vulnerability is likely to be far greater.

Such moments of uncertainty about what best to do are where, in Wenger's terms, meanings are negotiated, and, in Schutz and Luckmann's (1974) terms, the pragmatic imperative (the aim is that of action in the particular circumstances) comes into play. This is the zone of anxiety, where all that I have learnt is insufficient to deal with the new situation in a taken-for-granted way, as the impact in terms of others' responses, and how this reflects on me, is an unknown.

As outlined above, there are situations that are resistant to easy categorisation, and the way in which people formulate the resistance (as problematic or disorienting, for example) has implications for the way in which they see people as negotiating – not just meanings, but futures. Risk assessment and planning in unfamiliar situations could involve scientific or quasi-scientific processes, direction finding, processes of familiarisation, the unconscious use of defence mechanisms, the pursuit of limit experiences (deliberately going beyond personal and social boundaries)²³, and so on. Dealing with the unfamiliar could have learning outcomes across any domain: people can feel differently, judge differently, act, produce, or speak differently than they would have done. This can take time, as the discussion of the 'specious' present indicated. It may not even be noticed, when reconstructed present and reinterpreted past are perceived as a continuum, extending forward into a projected future (Berger and Kellner 1977).

Writers such as Berger and Luckmann (1985), in their descriptions of the processes of institutionalisation, are pointing to the role of the future in present action – anxiety reduction, and the prediction of action in particular social spaces over time. Various heuristic devices are used as guides. The importance that many people attach to such guides for action in the future (including Foucault) attests to the significance of a future-oriented, as well as a past-oriented narrative.

²³ According to Charlesworth 1993, this was Foucault's approach to life.

While the holistic nature of experience, and the multiple individual, social, and practical contexts in which experiences occur, need to be taken into account in looking at the role of intention in learning, studying them all simultaneously in any depth is well beyond the scope of this, and probably any, study. Nonetheless, it is important to recognise, when drawing on subjective data such as diaries, particularly diaries written by different people in different contexts, many of these matters may be evident, even if only fleetingly. In the next chapter I describe the methodology of the study, and the ways in which I have grappled with this complexity.

Chapter Four

Methodology:

A Fool's Journey¹

4.1 A view of the terrain



The journey through an unfamiliar landscape has become an increasingly frequent metaphor for research endeavours (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, 1998a, b & c; Connelly & Clandinin 1999; Spiro, cited in Stake 1998: 96; Kvale 1996: 3). The proliferation, over the last twenty five years, of qualitative research approaches provides a highly contradictory domain to traverse, with many tensions, ambiguities, hesitations and gaps in a still-developing and fluid field (O'Connor 2001; Denzin & Lincoln 1998c: vii; Miles & Huberman 1994: 1). While there are many different paths to take across this lava flow, and many different reasons for taking them, the common focus of qualitative approaches is the exploration and description of lived experience in natural settings, and the complex interrelationships that this involves (Marshall & Rossman 1999: 60; Cresswell 1998: 15; Denzin & Lincoln 1998: 3; Stake 1995: 37). This focus is most fully articulated by Cresswell:

Qualitative research considers the natural setting, has the researcher as instrument and inductive analyses of subjectively meaningful phenomena; it is interpretive, describes routine and problematic moments, builds a complex, holistic picture, and draws on a few cases with many variables. (Cresswell 1998: 15)

¹ Merely using the metaphor of the Fool indicates how long this journey has been - I was using the tarot at a particularly stormy period of my life when I was struggling to understand a novel situation (the late 1970s). The card in question has no number (unlike all other cards), and can therefore be placed before or after the other cards (Le Gette 1976: 23-24). As Huson (1972: 120-121) describes it, 'When the Fool pops up on a tarot spread, you know an element of anarchy has entered the picture, for traditionally he represents the irrational, the undetermined - the somehow mysteriously structured chaos which seems to lie at the root of all existence'. The meaning of the card, according to *The feminist tarot*, is, 'The young person begins a journey, a task, a challenge. She is fresh, innocent, far from prepared to meet the obstacles that will come, but unable to prepare except by the experience itself of starting. She sets out optimistically, at great height and surrounded by the high white mountains of abstract knowledge. The rising sun brightens the departure. Danger at the very outset of stepping off into the thin air of ungrounded abstract thought. Only the dog [...] connects her with the world of nature, and even the dog seems to warn of an impending peril.' (Gearhart & Rennie 1977)

Given this complexity, I should be unsurprised that, for me as the Fool, the journey has been a voyage of discovery.

I started on this journey relatively familiar with surveys, participant observation and action research, all of which had been integral to working with disabled people, and with families living in caravan parks in New South Wales, and which had been possible because of earlier studies in sociology. My understanding of where I was going, and how I might get there, was based on post-1950s approaches to social research, albeit being aware that there were now many other choices. In my kit-bag was an abiding interest in how people learned from unfamiliar, unexpected and problematic experiences, and the assumption that the evidence for this might be found in journals and diaries.

This chapter provides an overview of my journey, one which aimed to explore the issue of how student police officers' projects of becoming a police officer were changed by their being in their community placements. My research process is inherently one of interpretation, both of life experiences that alter meanings (Denzin 1989: 10), and patterns of anticipated and unanticipated relationships (Stake 1995: 41), not just for the informants in this study, but for myself as researcher.

There are, as the previous chapters suggest, many factors to take into account in examining how the intention to become a worker of a particular sort is negotiated in specific contexts. Both the partiality of knowledge and the limitations of the research context contribute, in their own ways, to my focus on subjective accounts of experiences as recorded in diaries. The aim of this chapter is to set out, in detail, my approach to answering the question of what informants' diaries reveal of their thoughts, feelings, actions, intentions and judgements and how they might be changing (learning selves) as they undertake their community placements and address the problems they face within them. The chapter starts with a discussion of the methodological issues raised by this type of study, followed by a brief description of the selected approach, and the reasons underpinning my choice. It goes on to consider the use of solicited and unsolicited diaries in research, before describing how the students' notebooks, which contained the diaries used in this research, were structured and why they were considered to be an appropriate source of data. The collection of the data and the

selection of five diaries as major foci of analysis are then described. A discussion of the limitations of the study precedes an explanation of the approaches taken to the analysis and interpretation of the notebooks. The chapter concludes with consideration of the trustworthiness of, and the ethical considerations pertinent to, this study.

4.2 Which path to follow?

Intellectual traditions shape the research process (Cresswell 1998: 2), and there are three broad approaches in qualitative research, those being interpretivism (through sociology and, more recently, semiotics), social anthropology (through ethnography to life history, ecological psychology and narrative studies) and collaborative social research (Miles & Huberman 1994: 8). The tradition shaping this research is interpretivism, through constructivist understandings I first encountered in sociology, and which have shaped, at the very least, my teaching practices (that is, works by Berger & Luckmann 1985, Berger & Kellner 1979, and Schutz & Luckmann 1974), subsequently coloured by an interest in hermeneutics and processes of meaning-making. As the basis of Berger & Luckmann's (1985) outline of the processes of self-construction lies in the work of Mead and Cooley, to whom Burkitt (1999) also refers in his ecological approach, I must also acknowledge social interactionism as a primary component. Thus the origins of and echoes in my intellectual history are on the 'light' side of constructivism (Burkitt 1991: 68), of a world of multiple realities and a subjectivist epistemology (Denzin & Lincoln 1998: 27), and where, owing to Burkitt's (1999) extension of the constructivist framework, I also focus on action in, on and by the world.

This is a relatively unusual stance in terms of adult learning, where interest in the social dimension only emerged in the eighties, with few people, for example, Jarvis (1985) and Jenkins (1996), examining the subjective and the social simultaneously (McIntyre 1996: 33) and where the questions of agency and choice have often all but been precluded (Grant 1996: 111). The trend is towards participative methods, such as interviews and observation, in which the researcher is interacting with participants, thus capturing the individual's perspective, when it is believed that more remote empirical materials reduce the capacity to capture this (Marshall & Rossman 1999: 61, 79; Denzin & Lincoln 1998: 10; Lofland 1995: 20). Moreover, when taking an ecological stance, there is, according to Barab, Hay & Yamagata-Lynch (2001), a strong argument for

participant observation. Participant observation allows for the recognition that learning is a social process, and for tracing trajectories and stages in learning. However, these approaches are unsuited to my problem, because:

- although relationships with research participants enable the researcher to escape the accusation of telling the 'native's' story on their behalf (Clare 1999), interviews, alone or supplementary to observations, lead to joint understandings and to reconstructions, putting new order into the unpredictability of learning in everyday life (Fontana & Frey, Clandinin & Connelly in Denzin & Lincoln 1998c; Madge 1978), and they would introduce subtle, and perhaps not so subtle, effects in the environment (Smith 2000: 135; Adler & Adler in Denzin & Lincoln 1998c; Madge 1978: 127);
- although participant observation, as outlined by Barab, Hay & Yamagata-Lynch (2001), does allow the tracing of trajectories, it also involves many expensive and, for this context, inappropriately intrusive measures (for example, the presence of observers in the learning context, and multiple video cameras). Importantly for this research, there is also no likelihood of observing the interlinking of the experiences *in situ* with other aspects of participants' lives.

However, the dismissal of research based on personal documents in the 1940s (Madge 1978) in combination with contemporary concerns about etic research that does not afford participants a role in the process (Denzin & Lincoln 1998; Guba & Lincoln 1998) means that the value of outsider interpretations of subjective accounts of experience has been seriously questioned (even though, as Smith 1998 points out, they suggest agency), and that intersubjective research is encouraged.

With the shift in the unit of analysis to one that involves interactivity between learner and context, researchers have turned away from methodologies which aimed to limit interference from extraneous variables, towards alternatives drawn from cognitive anthropology, ethnomethodology, and various psychological perspectives that recognise the influence of context on the individual (cultural-historical psychology, phenomenological psychology, critical psychology, and ecological psychology) (Barab & Kirshner 2001: 7). Curiously, the earliest pragmatist methodology (tied to educational

theorising through Dewey) has no place. Positivist critiques of early symbolic interactionist work (Madge 1978) appear to have effectively squashed interest in the approach considered by those early theorists as potentially *the* most fruitful data source for studying social phenomena (other than as an adjunct element), that is, personal documents such as letters, logs, journals, portfolios and diaries (Manning & Cullum-Swan 1998: 246-247; Plummer 1983: 3; Thomas & Znaniecki 1919: 1832). Plummer sees personal documents as the largely undiscussed underbelly of social science research (1983: 1-2), and educators believe that reflective inquiry into one's own practice can be based on such documents and that journals foster learning (Kerka 2002; Moon 1999; Boud & Walker 1996; Brookfield 1995), so interest is increasing in using diaries for researching adult learning.

My argument is that, while learning is inherently social and diachronic, changes occurring within the individual that constitute the learning are unique to that individual and need to be accessed across time. Based on these premises, a focus on the individual's experiences of a series of life events is essential. Moreover, because interactions change people, the data needs to be accessed in a way that provides minimum 'interference' in the original processes.

Without models to follow, the process of research itself has been a hermeneutic one, tacking to and fro between elements of the thesis and of the literature in an attempt to arrive at a useful interpretation of the materials on which I was working. Most importantly, in research that is founded in holistic assumptions about the nature of learning, I am asserting that context can be accessed through individual accounts, and that it is in such accounts that 'the intersection of individual, context, and activity over time (knowing in the making)' (Barab & Kirshner 2001: 6), which is, from an ecological perspective, the unit of analysis, can *best* be accessed. As Kemmis (2003: 7) points out, a subjective/individualistic approach is typically concerned with intentional action (the starting point of my research questions).

In subjective/individualistic research, the orientation of the researcher towards the research participants is what Kemmis (2003) calls the 'you-orientation' (in Schutz and Luckmann's 1974 terms, the intimate 'thou-orientation'), where the relationship is not about 'they-relations', or 'we-relations', but akin to unmediated and most particularly

reciprocal communication. As, for reasons that are described in section 4.6.1 below, I have had no immediate relationship with the students who agreed to participate in this study, I am treating the materials I have been given as if I would have the students were they in my presence, with due respect for their positions, and recognising the uniqueness of their voice. In this way, I hope to present the students to the reader in a way that allows for the intimacy of the 'you-relation' to remain.

4.3 Which town to explore?

Stake (1995) asserts that case studies are a choice of object to be studied, a site of exploration, not a method. Case study forms the basis of the 'town' of police student experiences in community placements I have chosen to explore.

While definitions of a case differ (Van Maanen 1999: 27; Vaughan 1992: 180), particularity of contexts (both spatial and temporal), detailed interpretive accounts of 'real people, doing real things' are central features (Van Maanen 1999: 32; Stake 1995: xi, 8; Miles & Huberman 1994: 25). The origins of case studies are to be found in early sociology and anthropology (Denzin & Lincoln 1998: 1), with a slump in interest in from the 1950s to the 1980s when the scientific model predominated (Van Maanen 1999: 33). Case studies now have a place across a wide range of fields, where common considerations are complexity, meanings and natural settings (Marshall & Rossman 1999: 1-2).

This resurgence of interest in case studies can be ascribed to the collapse of unifying theories under post-modernism, the appeal of the modest knowledge claims that case studies allow, the recognition of cultural differences and variability they reveal, and their relative flexibility and ease of use (Van Maanen 1999: 38-40). Van Maanen (1999: 26) also argues for the importance of case studies for our understanding of reflective practices in the world of work. Case studies, he adds, can make the strange familiar and the familiar strange (Van Maanen 1999: 30), by providing an opportunity for vicarious experience and the reconstruction of our own knowledge (Stake 1998: 94). While Yin 1994 conceives of cases in a positivist way, he sees them as useful when the researcher has little control over events.

The demands and consequences of the choice of case study as the means of exploring a phenomenon must be recognised:

We tout case studies as being non-interventive and empathic. In other words, we try not to disturb the ordinary activity of the case, not to test, not even to interview, if we can get the information we want by discreet observation or examination of records. We try hard to understand how the actors, the people being studied, see things. Ultimately, the interpretations of the researcher are likely to be emphasised more than the interpretations of those people studied, but the qualitative case researcher tries to preserve the *multiple realities*, the different and even contradictory views of what is happening (Stake 1995: 12).

It is immersion in the case that allows for the progressive focussing of research questions which lead, along an intuitive and highly personal path, towards ‘assertions’, not conclusions (Stake 1995: 8-9, 12, 42-43).

In terms of the distinctions that can be drawn between types of cases, as either individual and intrinsic cases or collective and instrumental (Stake 1995: 88), my research constitutes a collective, instrumental case study because my interest is in abstract constructs within the materials, not the individuals *per se*. As a consequence, I am constrained in my exploration of the materials I have collected (Stake 1995: 77; Miles & Huberman 1994: 30), although this was not something I fully grasped as I began examining the diaries. Nonetheless, multiple cases can add confidence to my assertions, and allow for within-case and cross-case analyses (Huberman & Miles 1998: 188-200; Miles & Huberman 1994: 29).

4.4 Travelling around town

I had selected the vehicle, the diary, for this research well before knowing how to drive it, and unaware that there were no manuals to hand, at least ones in languages I was going to need. Personal documents are first person descriptions by an individual of her/his own actions, experiences and beliefs, whether spontaneous or solicited (Madge 1978: 82). Diaries or journals are just one form of ‘life writing’ (Smith 1998: 186-187). They offer contemporaneous accounts of experiences over time, with each entry sedimented into a particular moment and yielding information regarding the structure, dynamics and functioning of the author’s mental life (Plummer 1983: 17; Jones 2000: 2; Kerka 1996). They constitute the ‘classic articulation of dailiness’ (Juhasz, cited in Jelinek 1980), with their inclusion of the ‘flotsam and jetsam’ (Woolf, cited in Monteith 1986) of everyday life, capturing the unfinished quality of the lived flow of experience.

Importantly, this type of writing is a literary genre most closely associated with the private domain and addresses matters considered significant enough by the experiencer to write about, for whatever reason – that is, the writing stays close to the writer's immediate concerns.

Diaries have been used in feminist research on ordinary lives (Personal Narratives Group 1989), in historical research (Stone 1977, cited in Jones 2000: 2), in anthropology (Shostak 1981, cited in Jones 2000: 2), in psychological studies of motivations and fears (Josselson & Lieblich 1999; Allport, cited in Plummer 1983), in organisational communication (Higgins, McClean & Conrath 1985), and in medical education (Pololi *et al.* 2001). Oppenheim (1966, cited in Jones 2000: 1) distinguished between intimate journals (unsolicited diaries) and daily records kept by informants at the request of the researcher (solicited diaries). Solicited diaries tend to be used for research in three ways: by requesting informants to keep a diary (a health diary; a growing old diary); by gathering logs recording daily activities; and by supplementing diaries with interviews (Jones 2000; Plummer 1983).

Private records are considered particularly useful for case studies, because the subjects' own definitions of the situations emerge, along with the ways in which they make sense of events, allowing a degree of intimacy that is underutilised in research (Berg 1998: 188-189). Other authors confirm this, describing document review as 'rich in portraying the values and beliefs of those in the setting' (Marshall & Rossman 1999: 116), as 'one of the clearest channels for learning about the inner world' (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber 1998: 7), where every text carries 'a self-statement with an individual signature' (Smith 1998: 184). Journals, in particular, are seen by Connelly & Clandinin (1998: 166) as a 'powerful way of individuals to give accounts of their experiences as they occur over time'. First person accounts are not solely of value because they describe life as the individual sees it, but also because it is in the hows of communicating that social relationships are revealed (Halliday 1998; Eggins & Slade 1996; Jahn 2001). Importantly for this research, then, first person accounts of experience reflect concrete socio-historical conditions. They also have the potential to include conscious expectations, hesitations, decisions and actions as they emerge from events (Davies 1999: 15) and what is problematic and what sort of rules structure how best to act (Foucault 1986).

According to Jahn (2002: N1.3), elements in a text are the written version of bodily presence, projecting, to a greater or lesser extent, the narrator's voice. The 'voice markers' that can be identified include content, expressions that indicate education, beliefs, interest, values, attitudes to people and things, and the pragmatic signals of a narrator's awareness of an audience, and their orientation towards it (Jahn 2002: N1.4). Voice is muted by the third person pronoun, bland statements and an absence of pragmatic signals, but usually people 'speak' co-operatively, selecting expressions suited to the task at hand and relying on their assumptions about the readers.

As Halliday indicates, in any situation, we make inferences from what is said or written to the situation (Halliday & Hassan 1998: 36). Certain types of phrases call up particular situations – 'once upon a time', for example, indicates a traditional children's story – and interpretation of these phrases is not just based on content, but also on the way the language is structured. This view of interpretation requires tempering with Schutz's (1980 [1932]) reminder that there are radical differences between the meaning structure of one's own behaviour, that of those with whom one is in immediate contact, and one's contemporaries, in my case, the policing students who contributed to this study.

Marshall and Rossman (1999: 116) remind us to view autobiographies and diaries with some scepticism. Allport (cited in Madge 1978: 85) distinguished a range of possible motives for glossing the 'truth', including assignments, self-justification, exhibitionism, a (sometimes compulsive) desire for order, making the style a pleasing read, securing a personal perspective, confessions, catharsis and therapy². While the 'agreeable lies' may also be the stories that emerge over time, that foreground certain experiences and blank out others, reflecting cultural expectations (Eggins & Slade 1996), psychological distress and a core of facts (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber 1995: 8), these larger stories may be a filter for what is recorded in the first place.

Their usefulness as a data source may be limited because they are a form of 'mute' evidence (Hodder 1998: 110), not always articulate about people's reasons for doing

² The remaining 'motives' were: monetary gain; scientific interest; public service (as a model or warning to help others through their difficulties); and, finally, a desire for immortality (Madge 1978: 85). Contemporary published diaries often claim public service as their motivation.

things, or understanding things in particular ways, and they therefore have many possible meanings. Fundamentally social, they are always written for an audience, and, if the self, an audience familiar with the people and the game (O'Toole 1999). Thus they may start in the middle of a complex network that another reader may never fully grasp, and be open to misinterpretation by a reader unfamiliar with the field of interaction.

To use Oppenheim's (1966, cited in Jones 2000: 1) distinction mentioned above, the diaries I have drawn on were *solicited* from students. Owing to the meagre guidance given to students about how to go about their entries, the distinctions outlined below between solicited and unsolicited diaries did not necessarily hold.

4.4.1 *Unsolicited diaries*

Unsolicited diaries are personal documents, written without financial or other inducements, which concern everyday experiences. They may take the form of logs of events, but can incorporate musings about events and people, ideas as they occur, drawings, poems, and reflections (Jones 2000). It is, according to Jones (2000: 4), rare to find unsolicited diaries relevant to a research interest area.

Unsolicited diaries involve a process, 'rooted in the private dimension of living', which canvasses what seems important at the time (Gristwood 1988; Pascal 1985; Anderson, cited in Monteith 1986). In Virginia Woolf's words, the diary contains the loose, drifting material of life, and, unlike narrative, is full of dead ends (Woolf, cited in Monteith 1996: 60). According to Schneider (1994), the writing is closest to natural speech, and writing can flow without self-consciousness or inhibition (Kerka 1996: 1). Indeed, diaries may become a site for catharsis (Lewis 1994).

Diarists often start with a justification, or an apology, for writing. The reasons they give include moral or intellectual self-improvement (a confessional stance); immediate amusement or for the entertainment of their descendants; as memory aids; as an extension of self-organisation; as a confidential conversation of discovery; to collect ephemera illustrating their lives; or quite simply the urge to create (Johnson 1998: 4). As confessional processes, they are archetypal technologies of the self (Foucault 1986;

Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982), where the individual has become an object of knowledge, and s/he learns to effect changes on him/herself. Personal monitoring or change is only one of several motivations for writing a diary, however. Sometimes, for example, they are used as confidants, intimate friends in the absence of any other person with whom feelings or thoughts might be shared (Lewis 1994: 1). The writing may be so secret that it is written in code (Potter 1966). They can start up around a problem, and then tail off when the issue is 'resolved'. The tacit purpose is to problem-solve, with the diary as a friend to assist. In these cases, the focus is pragmatic, on how best to act, not confessional, how to self-improve.

4.4.2 *Solicited diaries*

Solicited diaries are generally structured around events, persona and issues of interest to the researcher, with some inducement for keeping the diary made by the researcher (Jones 2000: 3). Journals are solicited to support learning in areas such as education, counselling, psychology, sociology, management, administration, epidemiology, and religious leadership (Walker 1985). Aims here include stimulating self-dialogue, personally engaging writers with their own understanding of experiences, and allowing for critical reflection (Brookfield 1996, 1987; Oaks 1995, cited in Kerka 1996: 1); distancing learners from experiences, so that they can clarify and work with them, without the distortions characteristic of recall; drawing attention to the role of feelings, clarifying the way in which the learner is experiencing the learning; and bringing together the old and the new in sometimes challenging ways (Walker 1985: 63-64).

Walker (1985: 62) identifies a suite of problems with diary writing in the case of solicited diaries. Writing a diary can be seen as just another task, increasingly onerous as time wears on; it makes great call on personal discipline; and the writer may skirt round issues that are unsafe and problematic either because the record is too confronting, or because he or she is aware of the contextual risks (Conrath, Higgins, & McClean 1985). Despite being considered potentially the most revealing of personal documents, as source material they can disappoint (Madge 1978: 87). Conflicts and dramatic events may be magnified beyond their original significance merely because they are written about, whereas calm and happy periods have few entries.

4.4.3 *Keeping true to type*

The extent to which solicited diaries will remain within their intended genre is not discussed in the literature. Informants may be more or less capable of, or more or less interested in, writing diaries, solicited or otherwise, or in reflecting on their entries. The intended audience and their imagined interests may be seen very differently (Connole, Smith & Wiseman 1995: 145). Most importantly, writing and learning are as much process as product, and a requirement to describe events and experiences can mean that writing slips from log to reflection or to cathartic release. Lack of familiarity with solicited diaries is particularly likely to blur distinctions between genres.

4.5 **Selecting the itinerary**

The selection of diaries as the vehicle for this research entailed a further step, that of choosing the most appropriate approach with which to analyse them. There were four approaches available, not all of them consistent with my interpretive framework, that is, discourse, narrative, content and conversational analysis (because of the interpersonal and dialogic qualities in the medium) (Denzin & Lincoln 1998: 5).

Highly formalised narrative approaches are ill-suited to the analysis of messy reality (Manning & Cullum-Swan 1998). It is the events themselves, and what students write about their responses to these events, which constitute the paint for depicting selves. Each learner in each work environment will have a different palette and canvass, as well as different painting techniques and mental images of the picture they are trying to paint. This is not to suggest that there will be a clear image or story line, for diaries have been viewed as a 'denial of narrative' (Monteith 1996: 61), the entries merely 'scraps of nothingness' (Connelly & Clandinin 1998: 166).

As exploratory research attempting to incorporate a holistic approach to experience and, therefore, to learning selves, the starting point had, therefore, to be tightly connected to the events and experiences as recorded, and to the recording itself. As Jahn (2001: N2.1.2) points out, practically all theories of narrative, following Saussure, distinguish between *how* a story is narrated (the signifier) and *what* is narrated (the signified). I therefore needed to look at the diaries in two ways, as records of events, experiences

and relationships with fragmented story lines, through content analysis, and as oriented towards the intended reader, that is, as conversation. I have retained an emphasis on the former rather than the latter, because of the focus of the case study, but have drawn on the *hows* where these added to my understanding of what had happened, or how the students were positioning themselves.

The strengths of content analysis are its unobtrusiveness and non-reactiveness, as well as its clear procedures, although care needs to be taken in displaying the logic of interpretation (Marshall & Rossman 1999: 117). Content analysis has been criticised for its failure to capture context (Manning & Cullum-Swan 1998), although, in this instance, the context forms part of the subject-matter of the content.

Underlying all of these considerations is the inevitability of distance between me as reader of the students' work, and the students themselves (Gurin 1992: 65). Reliance on this type of material demands that I avoid erasing them as narrators of their own lives, addressing their remarks to the lecturer they imagined would be assessing their work (Denzin & Lincoln 1998: 39; Davies 1992: 10), by ensuring that I draw as much as possible on their descriptions of their experiences without adding my own descriptive and evaluative overlays.

4.6 Describing the journey

In this section, I describe the different data that I collected for this research, and how I have gone about analysing and interpreting these materials. Three types of material were collected, as a very modest form of triangulation, with the student notebooks forming by far the largest body of material. The notebooks themselves were in three parts, comprising the diaries, 2 reflective exercises, one after 40 hours and one at the conclusion of the placement, and 20 activities related to the study materials. The other two sources of data were, firstly, attendance at two debriefing sessions, during which I had the opportunity to listen to other students' views of their placement experiences, and, secondly, photocopies of the comments that I had written to still other students about their work, once I had become a marker on the subject in question. The two latter sources of data reveal the background information gleaned as a participant observer

against which I made my interpretations, neither of which source I intended to use in this way at the times I accessed and wrote them.

One other process underpinned everything I have done in this thesis, and this was keeping my own notebooks. Now numbering 30 (the size of a thesis in their own right!), these include daily writing (at least in the early stages before I had drafts upon which I could work), notes and reflections on what I was reading or working upon, and jottings on scraps of paper, written by the light over the stove in the middle of the night and pasted in the next day. Notes on the literature were indexed, to allow me to revisit the ideas and my reactions to them as and when I needed to.

4.6.1 Collecting keepsakes: students' notebooks

I selected the cohort of students (unspecified to secure the anonymity of the students) who would participate in this study for entirely practical reasons – their work had been returned to them only when they had returned to the Goulburn campus, so that it was relatively easy, and inexpensive, to collect it. Students were invited to resubmit their marked work by letter³. The written request generated the re-submission of only 9 pieces of work. Deeming this potentially too small a number to furnish me with useful data (given Madge's 1978: 87 caution that diaries can disappoint), I made a brief presentation about the research to the student body, reiterating the contents of the original letter. My nine pieces of work increased to twenty-six (about 10% of the cohort).

The students' work was copied by a third party, had a replacement cover sheet attached⁴, and the original was returned to the student. A clerical assistant removed any identifying information from the copied diaries. As Acting Head of School at the time of data collection, I was in a position where I might have to make determinations about students' academic progression, and if I acquired any knowledge of who was resubmitting their work, my perceived impartiality might have been at risk.

³ See Appendix 2.

⁴ See Appendix 2.

4.6.1.1 Selection of diaries

Twenty six notebooks were received. Five did not have replacement cover sheets. Where neither age nor gender could be inferred, the notebooks (three of them) were excluded from the study, because two important aspects of social positioning were unavailable. The gender of the writers of two of the notebooks could be inferred from their placement (one in a Women's Centre, and the other in a shelter for homeless men), and their work has been incorporated in the analysis of the data. Table 2 provides an overview of the informants, using the agency categorisations of Bowles *et al.* (2002).

STUDENT	AGE RANGE	FIRST LOCATION	AGENCY TYPE	AGENCY LOCATION
Airlie	Under 20	Community	Multi-purpose	Rural
Anice	Under 20	Community	Multi-purpose	Metropolitan
Audrey	Under 20	Police	Disability	Metropolitan
Annabel	Under 20	Police	Disability	Rural
Brittany	20-24	Community	Indigenous	Metropolitan
Beryl	20-24	Community	Women	Rural
Chloe	20-24	Community	Disability	Metropolitan
Chayne	20-24	Community	Disability	Metropolitan
Courtney	20-24	Community	Disability	Metropolitan
Cameron	20-24	Community	Multi-purpose	Metropolitan
Denis	20-24	Community	Multi-purpose	Rural
Edgar	25-30	Community	Disability	Metropolitan
Frances	25-30	Police	Multi-purpose	Metropolitan
Grace	25-30	Community	Women	Metropolitan
Gareth	25-30	Community	Men	Metropolitan
Hector	30-34	Community	Children	Metropolitan
Isabel	30-34	Community	Multi-purpose	Rural
Jay	30-34	Community	Multi-purpose	Metropolitan
Kelvin	35-44	Police	Aged	Metropolitan
Leonard	35-44	Police	Multi-purpose	Metropolitan
Molly	35-44	Community	Aged	Metropolitan
Perry	Unknown	Community	Men	Metropolitan
Prudence	Unknown	Community	Women	Metropolitan

Table 2: Informants⁵ by age, timing of placement⁶, agency type and location

⁵ All informants, and the people and organisations about which they wrote, have been given pseudonyms. Uncertainty as to whether students had changed the names of those with whom they came

I had originally intended to cull the work on the basis of information on the replacement cover sheet (Appendix 2). The cover sheet requested the age and gender of the respondent, and also enquired about the person's level of familiarity with the client group, with diary writing, how easy they found writing the diary, and whether they had censored their material. I was intending to select women, older men (the Subject Co-ordinator had indicated that women and older men used the diary medium more comfortably and more successfully than younger men), those with little or no prior experience of the client group (because their experiences were more likely to be unfamiliar), those with experience of diary keeping (because I thought the information might be richer) and those who had no or few other sources of support (again, the potential for richer data). However, with full sets of information available for only twenty one of the students, a greater proportion of students under 25 years of age, and slightly fewer men, this approach was discarded.

It soon became clear that some selection was required, at least in terms of intensive study. In qualitative research, this selection tends to be based on factors such as maximum variation and a deliberate hunt for negative instances (Miles & Huberman 1994: 29), and cases that offer the opportunity to learn the most (Stake 1998: 101), with Kvale (1996: 7) suggesting that diversity is a strength because a multitude of views can be captured, and a manifold and controversial world is depicted. It was for these reasons that the 5 diaries selected for more intensive study were chosen, not against the original criteria, but on the basis of their difference from each other, and the interest I had in these particular students' responses to their experiences. Those selected offer a mix of 'easy' and 'difficult' placement experiences, different ages, different orientations to 'audience', different types of organisation and service delivery, and different personal backgrounds. There were other diaries in which similar experiences are indicated to those selected, but less poignantly. Diaries that were to be intensively studied were fully transcribed for analysis using N-Vivo. Twelve of the remainder were typed, but financial constraints meant that six were abridged for data entry purposes.

into contact, as well as the need to clearly differentiate the informants, led to this decision. Pseudonyms were allocated according to age, where known. Informants of the same age share the initial letter of their pseudonym. Thus, Airlie, Anice, Audrey and Annabel are all known to be the youngest informants in the study, and are all the same age, and Molly is known to be the oldest person to contribute to this research.

⁶ This column refers to whether the students undertook the police placement or the community placement first in the trimester.

The first diary that was irresistible was that of Denis, because here was a student who wrote totally outside of what I would have anticipated in an assessment context – that he had ‘spent the day putting a cold hand on a warm bum’ (Day 20: ‘At my girlfriend’s house’). To me this indicated several things. Firstly, it suggested a *machismo* orientation, in tune with traditional views of what it meant to be a police officer, as outlined in chapter 2 of this thesis. It also appeared as if the division between public and private had broken down, and that multiple fields of interaction were in play. These were interesting indicators as to the themes and issues that might be found in Denis’ work.

The second diary I selected was that of Annabel, whose work included really strong emotional reactions that seemed to persist into the very writing of her experiences: ‘YUK! YUK! YUK!’ (Day 12) was the conclusion to one of the daily entries. Perhaps this diary would point to the ways in which feeling was affecting her learning? Moreover this was, like Denis’s, a diary where the division between solicited and unsolicited diaries was blurred, but not in terms of content, rather, in terms of style.

Another interesting diary was that of Brittany, whose major concern, as a white Australian in an Indigenous organisation, was about herself in relationship to others: ‘I want to make a good impression & I want the kids & the staff to like me’ (Day 1). In other words, she was very clear about her project in the immediate circumstances. Again, the style was personal rather than academic, and was more akin to a diary than writing for a lecturer as audience. Brittany also interested me because she brought some skills to the placement, and was recognised as having them, which allowed her to achieve her aims.

Hector’s was the fourth diary that I selected. It interested me because his placement experiences were in two discrete chunks (working with two teachers with two entirely different groups of children in a residential holiday facility), and, at the conclusion of the first group’s stay, he was concerned about getting so close to children who were returning to extremely unfavourable home circumstances. In other words, I saw Hector as encountering a problem that he was attempting to resolve, and as having the opportunity to work with it through a similar experience.

The last diary I selected was quite different to the previous four. Kelvin wrote his work almost entirely in the third person. While the question of audience was to the fore, the content concerned his personal orientation to the placement and pointed to an interesting tension between the public and the private. Like Denis, then, Kelvin offered me a window on the interaction of several life-worlds.

4.6.2 *Collecting keepsakes: Placement briefings and debriefings*

I attended, as a marker in the subject, one briefing and two debriefings of community placements, well over a year after the students' notebooks were collected. All sessions combined consideration of the police and the community placement, and therefore had at least five staff present, including police, one 'civilian academic', and staff from the Field Training Unit. Numbers were large for such a session, with approximately forty students. The briefing yielded very little information, other than general worries, as students did not know at that time in which agency they were to be placed. I kept no record of this session.

The debriefing process began with the completion of a questionnaire (which is the basis of the analyses in Bowles *et al.* 2000), and moved, somewhat awkwardly, into a question and answer session about various aspects of the placement experience. It should be noted that those running the debriefing were unhappy with the format, and sought advice on how to change this, but timetable constraints gave them no other means of doing this (Heller-Wagner, pers. comm. 1999). Because students were speaking one at a time, I simply sat at the back of the room, and took notes on the points being made.

4.6.3 *Collecting keepsakes: Assessment comments*

The last type of data that was analysed was the comment sheets that I had completed on the work of 148 students during the period in which I was marking on the subject. 50 of these originate from the first session in which I marked, when I had obtained feedback from the Subject Co-ordinator that I was pitching my remarks and marks correctly (Heller-Wagner, pers. comm. 2001), and the remainder from later trimesters.

I had copied this material at the time, along with a page from the students' work, as a means of recollecting these should the students have wished to make any queries, and had not cleaned out the files containing them after the end of the trimester. The random nature of the photocopied sections of students' work, and the complexity of locating the students to use their diary fragments in this research, meant that I discarded this material, keeping only my comment sheets. These sheets supplement the feedback I had given in the body of the assignment, and include marks for each component of the work.

These comment sheets were included in the study for two reasons:

- to assess the extent to which the project of policing was implicit in the ways in which I understood what students were doing; and
- to assess the extent to which *my* work corresponds with the issues identified in my informants' diaries, which would suggest either that these are continuing themes across all students' work, or matters which draw my attention to the exclusion of others.

In studying this material, as with the diaries, I focused on content.

4.7 The journey itself

Yin (1994: 19) suggests that data analysis is the least developed and most difficult step in case study research, although Miles and Huberman (1994: 101) do provide a recipe⁷ So, too, does Cresswell (1998). Yin warns that these are merely good starting points, and suggests that one should rely on one's theoretical propositions and a descriptive framework for organising the study. As a consequence, within the framework of the case study approach, I have been a *bricoleur*⁸ (Denzin & Lincoln 1998: 3), using a variety of interpretive strategies to try and arrive at the meaning of the data, and, as any explorer would, have tried to 'map' the territory, using a range of instruments that seemed to suit my purposes.

⁷ Put the information into different arrays; make a matrix of categories and put the information in these; create data displays and flow charts; tabulate the frequency of different events; put the information in chronological order or some other temporal scheme (Yin 1994: 103).

This was by no means a matter of following a set plan. Rather, it involved an iterative and hermeneutic process of tacking between reading, writing and data analysis, and the insights which followed these activities in the early hours of the morning, during my shower, or on my walk to work. Given the considerable size of the terrain I was attempting to cover (more a region than a town or a suburb), the whole process was more circular moose-hunting (Denis & Richter 1987), downwind of my target, than a structured itinerary. Indeed, in the early stages, because I collected the data early, I was working without a clear picture of the moose.

Even selecting the techniques through which to analyse the data as records of events and experiences proved difficult. Plummer (1983: 99) suggested using the standard techniques of reading, making notes, leaving and pondering, re-reading without the notes, making new notes, matching these, and so on. Jones (2000) used a manual method of content analysis, finding computer assisted approaches too cumbersome for a small volume of data. In this research, I have relied on Plummer's delineation of the standard techniques, but have also drawn on a data analysis package, N-Vivo, to assist in working with what proved to be a large volume of data, as well as Miles & Huberman's (1994: 92) suggestion of creating data displays from information coded into matrices.

I started, not long after collecting the diaries, by reading them all (as part of the process of selecting which ones to use), and then began to work with Denis's diary in N-Vivo, a software package that is 'designed to approach qualitative analysis as researchers do' (Bazeley & Richards 2000: 5). The first steps, after ensuring that each day's entry can easily be identified as belonging to that day when coded to a node, involves coding content to nodes. Because the package allows the researcher to retrieve the context of coded materials, it is argued that the package overcomes the problem of decontextualisation that is otherwise typical of content analysis. The theme identification process, which is built in to learning how to use the package, locates this work as typical of the early stages of grounded theory. I then coded the other four

⁸ See section 1.7.

diaries, in the process of which I established what I understood to be each diary's unique theme.

Given the diversity amongst the students, and the lack of common themes upon which to develop theoretical frameworks, I did not fully exploit the theory-building capacities of the software program. However, revisiting the argument of the thesis revealed that there were theoretical perspectives on the data that I needed to explore, and I developed a new set of 'nodes' that would allow me to do this. This emergent approach to the data, loosely reflected the framework of interpretive interactionism (Denzin 1989), as presented, in modified form, below. However, each of the types of activity outlined were rather more *avenues of exploration* (because of the iterative and hermeneutic process) than they were steps down a predetermined straight path.

1. *Familiarisation* I undertook an initial reading of each diary to get a feel for each student's placement experience, for the way they understood what they were doing (as student and as writer), as well as grasping what there was of biography and the learning context, and repeated this several times over more than three years as I explored different facets of the material. This allowed me to become an 'informed reader', trying to secure, of the many possible meanings of the diaries, those intended by the students (Denzin 1989: 45). This was supplemented during the coding process in N-Vivo, as the characteristics of each diary were more thoroughly explored. At the time I did this, I also reflected on what I was finding in my own notebooks, and drafted preliminary analyses, thus leaving trails of my changing interpretations, to which I returned in the final stages of the research to see whether, and how, my interpretation might have changed, and to reassure myself that I was drawing reasonable inferences from the data, and selecting appropriately representative materials for inclusion in this thesis.

With the other two types of material, I familiarised myself with the content by rereading each record, and transcribing the relevant content.

2. *Thematic analysis* Themes are tools for getting at meanings, describing the content of a notion whilst always being a reduction of it (Van Manen 1997:

78). This first approach to the establishment of themes was used solely for the five selected diaries, and involved 'bracketing', that is, disregarding meanings in the literature, and analysing the diaries in their own terms, as much as possible (Schutz 1944; Denzin 1989). This generated clusters of 'nodes' (themes) in N-Vivo, although not all nodes initially developed became themes. For example, differences between people attributable to age were initially highlighted as a potential theme in Brittany's work:

Mr X, I'm guessing, is aged somewhere between 60 & 70, possibly at the higher end of the scale. Naturally he has that certain smell about him that people his age always do, & every single day he wears a suit, tie & hat to work, even though it really isn't necessary. (Day 17)

After a particularly long entry, in which Brittany recounted what she experienced as a frustrating day with Mr X, she did not return to the theme. Hector's work, about his experiences in being with children from disadvantaged backgrounds, also had some entries coded to this node:

When you had the ball you had to list the names of those before you and finish the list with your own name. This proved to be harder than I thought. Again, the children seemed to grasp this very well which surprised me. (Day 1)

In his case, learning about the children became a minor theme (the major one was that of the harsh life circumstances the children endured), particularly in terms of the difference between the first and second groups of children, where the second group were younger and more difficult to keep on task than the first.

The theme was also evident in Kelvin's diary about his experiences in the geriatric hospital (where age can be seen as a theme emerging from the practice environment), but in a far more personal way:

To be told more than once by different residents that you [are] a "nice young man" gives one a real boost. (Day 3)

Emotions were mixed, having witnessed grandparents go through old age and the potentially demeaning atmosphere of a nursing home / aged care centre the student was unsure from the outset. Being a firm believer that the senior citizens of our society have done their share and deserve the utmost respect one was possibly a little vulnerable to losing that respect. (KR1)

At 35 this job will mean a great deal to me. (KR2)

These processes allowed the development of a tentative view of the focus and themes of each of the five diaries. This was not the phenomenological process that Denzin (1989) suggested, rather an intuitive exploration of each diary once a particular entry had stood out in some way in any one of the diaries, occasionally supported by some tools drawn from narrative and linguistic theory (see step 3 below). Albeit in a far less extensive way (because of the relative poverty of the data), a similar process was used in the analysis of my comment sheets.

For the sessions I had attended and my own comment sheets, I hand-coded the material according to its content, clustering it into themes as I worked, then identified any overlaps before arriving at the final categories.

3. *Deconstruction* This phase of the analysis, which I used for all 23 diaries, involved canvassing the analytic frameworks suggested by the literature on selves and their construction, on learning in everyday life, and on approaches to the analysis of the interpersonal and emotional dimensions of writing, and using these to re-code the diaries. Here, the matters for which I was searching were coded under nodes referring to workplace practices (relationships and participation), to novelty and responses to that novelty, including the extent to which this reflected experiences outside of the community placement (feelings, values and actions and personal life), as well as any learning that might have resulted. Each of these nodes had branches representing different aspects of the phenomenon.

In some cases, the branches themselves were derived from the literature. For example, under participation, there were nodes for data on being afforded a legitimate role, and on aspects of participation such as mentions of observing particular practices, of listening, of being provided with specific guidance, of assisting with, or being responsible for, certain activities, and non-routine activities.

In other cases, the branches emerged from the data itself. For example, while the literature points to the importance of action in our conception of how

people might learn from their experience (Burkitt 1991; Boud & Walker 1996), Schutz and Luckmann (1974) suggest some steps in problem-solving that involve interventions, and Goffman (1976, 1973) some types of social action; there is no broad framework on which I could draw. The sub-categories that could be identified in the students' work included joining in, referring problems to others, researching (both through enquiries of staff and in seeking out written resources), self-asserting, innovating, and impression-management.

In undertaking this stage, I drew, when necessary, on the tools for analysing text developed in narrative and linguistic analysis in order to identify the social positioning of the students (Jahn 2002; Halliday & Hassan 1998; Eggins & Slade 1996; Denzin 1989), and which had a potential bearing on what students learned, and what I understood of the students' work. That Denis wrote 'Spent the day putting a cold hand on a warm bum' called up a range of inferences about class, gender, marital status, age, police stereotypes, and how the lecturer was viewed, as well as how the student interpreted the task of recording his experiences. That Annabel wrote 'YUK! YUK! YUK!' suggested not just age and gender, nor simply writing typical of an unsolicited diary, but also extreme revulsion (repetition and the use of capital letters), and that high levels of feeling persisted into her writing about this experience (that is, there was very little distance between experience and writing). Such considerations helped me to identify students' starting points and the frames of reference through which they had understood their experiences, and learned from them.

In this phase, my major focus was on the agencies in which students were placed, identifying who they had written about, and what understandings I thought people in the placement had about the students' role in their agencies. This material forms the substance of chapter 5, and is presented, as far as is possible, using the students' voices.

4. *'Mapping' the diaries* Needing to condense the diaries in such a way that their differences and similarities would be immediately evident, I initially decided to adapt an approach developed by Barab, Hay & Yamagata-Lynch (2001). These researchers developed a method for 'capturing and tracing the emergence,

evolution, and diffusion of a practice, conceptual understanding, resource or student constructed artefact' by sectioning experiences into action-relevant episodes, parsing these down into codes, and then representing these as nodes in a network to allow the historical development of a phenomenon to be traced.

For each student's diary, for each day on which there was an entry, each mention of a person, practice, idea or feeling that had been coded to a node was inserted into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet as a shade of grey. If mentioned more than once, a darker shade of grey was used for each subsequent mention. This approach was used to map the contents of all of the diaries, to allow the 'story' of any problem to emerge (Denzin 1989: 46, 65-67), and to allow for comparison of the diaries. 'Maps' of the diaries intensively examined in this study are provided in appendix 3, and while they indicate broad patterns, they also show that, at the stage at which I undertook this exercise, I was still vacillating about how best to categorise the materials.

The students' diaries proved not to be entirely amenable to this approach, in that each day's events were not necessarily linked to the events or themes of previous days, and their narrative form was not strictly chronological, being either structured for the reader in some way, or a 'stream of consciousness' outpouring that had no respect for order. Moreover, although networked chronologies of who students were working with could, for example, have been drawn up, how the resulting experiences interlinked with each other was opaque. These things rendered the tracing of a network impossible, although the individual 'maps' were the inspiration for the next stage of data analysis, not unproblematically.

The other problem with this approach that I encountered was later in the research, as I attempted to summarise aspects of the 5 student diaries ~ there were no numbers in the Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, just shades of grey. I simply could not count entries coded to relevant nodes in order to detect patterns in the data, and to develop data displays which would allow for comparison, and the detection of differences (Miles & Huberman 1994: 41) that I could use in the body of the thesis. With a clearer idea of what I was

looking for, I re-coded the 5 diaries to the issues under examination, and developed matrices from these in Microsoft Excel. I then charted them in the form of 'diaryscapes', again using Microsoft Excel, in a deliberate reference to the predominance of the metaphor of the landscape in contemporary research as well as providing acknowledgement that these were *my* perspectives on the diaries, an artful presentation drawn out of the students' accounts.

In calling these displays 'diaryscapes', I am also distinguishing the representations from others in this thesis which are based in quantitative data such as that on the cover sheets (called figures). To emphasise their distinctiveness, 'diaryscapes' are in colour, whereas all of the figures are in black and white. I do not purport to summarise the diaries with these representations, or to represent the fullness of each informant's experiences. My objective is to select out common elements in the diaries that relate to the topic of the thesis and provide ingress into the raw material. The 'diaryscapes' are a means of depicting the effect and essence of the diaries, without the reader needing to read them all.

5. *Reconstruction* In this stage of the analysis, I aimed to link the disparate and deconstructed elements into a tentative framework of the sorts of factors in play. Using N-Vivo, and its Boolean search tool, I examined all of the nodes and how they might relate to my research questions. In this stage, at first I drew on all 23 usable diaries, which allowed a picture to emerge of the features of community placements and of students' learning experiences within them.

As in step 3, discovering that the material was not entirely suited to the technique I was trying to use (there were too few entries across a large number of nodes for Boolean searches to yield anything of interest), I turned back to the 5 selected informants and examined their work more closely, re-coding it deconstructively and according to my increasingly clear research issues, to develop a profile of the trajectory of each student.

To elicit these learning trajectories, I began by extracting the first and last diary entries made by the five selected informants, to establish whether any change

appeared to have occurred, and, if so, what type of change it was. I then examined each diary in the light of this information, with the aim of tracing the path of the key issue(s) from the first to the last entry. What I was looking for were entries that indicated, either through the style in which they were written, or the events that were described, that a change had taken place (the how and the what of narrative analysis). This work is the basis of the framework for chapter 6.

6. *Reflexive comparison and interpretation* Having refined what I thought I needed to include as accounts of students' trajectories, I turned to the two other data sources to develop matrices comparing these forms of data with that obtained from examining the diaries.

The other remaining task was to check the extent to which the various accounts of experiences in the placements supported the assumptions underpinning this study. I considered the lead assumption, and the sub-questions, against my conclusions about where each of the students stood in relation to them, developing matrices to identify whether there were any patterns. This analysis forms the substance of chapter 7.

4.8 Limitations of the study

The first limitation of the study is the stand-alone quality of the data. Most research with a significant qualitative component includes researcher involvement in the lives of the participants, through, for example, in-depth interviews. Ethical, theoretical and practical considerations have limited the interpretation and discussion of the data to what is written, and to my experiences as a police educator, as a worker in the service sector (hospitals, disabled people, and the financially and socially disadvantaged) and as a marker of the subject in question.

A second limitation is related to the nature of the records themselves. Informants' accounts of their experiences, framed by implicit concepts to which I had no direct access, were addressed to a different audience. I was the vicarious observer of these informants' experience, and their work was written in a context of potential constraint (Boud 1999; Boud & Walker 1996; Allport 1942, in Madge 1978: 85). Clearly, they

would not have recorded every event and interaction, but were more likely to have been writing about those in which they believed the marker would be interested than those which were significant to them in a personal way (although these interests may, on occasions, have coincided).⁹

An assessment context is particularly complex. Boud (1999) indicates that there is a fundamental tension between the uncertainties and difficulties of learning as revealed through reflection and the certainty of position demanded in assessment. Boud (1996: 199) writes that his primary school experience of writing a diary was a task full of traps, where only those things of which the teacher approved could be recorded, and organisational studies using diaries have shown that information that might be negatively received tends to be filtered out (Conrath, Higgins & McClean 1985: 185-186). Ruskin Mayer (1999: 1) observed that portfolios he marked were so constrained by the assessment context that there were no distinguishable voices, no 'selves' in them as could only be evidenced through intense self-reflection. Sara Sanders (n.d.), on stories, reminds us that sharing a story requires trust. Students who are less trusting of the context are more likely to confine themselves to recounting events than to sharing their stories. Six of ten adult educators who used journals in Holt's (1994) study did not write reflectively (Kerka 1996: 3). Kerka (1996) also found that nursing students wrote more descriptively than they did reflectively and that teacher trainees wrote more frequently about reaction/response, and elaboration of ideas, than they contemplated. Bartrop (1992: 150) used diaries with police recruits, and concluded that reflective projects have many pitfalls in a hierarchical and accountable service, resulting from officers' suspiciousness about what is being recorded. Wilmot (1995) points to the use of a variety of filters. There is, firstly, students' own views of the placement (the direct perspective); there is then the student's view of the lecturer's view of the placement (the metaperspective); and, finally, the student's view of the lecturer's view of the student's view (the meta-metaperspective – that is, the reflexive filter) (Wilmot 1995).

In order to overcome these impediments and increase the trustworthiness of my interpretations, I have used two strategies, the first of which was using two approaches

⁹ There may be some difficulty in teasing out which of the two orientations the informant has in a particular piece of writing, although it is possible that differences between early and later diary entries may indicate a particular informant's orientation to her/his audience.

to analysing and interpreting the data (primarily the 'what', but also the 'how'). As Denzin (1989) points out, using more than one strategy allows for an expanded interpretive base and increases the likelihood that out of a relatively narrow band of data I can develop some compelling evidence. The second strategy was to supplement the main body of empirical materials with materials from two other sources, the debriefings and my own assessment comment sheets. In relation to the latter, when I began marking for the subject, I had sought feedback on my work from the subject co-ordinator to ensure it was appropriate, and marked the work in the knowledge that any notebooks to which I gave less than 50 marks or over 85 marks would be re-marked by the subject co-ordinator. While I believe these two factors mean that the comment sheets offer similar levels of trustworthiness to those discussed below in relation to diaries, my comment sheets were, like the diaries, limited by the assessment context. My aim was to provide constructive and supportive feedback about how students had dealt with their placement experiences, adding marks above the minimum of 10 for work that was reflective (either using the personal experience base and/or the readings).

4.9 Trustworthiness

Because I am dealing with what can be seen as historical texts, with myself as secondary reader and interpreter, the absence of any relationship with the students means that I am indeed engaged in a version of 'savage' research. This partially mirrors the situation of the students, in terms of their role as 'social investigators' of the people they encountered. Clare (2000) criticises Hollway & Jefferson's paper in the collective volume on the narrative study of lives by Josselson and Lieblich (1999) for its wholly unnegotiated, and potentially exploitative theorising. I have tried to address this by considering my own experiences in comparison with what the student is describing (Johnson Melvin 1998, cited in Jones 2000), by including my own comments sheets in the study, and by trying to have the students' 'voices' emerge in their own right, but this remains a criticism that I cannot counter. The aim, according to Clandinin & Connelly (1998), in relation to voice, is to inquire rather than summarise or interpret, whilst ensuring that the participants' voices come through in some measure.

As what I wanted was a subjective account of experience over time, then the diary (life history) is the most valid method (Plummer 1983: 102), and the main concern regarding

the trustworthiness of this study has to be possible sources of bias, in this case, the assessment context, and my attitudes. For the students, above and beyond the things which may have been important but are forgotten, and self-deception, the assessment context may have generated misinformation, evasion, and 'front' in the attempt to please the marker. For me, I may have little in common with the writers of the diaries, and factors such as my age, gender, class, race, values and attitudes, and expectations about what I might find in the diaries may shape the interpretation and therefore the research outcome (Plummer 1983: 102; Hodder 1998: 111).

Jones (2000: 3), who combined the work of Scott (1990) with that of Macdonald & Tipton (1993) and Johnson Melvin (1998), described some criteria for the appraisal of diaries as data sources. These included their:

- authenticity (the extent to which the document coheres and makes sense as a unique and reliable source);
- credibility (the who, why, when and where of the diaries' authorship);
- representativeness (whether it is reasonable to assume the diary is typical of the universe of such diaries); and
- meaning (whether the diary has a literal meaning *and* the potential for interpretation, content or semiotic analysis).

The diaries used in this case study are authentic, credible documents with many similarities to others that I have marked, and they offer many levels of meaning. However, each of them is a stand-alone document. Madge (1978: 88) suggests that, without corroboration, we have to be content with the inherent plausibility of the statements diarists make, as outlined by Gottschalk, 1944. Diaries can be considered trustworthy:

1. *if the writer has no vested interest in what s/he writes.* This was not the case here, but students had differing interpretations of what their best interests might have been, and differing levels of commitment to the tasks required. Students of policing typically are first generation university students, who did not expect to study at a university, and many require a lot of help in making the transition to academic writing. Non-traditional forms of assessment are as much of a struggle as is an

essay, and students are often unsure about whether they are doing what is required.¹⁰ Some students did not complete all of the requirements, despite it being in their best interests to do this.

2. *if what is written is potentially prejudicial to the writer's interests (check for boasting or cunning if the writing is confessional)*. This indicated that a cautious interpretation of some of the students' work was required. Multiple analytical approaches assisted in identifying the plausibility of statements that were potentially prejudicial. For example, Annabel 'confesses' that she feels 'a little bit scared' of one of the clients, but this is not an isolated comment, and the emotional tenor of her work (with many instances of amplification) indicates that this is not a disingenuous remark – rather, it is an understatement of the feelings that she experienced.
3. *when what the informant writes about is a matter of common knowledge, and the informant is therefore unlikely to be mistaken or to lie*. This indirect form of confirmation is considered by Madge to be of more value to historical than to contemporaneous research. There was some confirmation of the students' views of their placement organisation available in research conducted by Bowles *et al.* (2002).
4. *when the part of the informants' work of primary interest to the researcher is both incidental and intrinsically probable*. This was the form of confirmation of most value to this data. Informants' use of the diary medium was naïve¹¹ (they received minimal information about the processes and values of reflection), and there was no interest in how the placement experience might be affecting selves. Thus, any boasting (as in 2. above) was a useful indicator of how a student might conceive

¹⁰ Kelvin's diary is a case in point - written in the third person, in his last entry he asks the marker whether this was what was required.

¹¹ 'Of the attitudes which life-histories reveal, the most important [...] are those of which the individual is [...] quite unconscious. Men [*sic*] know themselves as they know and are known by other men about them. They are keen for what is unique and different, but the things in which one man seems like another do not interest them. The individual's opinions, for example, of which he is always keenly so conscious, are usually the least important of his personal attitudes. It is things which people take for granted which reveal at once the person and the society in which he lives. The naïve behaviour of the individual is therefore an unfailing index of the society in which he is a member' (Park 1929, cited in Madge, 1978: 86).

police identity, and this was able to be juxtaposed against the record of what they did and noticed.

5. *when the writer makes statements contrary to the investigators' knowledge of her/his thought patterns and preconceptions.* Again, this was a valuable confirmation mechanism in some diaries, as 'stream of consciousness' writing offered new insights into earlier claims.

These strategies did not deal with my relationship to the diaries. The responses I have had to the material may have influenced my interpretation. I have been the research instrument engaging with the situation and making sense of it, as were the students as they did the work. However, I was explicitly aiming for interpretation (trying to account for what students had written), with aims which they did not have in their purview (Madge 1978). We have a social relation to texts, and my reading was in terms of the contextualisation cues that were familiar to me. I may have misinterpreted the meaning of some students' writing simply because I do not share their cultural context (Gumperz 1982, cited in Eggins & Slade 1996: 34; Bourdieu 1981: 135). The use of some linguistic techniques of analysis may have provided a less personal base (Madge 1978: 112-114). However, Madge also mentions that personal documents are particularly hard to interpret systematically, because each writer will have carried out the task in their own way and 'in defence of his [*sic*] own system of values'.

The informants whose work I have selected are reflecting the things that interest me (Smith 1998: 191). For example, how could that manager leave the student being harassed by an out-of-control, incontinent, developmentally disabled young man? Other researchers may well have selected a different group of cases to study. My relationship with these texts goes beyond my relationship as reader. Like the informants, I, too, am embedded in a structured set of economic and social relationships which have a bearing on what I do. Whilst they, to a greater or lesser extent, have taken account of the assessment context, I had to take account of my role in police recruit education, and the interest I have had in seeing that the Reform Agenda generated by the Wood Royal Commission remained integral to the design and delivery of the Diploma. The interest was not merely academic. It was how I earned my living. This may have blinded me to certain aspects of the diaries, or meant that I did not wish to share others.

It must be remembered that, both for the diarist, and for me as researcher, more will be pursued than is written about, and less will be reported than was learned - all the various stories will exceed anyone's telling (Stake 1998: 93-94).

4.10 Ethical and Political Considerations

I have already alluded to some of the ethical risks in this research. Research which accessed students of policing in their first year of study could have affected their chances of employment, or affected their treatment in the probationary phase of their employment¹². Prior to their participation, informants received a full explanation of how their privacy would be protected. The work that was being requested had already been assessed. At the time of data collection, diaries were submitted to, and copied and returned by, a third party, and I merely received the photocopied transcripts with replacement cover sheets. Any identifying information had been whited out. Students were themselves requested to provide pseudonyms for the people about whom they wrote, and they did this more or less effectively. Nonetheless, a process of elimination could have led to the identification of at least some of the informants – the data were to some extent 'de-identified' rather than rendered wholly 'unidentifiable'. All names in their diaries have therefore been changed (whether pseudonyms or not), including those of the organisations and locations. Any remaining risk has since been considerably reduced in that the informants have attained their diplomas or have left the course. Limited detail has been provided on any one agency in describing the situations in which informants found themselves. None of the agencies were contacted as this may have compromised the anonymity of the informants (agency staff knew who had been in the placement, even if I did not).

Nonetheless, identification of the students or of particular agencies is a potential, but unlikely, problem. I have selected only five diaries out of over two hundred potential informants in an unidentified cohort in an unidentified year, all informants, agencies,

¹² Ethics approval for the research was obtained. The documentation is not appended, as it could lead to the identification of the cohort of students.

staff and clients have pseudonyms, I am using age ranges rather than exact ages, and have excluded or modified some details that could have provided indicators of who has contributed. With the passage of time, only those students who resubmitted their work are likely to remember precisely which cohort was involved. The numbers of agencies over time should serve to conceal those described in this study

The case study approach that I have chosen means, however, that, should the individual student ever read this thesis, then they would probably recognise themselves. The exploratory nature of the research, and its focus on learning and identity construction, means that they are unlikely to find anything damaging or offensive. Every effort has been made to ensure that it is the student's voice that speaks, rather than mine.

The final ethical concern has been mine. Research undertaken on a program conducted by the organisation with which I work, in collaboration with another, and in a nervous competitive environment, could have had negative consequences for me, for the program, for my colleagues, and for the University. Despite the political constraints inherent in this context, these diaries have to be seen as instruments to challenge accepted understandings of the placement experience in police education – including my own as a one-time significant actor in this play. Whilst I must seek to protect the individual students, the agencies, and my colleagues, I cannot protect myself as one of the key players in the development of this subject.

4.11 Summary

The chapter has provided a detailed outline of the methods and methodology used in this case study. Using the basis of participant observation and documentary research, I have analysed the data employing an adaptation of Denzin's 'interpretive interactionism' – an adaptation rendered necessary by the absence of interaction in the research design. I have drawn on a variety of techniques in the analysis of mute evidence, with the aim of increasing the trustworthiness of my interpretations. In the following chapter, I provide a profile of the students who contributed their work for this study and of the agencies in which they were placed.

Chapter Five

Data analysis:

Perspectives on the landscape

5.1 Setting the scene

This chapter provides an overview of the informants in this study, of the affordances of the agencies in which they were placed, as described by the informants, and of the types of learning experiences that were mentioned by other students (as available through the debriefings and my marking). I firstly introduce the students, the types of entries they make about the placement on their first day and the extent to which their project of policing was in the foreground. I then go on to analyse the ways in which staff and clients in the various agencies responded to and guided the students, reflecting the need to take account of interactivity. Finally, I outline the information on students' placements that was gleaned from the other two data sources.

The chapter therefore provides the background information against which the next two chapters can be set, which, respectively, focus on the overall content of the diaries and how this relates to any re-positioning of selves, and upon the trajectories of a selected group of students.

5.2 Profile of informants

This section provides a brief introduction to the students who contributed to this research. Summary profiles of all of the informants are provided in Appendix 4, with this section concentrating on an overview. The twenty-three informants whose work is drawn on in this study largely come from Anglo-Celtic backgrounds, and from the city rather than the country. Only one of the students had worked in a human services organisation, and most had been in a trade or in clerical work. Quite a few of them had strongly religious backgrounds, which had either been embraced or rejected in their teens. Several had policing or military personnel in their families.

The hope had been that students would undertake the community placement prior to undertaking their field placement at the police station. The large numbers of students, and the limited availability of organisations that were interested in participating in the program, meant that this was not the case for many of the students. Seven of the informants undertook the police placement prior to the community placement. The majority, sixteen, undertook the community placement first.

Informants were asked to provide information about their levels of familiarity and comfort with the medium of diary-writing. Twelve of the informants had had at least some experience of diary writing, although this tended to be spasmodic or short-term rather than a habit. Women informants in this study had kept diaries more often than had men. The majority of men had never kept a diary before undertaking the community placement. The majority of students in the 18-24 and 35-44 age groups had used a diary (7 of the 11 informants and 2 of the 3 respectively), whereas the majority of students between the ages of 25 and 34 had not used one.

It was anticipated that students' liking or disliking of the medium might affect the amount of information that any diary might yield. While none of the informants indicated that they found diary writing *very* easy, the majority found it easy (15/21 responses). The students between the ages of 25 and 34, who had least experience of writing diaries, were the only informants to indicate that they hated doing it. Most of the students across all age ranges found it an easy activity. More women than men found diary-writing difficult or hated it. As no reasons for students' views were sought, it is not possible to assess whether this was because women experienced greater tension about the distinction between the private and the public than did the men.

5.3 Agencies and client groups

In chapter 2 (section 2.6), Table 1 provided Bowles *et al.*'s (2002) profile of all of the agencies involved in the community placement, and of the numbers of students. Table 3 below sets out the notebooks received for this research against this larger profile.

Agency Type	Total Agencies Used		Student Notebooks	
	No.	%	No. Received	No. Selected ¹
Multi-purpose	285	42.0	8	1
Youth	135	19.9	2	2
Disability	80	11.8	5	1
Aged	33	4.9	1.5	1
Children	19	2.8	1.5	2
Women	35	5.2	2	
Men	18	2.7	2.5	
Family	30	4.4		
Indigenous	28	4.1	.5	1
Ethnic/Cultural	15	2.2		
TOTALS	678	100.0	23	8

Table 3: Notebooks re-submitted and selected, by agencies and target groups

The students who re-submitted their work for this study were in placements that largely reflected the overall profile of agencies. This is also the case for those students whose work has been selected for intensive study.

The field of social service encompasses great diversity, including state-run bureaucracies, independently funded and managed charities, some of them national or international, as well as community-based groups. Students' work in this study is fairly evenly distributed across agency types, with 8 students each in State Government

¹ Students whose placements involved working with two discrete groups, or where the client group was aged males, or indigenous youth, have been entered as 1 in each relevant category, and the total is therefore greater than 5 (the number of informants whose work is being intensively studied).

Agencies and community groups, and 7 in religious charities². Figure 1 shows the client groups catered for by the different organisational types.

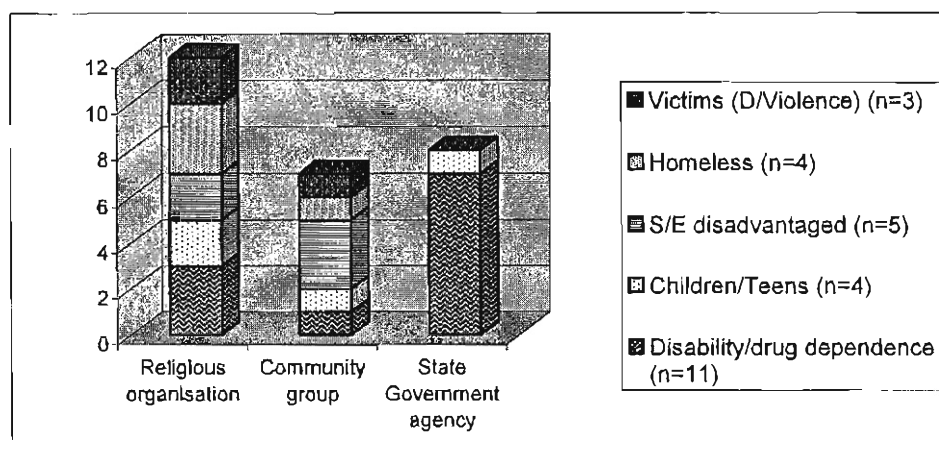


Figure 1: Client focus according to organisational type³

The focus of the work in State Government agencies was on disability (particularly the mentally ill, whether associated with age, physical disability or mental illness *tout court*), drug dependence and educational services for children in crisis. There was far more variety in types of clients served amongst community groups and religious organisations. Both provided support services for disabled clients (life skills, activities, and care of the elderly), educational and emergency relief for the socio-economically disadvantaged, shelters for the homeless, and court support and other services to victims of domestic violence. Most of the students (n=11) were placed with clients with disabilities of one sort or another.

The replacement cover sheet which most of the informants completed also asked them to specify their level of familiarity with the client group in their agency prior to the placement. Figure 2 summarises their responses.

² Community group students were Airlie, Annabel, Audrey, Beryl, Brittany, Isabel, Grace and Prudence. Those located in religious organisations were Anice, Chayne, Courtney, Denis, Gareth, Molly and Perry, and in State Government organisations, Chloe, Cameron, Edgar, Frances, Hector, Jay, Kelvin and Leonard.

³ Some students in religious organisations moved from one type of service delivery to another.

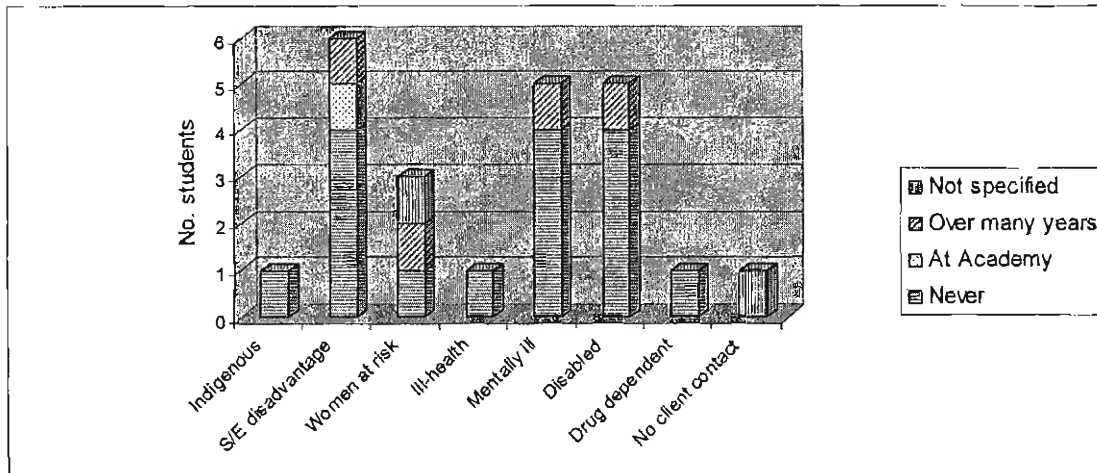
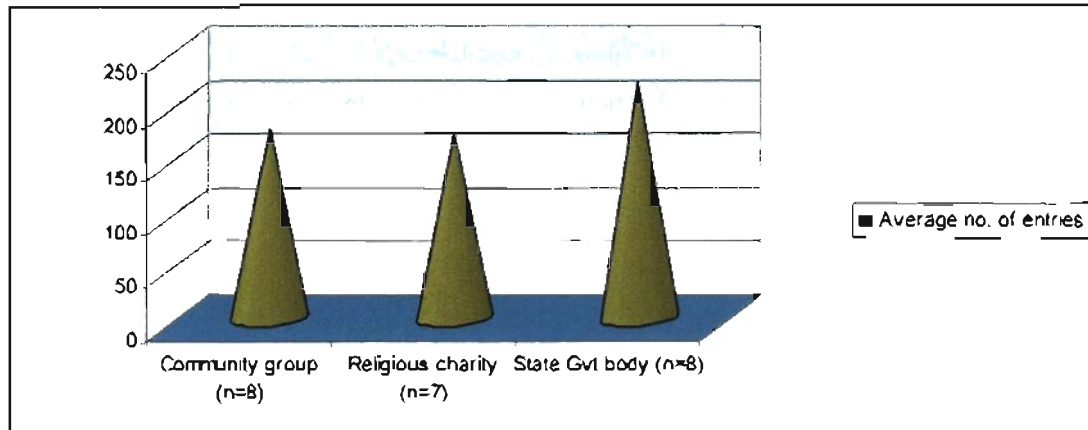


Figure 2: Informants' level of familiarity with the client group

The majority of informants had had no prior contact with members of the client group in their agency. Two of those who mentioned contact over many years were referring to having grown up, or worked, in a particular community (when the agency catered to the needs of the socially or economically disadvantaged), and the other that a member of their own family was disabled. Of the two specifying recent contact, one was referring to their police placement, and the other to the students encountered at the then Academy from unfamiliar socio-economic groups.

5.4 Informants' descriptions of agencies and their practices

As an introductory overview of the organisations and the types of entries they typically generated, Diaryscale 1 overleaf shows the average number of entries by placement type. It should be noted that the category of community groups includes those sponsored by or part of local government.



Diaryscape 1: Average number of entries coded to nodes by placement type

Diaryscape 1 shows that students placed in State Government agencies, wrote, on average, more about their placement experiences than did students in either community groups/local government agencies or religious charities. The richest material about the placement experience amongst this group of students would seem to be generated by the organisations which had the larger presence of professional staff, as opposed to reliance on volunteers, and to organisations that focused on the fostering of clients' rights rather than the dispensing of charity.⁴

The most intensive participation by students in agency work practices was in the care of the disabled and the mentally ill. Students who had placements with children or teenagers also tended to be intensively involved with the clients. Many of the jobs, those with the elderly, disabled people and children in particular, involved outings in the community for the otherwise institutionalised. Routine tasks dominated in the care of the homeless (clients had to be signed in, woken, and given breakfast). Methadone clinics more commonly involved much observation, sitting in on consultations, sometimes supported by work in reception. Health facilities offered students the opportunity to observe specialist interventions, such as electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) (Frances), emergency surgery (Leonard), and admission into a nursing home

⁴ Given that the students participating in this study do not represent a random sample, the differences identified cannot be seen as anything other than chance variations. Nonetheless, the differences would be worth pursuing should community placements be reintroduced in police education, or instituted in other courses, following the trend towards service learning evident in the U.S.

(Kelvin). Community and religious agencies that offered a range of services to the socially and economically disadvantaged, or that functioned as a bridge between stakeholders, seemed to offer the fewest opportunities for client contact. In these organisations, students were sometimes given special projects to undertake, were used in the general running of the place (answering phones, for example, or sorting clothes), or were left to their own devices when clients did not give permission for them to be involved (Airlie, Beryl, Denis and Isabel).

There was then, little commonality between students in terms of what students were required to do, and the extent and type of contact with clients. Some students had ample opportunity to observe professional people at work, and others none. The extent of the variations ensures that students would have very different learning experiences, and that their intentions to become a police officer would be negotiated in very different ways.

5.4.1 Staff support of informants' learning

Staff were mostly mentioned by informants in relation to the ways in which they behaved that made them feel comfortable or accepted; ways in which they improvised or intervened in difficult or complex situations; and the types of guidance they provided. Various types of contact were described, from structured learning experiences to the sharing of jokes, opinions, life circumstances and how to deal with particular clients, as well as, occasionally, working with students through their distress at what they were encountering.

5.4.1.1 View of policing

At least some of the agency staff were concerned to provide students with experiences that related to their intended careers. Annabel had most of her time allocated with Ben, 'because he has a disorder whereby he could become extremely aggressive and therefore spends a fair bit of time in contact with the police'. Anice was considered (albeit briefly, until she refused) an appropriate person to stay overnight with a woman

who had murdered her husband. Kelvin was given several twelve-hour shifts, ‘as practice’.

Sometimes staff provided specific advice, most comprehensively in State Government departments. Edgar and Chloe were both told about how certain types of disability could be misinterpreted as drunkenness, and that they should try and communicate with the mentally ill rather than become aggressive. The mental health team gave Frances examples of good and bad aspects of police handling of their clients, seeing the placement as a ‘fantastic’ way to prevent ‘police jumping in and asking questions later’. Staff in an Admissions ward advised Cameron that physical force could be avoided through the use of good communication skills, and that even something as simple as offering a patient a cigarette could defuse a volatile situation. A doctor told Cameron that abusive behaviour was common amongst the drug dependent, and experiencing it was a useful learning experience for police work. Jay mentioned the enthusiasm of staff for police student involvement in mental health, because of their participation in situations in which individuals are at risk. In the voluntary sector, Molly was advised that it was important to be able to identify the symptoms of untreated high or low glucose levels. In the community sector, a carer points out to Courtney that ‘although it was easy to love the disabled girls, police don’t have time to talk with them’, and advocates are needed for those with behavioural problems.

Annabel, Frances and Jay mentioned staff dissatisfaction with the ways in which police had dealt with their clients. On some occasions, staff, seemingly motivated by the desire to protect students or clients (particularly when the latter were disabled, drug addicted, or mentally ill), limited student interactions by requiring students not to reveal they were student police. Anice was introduced to a group of teenagers as someone ‘sitting in today to see if I would like to spend six weeks working with them’. Courtney was ‘told not to tell people I’m in the CEP⁵, which made me sad because the uniform doesn’t make me more or less of a nice person’. Cameron, in a methadone clinic, was told to say he was a medical student. In Leonard’s case, there was consultation, and they found the

⁵ The Constable Education Program (the Police Service name for the Diploma of Policing Practice).

best tactic was to say he was a student, 'um er of sociology with an interest in medicine'.

Staff seem to have had fostering student learning, or protection of the clients, as their primary intention in the ways in which they dealt with students, whichever the organisational type, with some of this attributable to previous negative experiences of the clients with police. Where staff provided advice, the focus of that advice was clearly consistent with the aims of the subject and its associated learning materials.

5.4.1.2 Levels of participation

As novices in their various placement environments, guidance as to how to participate was to be anticipated. Types of guidance provided included information giving, as part of induction or other introductory procedures, explanations of the reasons for clients behaving in certain ways, chats about the clients who people found to be problematic, active attempts to change opinions, and guidance provided through legitimate peripheral participation.

In most cases, it was unclear whether the guidance that was mentioned by students was a response to explicit or implicit positions taken by the students⁶. Chayne commented that 'staff were very explanatory today about the side effects of various disabilities'. It was explained to Courtney that payday was quiet days and that a client who failed to return from a house visit had probably taken a shot of heroin and was 'on the nod'. Cameron had the suicidal behaviour of an addict and the abusive style of the clients in custody, explained. One of the doctors in Cameron's placement argued for the establishment of heroin injecting rooms, and 'made some good arguments'. Jay was told the elderly ladies on the bus trip were not 'just old' but were being subtly monitored for depressive reactions to bereavement. All of these students were in their early twenties.

Only Prudence notes that a remark she had made resulted in raised eyebrows, a form of guidance that led her to conclude that she had been naïve.

On the other hand, being in the workplace as a legitimate participant allowed for observations of staff/client interactions, which students sometimes merely described (such as Frances writing that she had ‘observed the nurse doing the rounds in the lock-up ward’), and others evaluated. Courtney described one worker as very emotionally involved, and the youth worker as making ‘harsh comments’ (that is, ‘Bitch, eat our pizza, then go!’). Cameron observed interviews with methadone recipients, sitting with ‘Dr T, who was strict and enforcing compared to Dr. G’. Critical remarks were confined to community and religious agencies. Anice remarked that the workers had little power over the adolescent clients, and that all they could do was talk and get their views across: telling the kids to quieten down and finish their craft merely resulted in more shouting across the room, and messing up of each others’ craft. Courtney felt that one manager abused her power in allocating them clients rather than an observational role, and that workers treated her and a fellow student ‘like crap they are rude and unprofessional, they boss us around and give us nasty looks. It sux!’

Students sometimes wrote about specific interventions and improvisations that staff made, reflecting legitimate peripheral participation. Staff where Anice worked ‘took the kids for a run’ to try and get rid of their hyperactivity. Audrey was asked to play with some children so the worker could talk to the mother unimpeded. In Courtney’s case, workers tried to use a bartering tactic with the disabled girls in their care, which did not work and ‘sent us absolutely batty’.

Students’ participation in religious and community workplaces sometimes closed the gap between peripheral and mainstream engagement in the work, with over a half of the students (eight of the fifteen in these types of placements) describing themselves as equal participants in the action alongside the staff (Annabel, Brittany, Anice, Airlie, Chayne, Courtney, Frances and Molly). Courtney, for example, mentioned that one client told her ‘things he hadn’t even told the youth worker’. Annabel concluded that she had been used as an ‘uneducated third hand, in a manner [...] I should not have been’. The majority of those in this position were younger students, and all but one were women.

5.4.1.3 Types of talk

The diaries were reviewed to establish the ways in which staff had communicated with students, and the approaches they took that might foster or impede students' participation in the workplace. The most structured form of interaction between staff and students was experienced by Chloe and Edgar, in the same organisation, one which catered for severely disabled people and dementia sufferers, and which provided students with their own room, various forms of experiential learning sessions, as well as weekly reflective sessions. In Grace's placement, a home-like environment in which street workers could rest and relax, there were routine meetings at the end of each day where staff talked over the day's events (the 'collective solving of problems without recourse to power plays'). No other organisations provided these fora. Meetings, and many of them, in community organisations, were particularly disliked, as the same issues emerged and remained unresolved, people talked about unfamiliar topics, and squabbled over seemingly trivial matters (Airlie, Audrey, Beryl and Isabel).

At the informal end of the communication spectrum, three of the men (Chayne, Edgar and Gareth) mentioned that they shared jokes with staff. Anice mentioned a lot of talking amongst staff with whom she shared a religious commitment (including the 'main guy' who had been her teacher at school). Cameron wrote that the intimate size of the working environment meant that he 'got to know pretty much all about the staff in their professional and personal lives'.

Both informal and formal interactions seem to have given students food for thought about their assumptions, and how best to deal with certain types of situation. Anice, after a group exercise, commented that two of the leaders of the youth groups did not 'believe in God, even though they are employed in a religious organisation. I guess I wrongly assumed that all these employees had to be Christian or churchgoers'. Leonard decided to ponder on a specialist's comment that the best way to deal with distressing cases (such as cancer) was to detach oneself emotionally.

5.4.1.4 Acceptance

Students felt accepted when their early contacts were relaxed and friendly (Anice, Audrey, Chloe, Cameron, Denis, Hector and Kelvin), when their labour was needed and their contribution valued (Frances, Hector and Leonard), and when their feelings and responses were recognised and normalised (Annabel, Brittany, Courtney, Frances, Gareth and Kelvin). The clearest messages of acceptance were the casual employment offered to Molly (which she took) and the way in which Hector was rapidly afforded trust and responsibilities in looking after the children alongside the teacher. Chloe expressed pleasure at having been invited onto an interview panel. Towards the end of the placement, the feeling of acceptance tended to be confirmed or strengthened by forms of feedback from staff such as gifts (Brittany), opportunities to participate in activities that were an expense to the agency (Anice – ‘I didn’t think I’d made that much impression on them’) and social gatherings after hours (Brittany and Chayne). Older students seem to have received acceptance through their contribution, and younger students through staff support.

5.4.1.5 Organisational practices and feelings

Hirschhorn (1991) suggested that a range of protective systems (denial, projection, and so on) against emotionally demanding work are adopted and become integral components of work practice when the work is emotionally difficult or dangerous. There are some examples of this in students’ work, mostly evident in hospital care, but also in the provision of emergency relief.

In the hospital environment, Leonard made mention of a Registrar who tells him that he ‘deals with “sad cases” by not becoming too emotionally involved’. On another occasion, Leonard provided matter-of-fact descriptions of a baby dying. He wrote that emergency routines meant that the ‘crash cart team swung into action to get a baby breathing’, the resulting ‘job’ of the operation took a ‘pretty average time’ to complete, and he provided a brief, detached account of how the parents were informed of the likely death of their baby. It was only Leonard’s concluding remark that indicated that

anyone had any level of emotional involvement ('after all that what a day! I was glad to knock off!'). Molly mentioned that many staff found the work on the dementia wards so demanding that they avoided it. Other protective mechanisms may have been ill-concealed or affected: Jay commented upon a mental health nurse who 'affects an image of cynacism', but who 'obviously cares quite a bit about those he deals with'.

In the service provision area, Airlie described an incident in which she decided that a client did not meet the eligibility criteria for emergency relief, about which the client became loudly frustrated. The supervisor came to assist, tried reasoning, showed the client the regulations, and then finally staff ignored her. Their conclusion was that this was entirely the woman's problem. Gareth, in a hostel for homeless men, was 'confronted with nauseating sights and smells', and commented, 'We could laugh it off, which I think was good, as it hadn't effected me', and Perry, in the same placement, appears to draw on the advice and support of staff in rationalising this type of experience as 'character-building', 'mind-opening' and 'rewarding'.

On the other hand, caring relationships are described, and empathy was clearly encouraged, sometimes in the same or similar organisations as those mentioned above. For example, Leonard wrote of a nurse's account of the emotional swings on the cancer ward, Frances was supported through her reactions to the mentally ill clients, and the two students in a hospital for severely disabled patients are specifically briefed and debriefed about their emotional reactions. Gareth was not dismissing the clients in laughing off the encounters, for he described them as 'all regular people with a tragedy in their lives or a mental, alcohol or drug problem'.

In the less established or well-organised agencies, the ethos of personal care and commitment, rather than systematised defence, was particularly clear. Annabel wrote that staff seem to 'really care for their clients and jobs', and that 'all the carers seem to have their own style'. Courtney, Denis, Gareth and Leonard all remark on the energy, care and commitment of the mostly elderly volunteers. Courtney talked to one of the

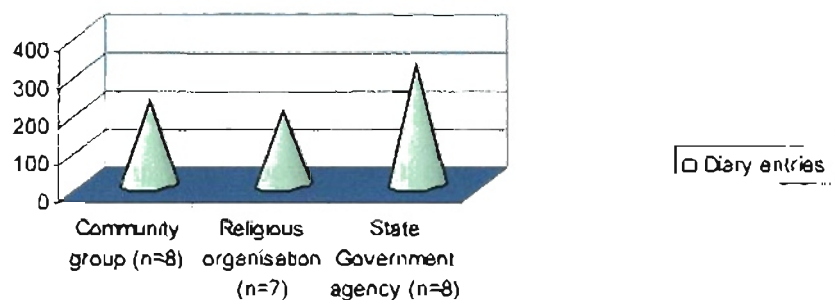
workers about how she was feeling about the work caring for severely disabled girls, and the worker agreed it was hard. Courtney cried.

Although, then, the diaries indicate that there are emotionally stirring situations that staff either routinely or unexpectedly face, and that some cope with these through the use of various defence mechanisms, these responses seem more to be a matter of a personal orientation than an institutionalised defence. Indeed, some organisations specifically provided support to cope with the emotional impact of what was encountered.

5.4.1.6 Legitimate peripheral participation

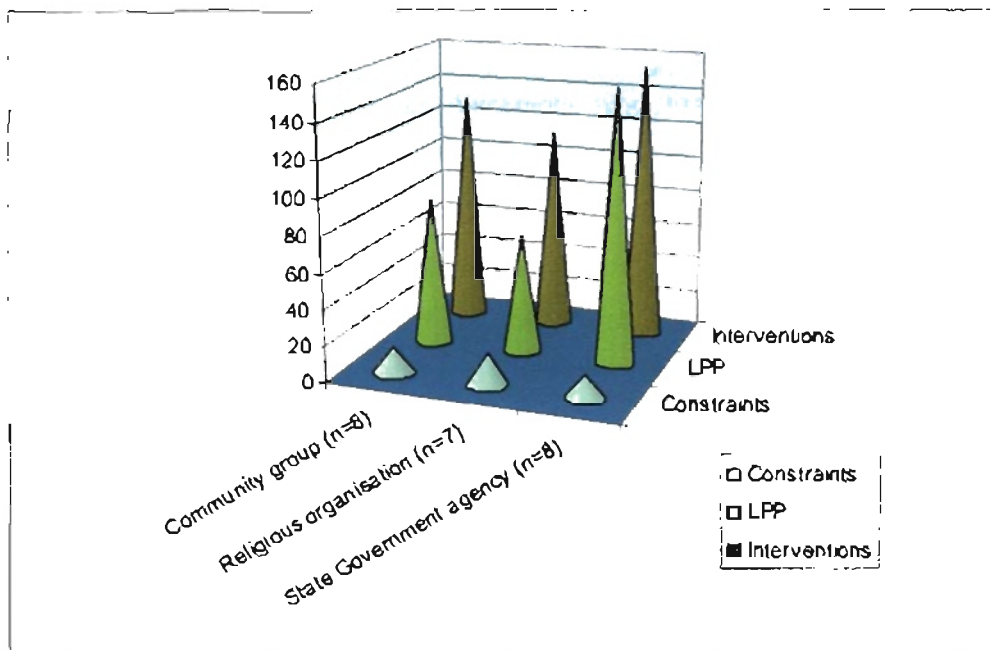
Students' diaries were examined to identify the types of participation open to students in their placement agency. Mentions of observation, listening, being questioned or given rationales for types of intervention, and feeling accepted were all coded as constituting legitimate peripheral participation. Participation, from the students' perspective, often went beyond these relatively passive forms of presence in the work environment to active involvement, and even innovation, in work practices. Activities such as asking questions, researching, assisting and joining in, reciprocating, improvising, intervening, innovating and guiding others were all coded as 'Intervening'.

Diaryscape 2 shows the overall participation rates across the three organisational types.



Diaryscape 2: Number of diary entries about legitimate peripheral participation by organisational type

There was more information on participation evident in the work of students located in State Government agencies than there was in either community groups or religious organisations. Diaryscape 3 displays an overview of the participation, and the limits on participation, that were described.



Diaryscape 3: Constraints, opportunities for legitimate peripheral participation and interventions according to organisational type

The majority of the entries describing participation related to interventions that students made (they had been asked to be active in their learning). There were also mentions of learning constraints, either self-generated (reluctance to undertake the placement in the first place), or imposed by the organisation in the name of client protection or of confidentiality. The latter was most common for students placed with community organisations. While those in State Government agencies described their interventions slightly more frequently than did students in other agencies, it is in the area of legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) that larger differences are evident. Whereas just over a third of the diary entries made by students placed with community groups and religious agencies described opportunities for LPP, almost one half of the entries for those in State

Government agencies concerned LPP. This is likely to be related to the range of specialist services observable in State Government agencies, as opposed to the generalist activities in the other two types of agency, many of which could be, and were, undertaken by students.

5.4.1.7 Informant positioning vis-a-vis staff

Descriptions of staff early in the placement tend towards detached observations of strangers, often along the lines used by Annabel: 'The carers all seem lovely and really care for their clients and jobs' (Brittany and Kelvin). This type of description was particularly evident in the case of volunteers (Anice, Annabel, Airlie, Chloe, Denis, Gareth, Grace and Leonard). Two students expressed nervousness about sharing their perceptions of what they were observing with the staff (Frances and Kelvin), but gained confidence when their views were accepted as normal.

Did they see themselves as staff? For the most part, no. Chayne wrote he was always aware that staff knew best and he listened to them. Brittany developed a unique role with staff and students, in which she was a bridge to the Indigenous students' participation in community sport, supported by staff. Annabel and Anice, who both worked in agencies where workers were relatively powerless, distanced themselves from the workers through their commendations of them (Annabel), and by feeling sorry for them (Anice). On the other hand, Molly was offered, and accepted, a casual position in the nursing home for elderly men in which she had been placed.

The separation of the students from staff was mostly clearly expressed in their commendations of them as admirable. Staff were described as 'great', 'special people', 'wonderful' (Anice, Brittany, Chloe and Gareth), and their patience and the quality of care they provided was lauded (Annabel, Airlie, Grace and Kelvin), as was their dedication towards, and enthusiasm for, the tedium and difficulties of their work (Annabel, Airlie, Courtney, Denis, Frances and Kelvin). Some were admired for their capacity to calmly handle difficult situations with angry or depressed clients (Frances and

Airlie), their flexibility in responding to the children (Hector), or their skills in eliciting information (Frances).

Five students (Anice, Beryl, Courtney, Frances and Isabel) were faced with situations where staff were unprepared for their arrival, and others (Annabel, Anice and Courtney) saw at least some of the staff dealing with problems students identified as beyond their capacities, or inappropriately. For example, Audrey was disconcerted by a supervisor who refused to take her to a meeting lest a failed job applicant discover that the student was doing the job for which she had applied, and Courtney was concerned that an advocate was trying to address a client's sexual problem which seemed, at least, to require a psychiatric assessment, if not police intervention.

5.5 Summary

There was potential for an enormous variety of student experiences in community placements. There were, too, questions as to the extent to which the personnel in the workplace might be providing insights into professional conduct. Many of the workers in the non-government sector were volunteers, or had minimum qualifications. It is possible that students might have changed less if the community of practice was not one of sustained interaction with long-term employees, but of individuals in under-funded organisations struggling to maintain an appropriate staff or volunteer/client ratio.

Ambiguities about the placement are therefore multiple. The occupation of policing was seen as lacking appropriate 'role models', and any understanding of how to relate to members of disadvantaged groups was to come from other occupations, which may themselves have lacked relevant or helpful traditions. Students were required to keep notebooks which part conformed to police processes, part required self-explorations (particularly, it would have seemed to them, in terms of their feelings), and part included theoretical work, at a time in their academic careers when many were only just learning

to write a traditional essay.¹ Many of the host organisations were participating in police placements for the first time, and had varied understandings of what was required, or staff/client relationships which ranged from total confidentiality (where students had no client contact), through observation of others' care (observing an operation in which the patient died, and being present when the family were informed), to providing very personal care (toileting the infirm).

There could be no certitude that students would develop a concept of themselves as a professional, nor yet a particular sort of professional, as a result of undertaking their community placement. The diversity of placement environments, orientations to clients, staffing arrangements, and degree of support offered to students would mean that some would be as much on their own as some student teachers once were in the classroom (but with a poorer idea of what it is they were supposed to be doing), and others would be struggling to relate their experiences to their chosen career. Their encounters with new and sometimes difficult experiences would occur as set against personal frameworks of understanding as much, if not more, than, a 'professional' knowledge base, ethical codes, or a capacity to act autonomously and with authority and altruism. All that they had to guide them, then, was their intention to become a police officer, and whatever assumptions they had about what this might mean for them. The next chapter looks more closely at the trajectories of five of the students, Annabel, Brittany, Denis, Hector and Kelvin, to depict the variations, and interactions, between students and placements.

¹ The majority of students are the first generation in their families to undertake University study, and many left school without acquiring the writing skills essential to scholarly work. Learning Skills Advisors concentrate on traditional essay-writing models as the basic strategy in Session 1.

Chapter Six

Data Analysis: Five Trajectories

6.1 Introducing the five informants

In this chapter I explore the negotiated experiences of five of the informants who resubmitted their work. Each informant's contribution is examined to establish how they understood the learning situation, how they dealt with the match, or lack of match, between their experiences and their overall project of becoming a police officer, and what they identified as being their learning outcomes.

In order to do this, I firstly set the scene for each student's work by providing a brief account of their biography and the agency in which they were placed. I go on to provide an overview of the diary itself and an account of their project. This is followed by an examination of the extent to which students were confronted by unfamiliar experiences and the types of feelings (if any) that the encounter was described as engendering. The next two sections concern the actions the students took, and whether or not the overall project was a touchstone for these actions. I then turn to the student's articulation of their self-positioning over time and their expressed learning outcomes. Each analysis concludes with a review of the extent to which the project of policing was in the foreground of each diary, and whether or not this was clearly a part of any re-positioning that occurred.

The notebooks reviewed are those of Annabel and Brittany, who were placed in community groups; Kelvin and Hector, who worked with State Government agencies; and Denis, whose placement was with a religious organisation. In terms of client groups, Brittany and Hector were working with children and adolescents; Annabel was working with intellectually disabled adults, Kelvin with aged people who were suffering from various forms of dementia, and Denis with the socio-economically disadvantaged. As an overview of the data being drawn upon, Kelvin wrote the shortest of the notebooks (10,655 words) and Hector the longest (21,534 words), Denis and Annabel wrote 12,789 and 13,145 words respectively, and Brittany 14,624. Table 4

below provides information on the distribution of the work across the various types of writing required in the subject (diaries, activities and reflections).

Informant	Reflections	Diary	Activities	Total
Hector	2407	9240	9887	21534
Brittany	1561	6593	6470	14624
Annabel	562	5813	6770	13145
Denis	966	2853	8970	12789
Kelvin	707	4929	5019	10655

Table 4: Word count of informants' notebooks according to type of task

All of the students other than Denis wrote roughly equivalent amounts across the activities and the diary, and Hector's entries across activities, diary and reflections were lengthier than those of the other informants. Denis's work was concentrated in the activities, and, although he wrote the shortest of the diaries at 2,853 words, his reflective work was relatively lengthy. Annabel's reflective work was the shortest amongst this group, and, as the youngest of the informants whose work has been intensively examined, it is with her work that the analysis begins.

6.2 Annabel

6.2.1 Biographical information

Annabel was one of the four students in their late teens. She had previously undertaken casual work in a tourist facility, and had progressed to become the temporary manager. Both of her parents worked, one in a trade, and the other in administration, and neither had attended school beyond year ten. 'Hard work' was seen in her family as the key to achieving what one wanted in life. Her social contacts, through sports and her parents, had ranged across the social spectrum, from friends at school who lived on housing estates ('I see them as 'normal' citizens within society who deserve equal treatment and opportunities in life') to local community leaders. She had lived closely with a disabled person and so, unusually amongst these informants, she had had prior experience of at least one member of the client group. During the course of her placement (which occurred after the policing placement), she spoke about her experiences with her fellow students and her parents, as well as some of the local police.

6.2.2 *The agency*

Annabel's placement, in a coastal town, was with an agency in the community sector that provided daytime care and/or social support for disabled adults, mostly on a one-to-one basis. That is, although there were periods of time spent on agency premises (the weekly support group, a birthday party, and rainy days), most of the time was spent out in the community, supporting the clients' independence (shopping, ten-pin bowling, trips to the beach, and so on). Work practices centred on fostering participation in adult leisure activities, so, other than knowing how to work with particular clients, no special skills were in evidence. Indeed, as the focus was on supporting what clients with very limited capacities could do, and enjoyed doing, any introduction of new skills (such as Annabel's sporting expertise) was not required.

This agency was part of a wider organisation, with other personnel assisting in the assessment of clients' progress and in the design of appropriate programs. In terms of staffing, Annabel mentions the supervisor, Barbara, from whom she thought she would learn a lot (that is, she saw her as a credible expert), and several of the carers with whom she undertook shifts. What Annabel describes of the carers' work indicates that some possessed an in-depth knowledge of the needs of specific clients, rather than a stance reflecting professional training. This impression may merely be a consequence of what Annabel saw as important, and the type of activities in which she and the carers engaged, not the actual qualifications of the staff. On the other hand, as described later in this chapter, the response of one of the carers, Blanche (Day 2), to a client's misbehaviour is indicative of a paucity of either training or procedures.

There were several factors that contributed to Annabel being thrust from the periphery into a central role. Firstly, the level of support required by some of the clients was very high, and, in such cases, two carers were needed, rather than a primary carer with an observer. Then, because of client anxieties about police, her presence as a student police officer was not a legitimate role, and the position was that she was on 'work-experience'. As a consequence, Annabel was treated as just another staff member, and came to refer to herself as a worker.

Annabel accompanied staff as they cared for clients, and was only rarely located on agency premises when she could observe what was happening rather than be part of the action. She was thus highly dependent on the way in which her companion carer coped

with the client, and how s/he viewed Annabel's role. This varied from Bart, who took a collaborative stance towards Annabel in managing Ben, to Blanche, who continually reneged on her responsibilities. This, then, was not an environment in which it would be easy to learn, as Annabel had limited access to what was to be learned, in a context where work practices were a matter of personal style rather than based upon established procedures and levels of expertise in the accomplishment of those procedures, and, most critically, a client, Ben, whose behaviour fell outside of everyone's expectations.

6.2.3 *Annabel's notebook*

Annabel's notebook was just over 13,000 words in length, with the diary component making up almost half of the work. She did not complete all of the required activities, having found some of the readings, particularly those on class, very difficult, and she did not provide a 40 hour reflection.

The diary section describes her experiences over a total period of twenty six days, composed of some very long days of double shifts, and other days when she was working full-time in another unrelated job. Annabel had kept a diary before, and found keeping one for the subject quite easy, although she indicated that she had left out a lot in case it affected her grade.

Annabel's diary was a 'very truthful' (Day 2) account of her experiences, and, as such, reads like a personal document, rather more of a letter to a friend than an assessment item:

P.S I forgot to mention that Bruce stripped off today stark naked so Bridget and I diverted his attention by singing and dancing to him! It was kinda fun!!! (Day 18)

In addition to this personal quality, her accounts of the most difficult days have the appearance of a cathartic release:

He told me a joke today - knock knock , who's there?; Ben; Ben who; Annabel let me in you f- - ing c- - - bitch of a thing! I learnt to laugh at jokes like this because last time I didn't and it resulted in punches being thrown. I've done almost 100hrs and days like today really ask me why am I doing this crap - I'm not even getting paid for it, however I do know why I'm doing it and I'm just angry now and the good times here compensate IN A WAY! (Day 11)

As a consequence of these personal dimensions of Annabel's work, I felt very close to what she experienced as I read her diary, and very concerned that these experiences had occurred under the aegis of university study.

6.2.4 *The project of becoming a police officer*

In the values clarification exercise that was the first of the twenty activities, Annabel ranked the police badge third. This third placing was a reflection of her current situation, rather than the extent to which the project of policing mattered to her:

Although not yet, this will be of great importance to me because when I do have one, it will symbolise the fact that I have achieved my life - long dream. When I receive this badge, I predict that it's value, in my mind, will move up to replace number 2 [her car keys]! (AA1)

At no point in her work is it possible to ascertain what it was about police-work that so enthused her. There was no-one in her family mentioned as being in the police, and Annabel did not complete the exercise on class that would have allowed for identifying whether she saw being a police officer as having the same, lesser or higher social status as her own background, which she identified as middle class (AA3). She saw the contemporary profile of policing as being in tune with her values, for it was important to her that 'no prejudice or stereotyping is acceptable especially within a policing role' and that it was 'the responsibility of each police officer to overcome [racism] and show no prejudicicism' (AA10). 'Today', she wrote, 'we are lead by a respectable and almost prejudice free police service' (AA10).

There was also evidence in Annabel's diary that her project was grounded in an understanding of the practical demands of police work, and the extent to which she herself possessed the required capacities. She had come to the conclusion that it was not sufficient to have certain skills, it was also important to have the knowledge that would permit the correct actions to be taken (a point she makes having used her observation skills in describing a client's fit, when she had observed the symptoms, but not known what they meant) (AA2). Another instance of this gap between understanding the principles underpinning correct action and knowledge of how to deal with a specific situation is evident in her view of the final, integrative case study:

The pressure on the police is first and most importantly to uphold the law. They have a responsibility to do the right thing by all parties. This case displays a degree of social

inequalities. Colin Patterson [an assailant in the case study] too, should be spoken to (I think?). (AA20)

She mentioned that she had observed in her placement that police officers each ‘had their own style’ (Day 6). She was surprised to discover that these very officers did not have a good reputation with the agency, to the extent that she was asked not to identify herself as a student police officer to the clients, but to say she was on work-experience, to avoid ‘problems with me working here’ (Day 2). She summed up her aim at the end of her placement as being ‘I just want to be a police officer, and a good one at that!’ (Day 25)

6.2.5 *Encountering the unfamiliar*

In terms of the clients, Annabel recognised who some of the clients were (they had been to the same school), and started the placement feeling fairly secure about her capacities in communicating with them. This sense of security was rapidly eroded. This is how Annabel’s notebook begins.

Day 1

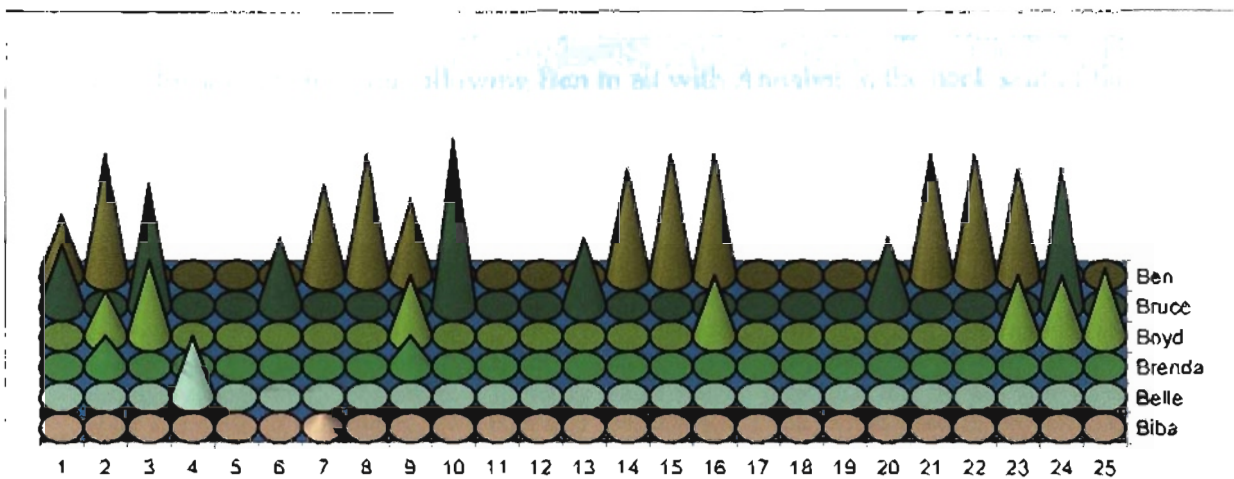
Well today was extremely interesting. I had no idea that programs like this were in place and actually working. The supervisor here, Barbara Barass, seems great and I think I’ll learn a lot from her. We spent the first hour going through the aims of [the organisation], and spoke about a few of their clients. I reckon I knew about 5 of the clients from my high-school years, well recognised them anyway. The carers all seem lovely and really care for their clients and jobs. Barbara told me that most of my time would be allocated with a client named Ben, because he had a disorder whereby he could become extremely aggressive and therefore spends a fair bit of time in contact with the police.

Ben’s 28 years old. He is a very complex character I am told, and the carers hold their breaths many mornings when Ben’s coming as they don’t know what type of mood he is in. Today Blanche and I took Ben to the Botanical Gardens for lunch, then out to visit his mother at Brighton. It was really good for Ben. Ben was in a great mood and complied with everything we did. I feel at the moment that I may in fact be more of a hindrance than a help because I don’t want to be someone detrimental to his learning. He’s known to become very attached to females and already I feel that when I leave, the workers may find that Ben would show more anger again. Anyway, I’m sure I’ll learn more about how to reduce the risk of this. I also met Bruce today. I’m spending tomorrow with Ben and I admit that I’m a little weary, and even a touch scared of him. (Day 1)

This is a conversational and initially enthusiastic entry, with a cautionary sting in its tail. As the meaning of a story lies in its coda (Eggins & Slade 1996), this ‘sting’ represented Annabel’s view of her first day, and her self-positioning as someone ill-equipped to deal with Ben, either because of his aggression, or his interest in her. Ben was dangerous, and an incident-free first experience of him had nonetheless left her weary and scared.

Annabel was in an encounter with the new (this type of support for disabled people within the community) *and* the novel (Ben). While the project of police work was at the forefront of the supervisor's mind, Annabel's summary of her first day's experiences does not mention police work, but focuses mostly on her own placement-specific intentions. These were general – that she would 'learn a lot' from her supervisor, and that she would 'learn more about how to reduce the risk' of either Ben's unpredictable moods, or his attachment to her (which of these two alternatives is unclear).

Annabel's work was unevenly distributed across three and a half weeks. Diaryscape 4 depicts Annabel's shift allocations over the course of the placement.



Diaryscape 4: Annabel – shifts¹ spent with Ben and other significant clients

Diaryscape 4 shows that most of Annabel's time was spent with Ben, and that, of her eleven days spent with Ben, six also involved work with other clients. Of her 160 hours, one half (77 of them, that is, 11 of the 22 shifts) involved shifts with Ben. She spent almost 50 hours (8 shifts) with Bruce, just under 30 (6 shifts) with Boyd and 2 shifts with Brenda. The remaining hours were spent in short shifts with 2 other clients, and in the weekly one hour social skills training sessions. Several days involved eight hours with one client, followed by five hours with a second client, and, not surprisingly, another problematic aspect of this placement, besides Ben's behaviour, was fatigue.

¹ The height of each cone is indicative of the number of hours spent with each client (to a maximum of 8 hours). Flat circles indicate that no time was spent with a particular client.

who liked to spend his day at the beach, whatever the weather. On this first day, when the weather was cold, Bruce had a seizure in the water and the carer and Annabel had to run in, fully clothed, and drag him out. This shift was followed by 5 hours with Boyd, taking him out to eat and to ten-pin bowling. Her diary entry for that day concludes 'I'm so tired, but today was good'.

Annabel, as the introductory quotation from her diary shows, was accepting of the rationale for the allocation to Ben's care, yet this was a man who was sexually interested in her, and the organisation lacked an agreed framework for managing Ben. Staff improvised in sometimes inappropriate ways. For example, on Day 2 of the placement, Blanche (the carer), hit by Ben as she was driving, used Annabel as a reward for good behaviour, allowing Ben to sit with Annabel in the back seat of the car. Blanche also refused to work with Ben on a day when he was behaving badly, and Annabel was asked by the manager to leave the birthday party and accompany another carer, Bart:

Ben was wearing the same clothes as he wore yesterday and had been unable to control his bowels. We did 300km to calm him down in a car which smelt worse than a pit toilet. It was absolutely disgusting. Ben swore a lot today which was an indication that he was still very upset and close to an incident. We both trod carefully and I was commended for my efforts today. Today was only 7-1/2 hrs but with Ben, every hour feels like 10. We returned back to the office and I felt awful because I wanted to wash my hands but I really believed that I was dirty. I could smell Ben on me and needed a shower. Bart assured me that he'd been in this field of work for a long time and he still feels the way I do and told me that it was normal behaviour. I ended up having three showers this afternoon and still could smell poo. (Day 12)

The time with Ben involved continuing unpleasant incidents and sensations. The sheer unpleasantness of physical proximity to Ben was recorded by Annabel on eight of the thirteen days (Days 2,6,8,9,15,16,18 and 19).

Being near Ben was not just unpleasant, it was also physically dangerous. The need to constantly improvise in dealing with this, in the absence of skilled support, is shown in the diary entry below (as is the increasing emotional tenor of Annabel's work):

Today started horribly. Ben demanded that we take him shopping again for that bloody black jacket. Again as none were big enough to fit him, being the size he is, he had another incident. Unfortunately he punched Blanche and anything else he could get his hands on. He punched the cars that passed, signs, trolleys, he kicked things and screamed abusive language at anyone & everyone. Blanche went around a corner of the shop and tried to ring the supervisor for help which meant I was left with him.

He screamed "F you Annabel, you Fing C" as he chased me down two roads in town. As it's illegal as a worker to physically restrain a client I found myself walking ahead of Ben telling

shoppers walking towards him to “get out of the way, don’t go near him, walk the other way,” and pointing the flow of people in different directions. My next thought was to walk away and pay him no attention so I wasn’t adding ‘fuel to the fire’ but he was already too far gone. He raised his hand up to a little baby boy so I locked his arm behind his back and pulled him back toward me. This triggered him to go off at me again but I’ve seen Ben in action before and didn’t want to risk the safety of the boy. I didn’t tell anyone at [the agency] about any of that because it was not a large incident and I feel that I had it under control. [2] We got Ben back to the office for him to call the police (he demanded to) but we (Blanche) told them that everything was fine. We trod very carefully today. He even had me singing and dancing in the street! The things we do!! Ha Ha (Day 21)

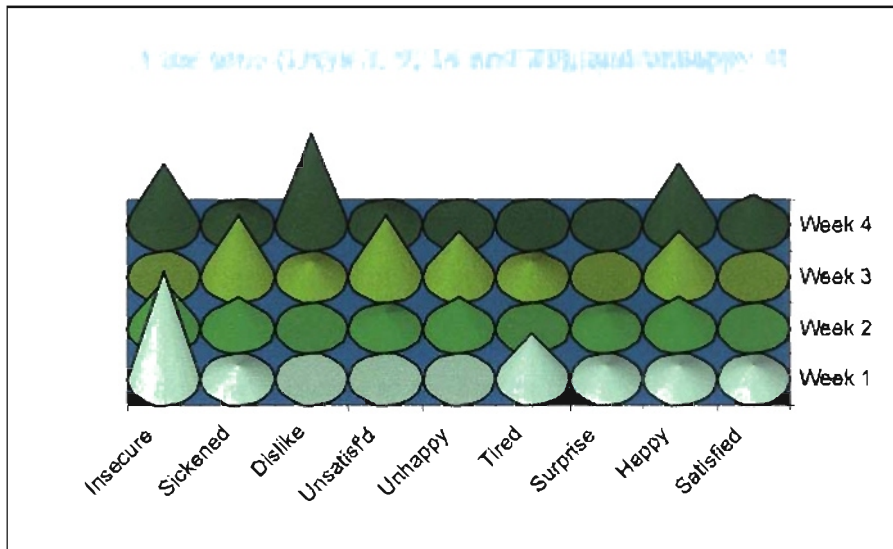
Annabel’s contact with Ben was, then, one that transgressed accepted social boundaries on a daily basis, and she was continually thrust into an active role in handling unusual and dangerous circumstances.

6.2.6 *Feelings about the unfamiliar*

In Annabel’s diary there were, compared to the other informants in this study, a large number of entries concerning her feelings, with the emotional tone largely carried by the her language usage (such as the use of amplifiers: ‘that *bloody* black jacket’ in the above extract), rather than reflective accounts of what she had felt. In terms of the latter, by far the majority of entries concern negative emotions of insecurity (13), feeling sickened (8), dislike (7), dissatisfaction (5), unhappiness (4) and tiredness (3). Fourteen entries refer to feeling satisfied (10) or happy (4). The diaryscape overleaf depicts these entries.

Diaryscape 5 shows that Annabel wrote about these various feelings at different points over the course of the placement. For example, Annabel’s insecurity was high in the first week, slightly less acute in the second week, and disappeared from the diary entirely in the third week, only reappearing as part of her concluding remarks in the fourth week. Annabel felt sickened by some of Ben’s habits, and this steadily increased until the third week, after which the mentions of nausea reduced. Expressions of dislike emerged in the third week, peaking on her last day’s entries. Dissatisfaction and unhappiness were in evidence in the second and third weeks, and tiredness in the first and third weeks. Expressions of surprise disappeared after the first two weeks. Annabel

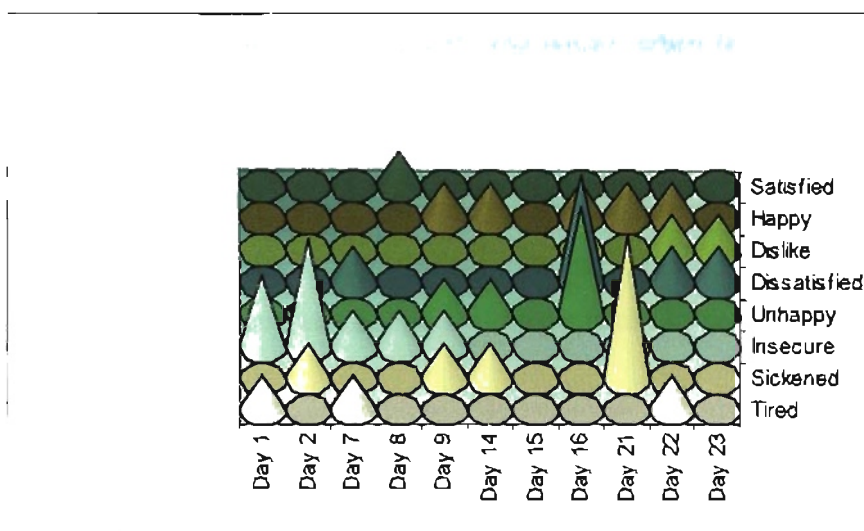
² She did tell the supervisor of the incident towards the end of her placement.



Diaryscape 5: Annabel – feelings over time

expressed satisfaction about aspects of the placement in Weeks 1 and 4, and her mentions of feeling happy increased over the four weeks.

Diaryscape 6 summarises her feelings in response to the days spent with Ben (and occasionally others), and shows the extent to which Annabel experienced the days as unpleasant.



Diaryscape 6: Annabel – feelings experienced on days spent with Ben

Most of Annabel's feelings on the days that she spent with Ben were negative. She expressed a considerable amount of insecurity about her early encounters with Ben

(particularly on her second day with him and on the last day). She felt sickened by Ben for much of the time (Days 2, 9, 14 and 21), and unhappy about her situation (Days 9, 14 and 16). There is a distinct increase in Annabel's expression of feelings such as feeling sickened, dislike and dissatisfaction towards the end of her placement.

Annabel's expressions of happiness and satisfaction all related to her dealings with other clients, or pleasure at not having to deal with Ben for a few days.

6.2.7 *Actions in response to the unfamiliar*

Annabel had soon perceived that she was 'going to find it difficult to do this for 160 hours' (Day 2). She turned to seeing those who do this work as deserving medals for their loyalty and understanding, and, in denial of her immediate reality, wrote about the carer's job that, 'I really don't think I could ever do it' (Day 4).

Sometimes she complied with the requests made by the carers or her supervisor, Barbara, despite her misgivings about their appropriateness. For example, Annabel did not want to get in the back of the car and hold Ben's hand, at Blanche's suggestion, but did so because 'under the circumstances, I agree that it was the only way to avoid danger to myself and the worker' (Day 2). On other occasions, Annabel did intervene to manage or change what was happening. She spoke to the supervisor about being used as a reward ('Good! Good! Good!!' she wrote, when her request to have the practice ceased was agreed to) (Day 7). She spoke to the police she now knew at the station about Ben's 'wandering hands', and identified her situation as unlike anything she would encounter as an officer, and something she could legitimately ask Barbara to change. She spent two hours talking with staff about Ben, learning how to spot when another incident was looming rather than get taken by surprise. She also used her diary:

I don't deny that I am scared of his behavioural problems, I hope I'm alright to say that - I am being very truthful in what I write. I'm given 2 very long days which all very draining for me. I respect the clients that we deal with but when you're asked the same thing every 2 minutes and pretending to laugh when you really feel like being sick, it takes a lot out of you. I haven't been able to eat anything yet but I'm trying very hard to be good at this. I am learning a lot - and losing weight!! (Day 2)

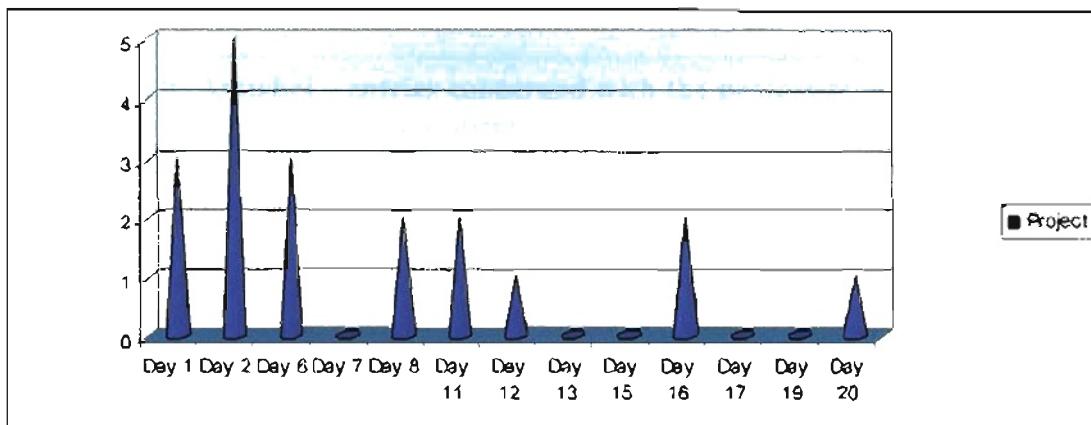
The diary - or was it the absent marker? - became her confidant, as she expressed her increasing level of frustration and anger at Ben: 'I tell you what, I've never disliked anyone more than I dislike Ben and apparently I'm not the only one' (Day 13).

Annabel's final reflection showed an attempt to map a way through her very strong reaction to Ben, and her identification of the extremes in feeling that the placement generated, from bliss beyond words (working with Bruce) to three showers to wash off Ben's smell and touch ('[...] the range of emotions I experienced went from one end of the continuum to the other' – Day 25). It is as if she could not believe that she felt this way, and kept searching for reasons that she could find satisfactory. Without talking to anyone, or any research, she came down to long hours and full-time work (Day 25).

6.2.8 *The project as touchstone*

The extent to which the project of becoming a police officer was mentioned by Annabel, either in terms of questions about the relationship of what she was experiencing to the work, or in terms of the goal sustaining her through difficult times, is shown in diaryscape 7 (overleaf).

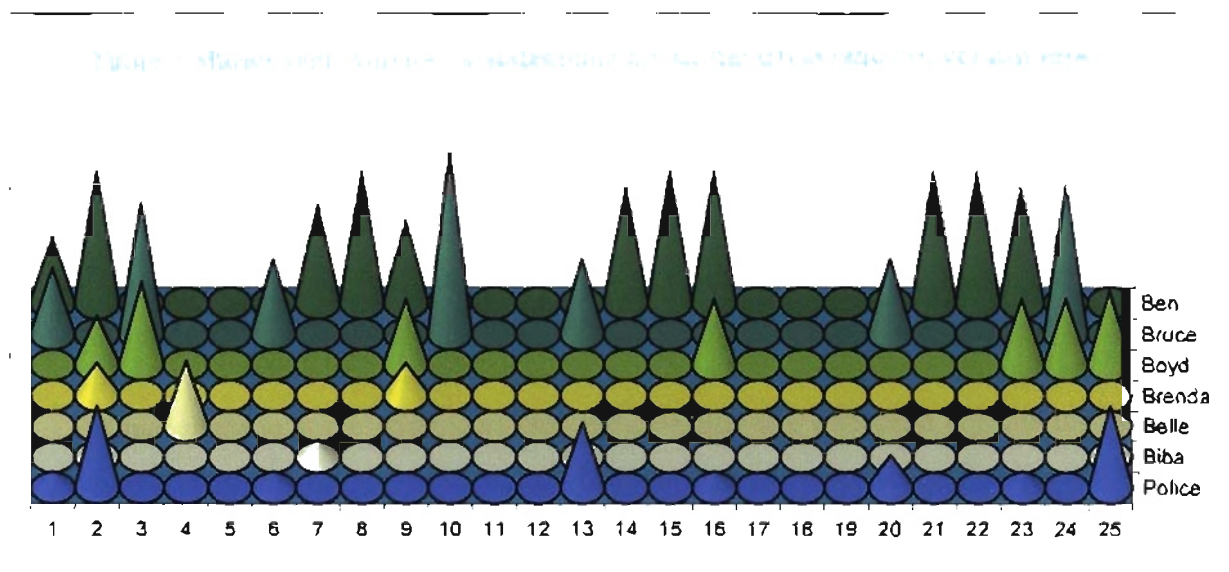
Perhaps related to the trying nature of the placement, policing was a theme throughout Annabel's writing, not just in the assessment items. She mentioned policing twenty times in the course of her daily log. On nine occasions she wrote about how these were the sorts of problems police would have to handle; once she mentioned seeking police advice about how to handle Ben's wandering hands; twice that the workers disliked the local police; once that the workers were as different in their approach to their work as were the police; and on seven occasions she considered how this experience would assist her as a police officer.



Diaryscape 7: Annabel – diary entries about the project of becoming a police officer

As soon as Annabel recognised that she was going to find the placement difficult, her focus was also on survival of each shift she had with Ben, in order to achieve her project. This project sustained her ('I do know why I am doing this', she wrote on Day 11), and this meant that she learned how to deal with the 'no relief' contact with Ben (Day 17), to spot the signs warning of an impending tantrum, and to act quickly to prevent harm being caused to others (Day 21). It led her to question others to establish what she could properly be asked to accept, how to 'read' Ben's behaviour, and whether her reactions to Ben were normal. These strategies allowed her to intervene when she felt that she could.

While Ben was the problematic centre of Annabel's experiences in the placement, colouring her final evaluation, the diary entries after shifts with Ben were not those in which the project of policing was evident as a touchstone. Diaryscape 8 shows the days on which these entries were made.



Diaryscape 8: Annabel – entries concerned with the project of policing, according to clients with whom shifts were spent

Most of Annabel's comments about policing were written on the days when she had worked with clients other than Ben. This may have been a reflection of the more leisurely pace of interactions with clients such as Bruce, where the days were often spent supervising him at the beach as he enjoyed the surrounds. Half of the comments concerned whether and how she might have contact with the clients as a police officer (future-oriented, imaginal contacts), and the other half were reflective comments about

the relationship of the placement experiences to policing. Annabel's imaginal contacts focused on the type of client, and on the type of contact, each of which she assessed as either relevant or irrelevant to her purpose, as shown in Table 5 below.

Concern	Relevance	Example
Type of client	Relevant	Again, I don't enjoy my time with Ben as such but I'm learning and I'm confident in saying that this experience will help me become a better police officer and person. (Day 7)
	Irrelevant	I doubt that Police will ever have to deal with Brenda as either an offender or victim (Day 2).
Type of contact	Relevant	I'd really like to see one of his outbursts because this is how and when the police will have to deal with him (on Ben, Day 2). He took the newspaper from the last worker and would not give it to anyone, not that we wanted it, but it was good for me to see that compulsive disorder is what Police will have to deal with quite frequently I'd imagine and I think it's important for me to have a taste of it now. (on Bruce, Day 14)
	Irrelevant	I don't really think that as a police officer that I will ever have to get this close to a person like Ben for so long in such a restricted area. (Day 2)

Table 5: Annabel – the project of policing as a filter for experience

Table 5 shows that Annabel's statements about the irrelevance of certain aspects of the placement are framed more tentatively than her statements of relevance. Whereas she doubted that police would deal with Brenda, and did not really think she would have to be so close to Ben as a police officer, she was 'sure' that she would learn how to reduce the risk of Ben's violence (and that she would experience this), and she was confident the experience would help her 'become a better police officer and a person' (Day 8).

Annabel made some comments that indicate that she had been considering how she would position herself as a police officer, that is, what sort of police officer she intended to become, and how she could best do the job. Firstly, she was aware that there were choices, and that some of these choices were not acceptable:

It's interesting to see that like the Police, all of the carers here have their own style (Day 6).

I've learnt here that even the [local] Police who I, after 200 hrs with them hold an utmost respect for, have a tainted reputation with this network due to a past experience of how an uneducated officer treated a client. However true or not this is, it has me thinking to say the least! (Day 25)

Secondly, she can see that the clients present unique problems, that, as a police officer, she may not be able to satisfactorily address:

It was another good shift but when looking at it from a police point of view I don't really know how to best deal with him. I've been thinking about it heaps and if his support worker was around – easy fixed as the police could talk to them but if the supporter wasn't there I think there would be problems. I asked one of his workers what, in their view, would be the best way for police to deal with / treat him in times of incidents. (Day 14)

I don't think that Police, no matter how much time they spend training, will ever be able to know how to treat every disabled/mental patient. (Day 2)

Overall, she was satisfied that the community placement was relevant to her intended career:

If and when [the organisation] no longer supports Ben, I really recommend that community placement here would be worthwhile for any student police officer. (Day 23)

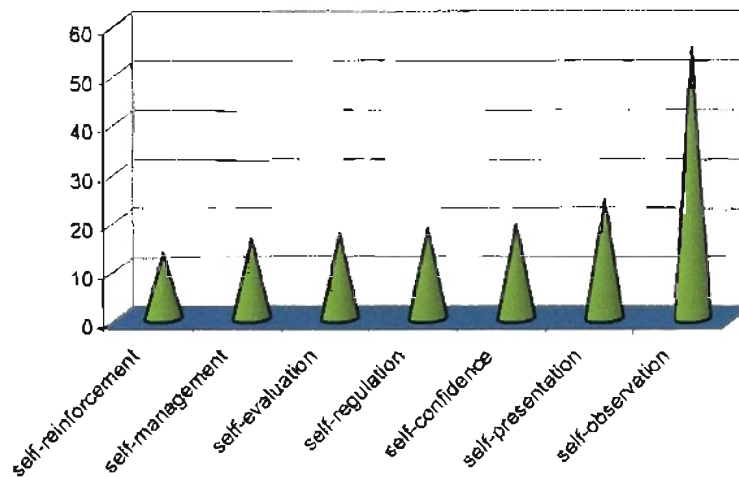
It is clear that the project of policing did act as a touchstone for the experiences that Annabel had in her placement, and that this was evident across the length of her placement, although largely in diary entries on days on which she had worked with the most tractable clients.

6.2.9 *Learning selves*

In this section, firstly, the ways in which self-positioning are revealed in the diaries are examined, as well as the extent to which these types of positioning changed over time. Then the different statements Annabel makes about what she has learned are addressed, and assessed against her self-positioning.

Annabel's diary reveals a range of self-positionings vis-à-vis the staff, the clients, and the putative marker of the subject. They are revealed in comments she made about how she had responded to particular experiences, and in actions that she took. Diaryscale 9, overleaf, summarises the entries.

By far the largest number of comments (n=55) made by Annabel concern self-observation – remarks about her responses to experiences such as finding something interesting, enjoyable or annoying. For example, she wrote that 'It was so interesting to see that every single client is so different and just how much their needs vary' (Day 2); '[Bruce's] body language tells me that he loves the water, so I was happy to sit in the rain for his enjoyment' (Day 3); 'This last shift with Bart and Boyd almost wiped my mind clear of Ben and I enjoyed it tremendously' (Day 9); and that 'today [Ben] annoyed me immensely' (Day 16). These types of comments, while the most numerous,



Diaryscape 9: Annabel – summary of diary entries concerning self-positioning

are to be seen as a form of Greek chorus – asides that provide cues as to the meanings being made, and of the direction in which experiences are flowing. What she did with these meanings is evident in the other comments she makes about herself and her experiences, discussed below.

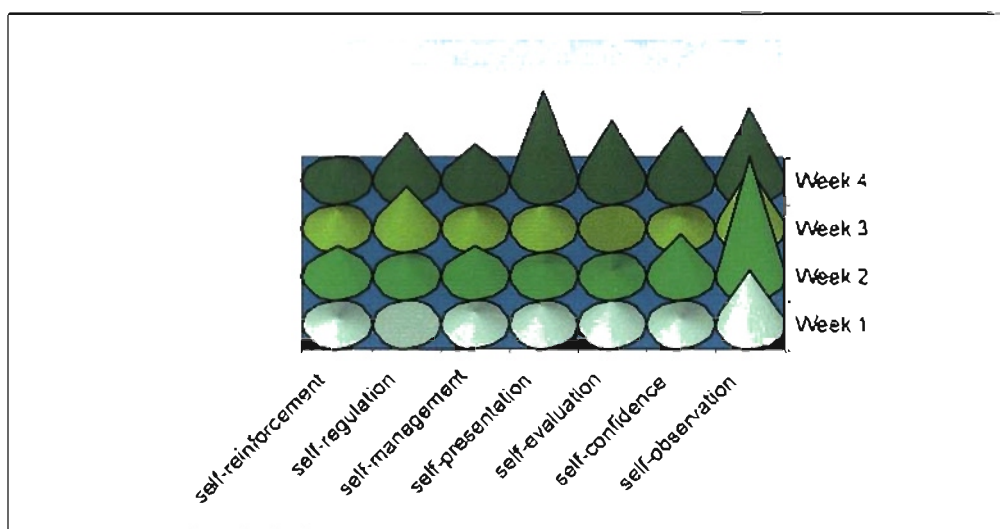
The next largest group of comments (n=24) concern self-presentation, particularly about the way in which the marker might be interpreting her reactions to Ben. Sometimes these are direct pleas ('I don't deny that I am scared of his behavioural problems, I hope I'm alright to say that') (Day 2), and at other times incorporate indirect remarks about how every carer feels the same as she does ('[...] again I was glad to see him go. I hate saying that but everyone left that will actually work with him feels the same') (Day 7). Only once do these comments indicating an awareness of the audience include rhetorical devices, that is, 'Now, just to set the scene [...]' (Day 3).

Approximately the same number of comments were made by Annabel reflecting self-confidence (or the lack of it) (n=19), self-regulation (n=18), self-evaluation (n=17), and self-management (n=16). The fewest comments concerned self-reinforcement (n=13). In relation to self-confidence, just over one third of the occasions (n=7) on which this was revealed concerned initiatives that Annabel took to check her perceptions, or to modify her situation, for example 'I spoke to my supervisor about [Ben] and she said that he's going through a fairly rough time and that I won't be used as a reward any more' (Day 7). The other two thirds (n=11) largely concerned her uncertainties about what best to do, for example, 'It was another good shift but when looking at it from a

police point of view I don't really know how to best deal with [Bruce]' (Day 14). There was one incident that potentially stands on both sides, when Annabel, against policy, physically restrained Ben from hitting a little boy on the street (Day 21). She appeared confident that her action was correct under the circumstances, yet she did not report it at the time.

Self-regulation was a frequent requirement, particularly in her dealings with Ben: '[Ben] annoys me tremendously and I'm doing pretty bloody good to still be here after all of this crap I'm taking from one single individual who has told me that he loves me' (Day 14), and, 'Ben again today – how much can one take?' (Day 16). She also stepped back from the situation to comment on how she was handling it (self-evaluation): '[...] I think I'm going to find it difficult to do this for 160 hrs' (Day 2), and 'I've enjoyed every shift with Bruce and funnily I will miss this guy' (Day 18). Annabel's remarks related to self-management have a focus on the long-term, such as '[...] I can't say I've enjoyed it as such but I can say this it will probably prove beneficial to my policing career' (Day 20), and those related to self-reinforcement have a short-term focus, such as, '[...] I'm so drained from yesterday that although I'm beginning to better deal with his habits, today he annoyed me immensely' (Day 16).

To establish whether there were any shifts in these forms of self-positioning across time, Diaryscale 10 depicts the various entries across the four weeks in which Annabel was in the placement.



Diaryscale 10: Annabel – self-positioning across time

Diaryscape 10 shows that while self-reinforcement and self-management remained fairly static across the four weeks of the placement, and self-observation, self-confidence and self-evaluation fluctuated, entries about self-regulation and self-presentation increased over time, with the latter showing its highest levels in the last week. It has already been shown that Annabel was very frustrated with, and, in the latter stages, angry with, Ben, and the demands upon her for self-control (with the support of Bart as time went on), were consequently increased. Not surprisingly, Annabel became increasingly concerned about how her actions and reactions would be understood by the marker, and her final diary entry concludes in this way:

Day 19

My thoughts

Re: Community placement.

Initially I really didn't think that I'd survive 160 hours of this kind of work. Honestly I disliked it, especially the time with Ben and didn't think that I was going to enjoy any of it at all. I liked all of the support workers and supervisor but not the clients. This sounds terrible but it's true. I think maybe it was all too much for me, such long hours and full-time work. Looking back now I can say that it wasn't as bad as I thought at the time but I may feel that now because I know it's all over. Please don't hold this against my character because I have learnt from this experience. Four weeks later my initial thoughts were in fact mostly wrong. As you've probably realised my opinions of both people and situation have changed. I've always considered myself to have reasonable communicational skills with mentally disabled as a member of my family falls under this category, but it took all of my strength to continually communicate for such long hours with certain clients. I think that it's wonderful to have this experience going into the Police Service and however limited this experience may have been, it is undoubtably better than none. I still hold my strong opinion of Ben but I also feel a little compassionate towards his condition. Bart, Bruce, Boyd were favourites of mine and I really wish all of the clients the very best in life. I could constantly relate this work to the Police and realise just how important policing in society is to both the NSW Police Service and the community. I've learnt here that even the [local] Police who I, after 200 hrs with them hold an utmost respect for, have a tainted reputation with [this agency] due to a past experience of how an uneducated officer treated a client. However true or not this is, it has me thinking to say the least!

I just want to be a police officer, and a good one at that. To sum up my community placement would be almost impossible, the range of emotions I experienced went from one end of the continuum to the other.

Difficult and Draining ----- Stimulating, Satisfying.
I will thank [them] for having me.

Thankx (Day 25)

Annabel, then, saw herself as having changed through participating in the placement, although she did not clearly specify the ways in which she thought she had changed, or exactly which opinions she had previously held that had been wrong. There are indications that what had changed was her ability to communicate with disabled people,

and her realisation that appreciation of the police was not a uniform phenomenon. She also realised, about herself, that what she needed was *strength* to continually deal with some of the clients.

6.2.9 *Summary*

Annabel's project was to be a police officer, 'and a good one at that' (Day 25). This project did not require negotiating in the workplace; rather it formed the basis of the allocation of her shifts. However, her experiences with Ben cut across her assumptions about the relationship of the time with Ben to police work, and she therefore sought reassurance outside of the placement in her intended employment context that her understandings were correct before approaching her supervisor to negotiate a new position. Once a more suitable framework was in place, she sought the advice of other carers about how to deal with Ben, and increased her capacity to identify the subtle indicators of his mood. These negotiations were intended both to reduce the immediate risks of the placement and to bring what was happening in the placement into line with her intended career. In this way, her learning experiences came to be structured by her project, with the latter becoming her sustenance in difficult times. Hers was not a situation in which the learning experiences re-structured her project in any way.

In negotiating a new position, Annabel was aware that she could have contacted the University, but chose not to. Instead, she relied upon the relationships that she had built with local police (and possibly, given the ticked boxes on the cover sheet, her family and friends) for advice on what to do, and decided to deal with the 'no relief' situations with Ben herself. In so doing, she relied on her 'strength', but her diary does not indicate whether this was a new quality or one which she brought with her into this difficult placement.

There is a flavour about her work that indicates that she was anxious to please, to work hard (as the family ethos required), for she was apologetic about expressing any of her negative feelings when not recording her unpleasant experiences. She appears to me to have accepted that she was the 'uneducated 3rd hand', as she voiced no criticisms towards either staff or organisational policies, both of which seem to have contributed to the trial she faced. She finished the placement liking the staff, supporting the placement, and disliking the clients. Any self-re-positioning related, then, to the ways

in which she viewed the clients, and seeing herself as able to cope with extremely difficult situations.

The diary shows a shift from uncertainty to certainty; from a focus on Ben's needs to a focus on Annabel's own position; from a tentative self-positioning to a firm stance; and from a position of fear to a position of strength. She concluded that despite its drawbacks, the placement was worthwhile.

6.3 Brittany

6.3.1 Biographical information

Brittany was in her early twenties, and had worked in the hospitality industry since leaving school, progressing from trainee to supervisor. Her parents were both university educated, and employed in professional jobs. They were 'active' Christians, and Brittany had gone to a church school. Nowadays, she wrote, religion was 'not a dominant aspect' of her life, and she was no longer 'entirely sure exactly what' she believed. She guessed she had always considered her family to be middle class, having lived in a middle class area, and having most of the family friends 'much the same'. She could not 'remember ever thinking for a moment that [she] would leave school before year 12', and saw herself as being fortunate to have had the opportunities she had had. She was, like Annabel, a keen sportswoman, and, at certain stages over the years, her 'life basically revolved entirely around [her] sport and hectic training schedules'. Brittany had never had any workplace or family-based contact with the client group prior to her placement, which she undertook in the first half of the trimester. During the course of her placement, she spoke about her experiences with her parents, her fellow students, and the people in the organisation.

6.3.2 The agency

Brittany's placement involved working with Aboriginal adolescents in a residential setting in a metropolitan area. There was little information in Brittany's diary on a day to day basis about the jobs that she was required to do, as most of them were oriented towards participation in 'family' life:

I wasn't actually given specific tasks to do initially, so I just did whatever needed to be done. I help prepare & serve meals, assist the kids with their homework, play sport & watch TV & generally just spend time with them. (Day 15)

A lot of the time I just did whatever I thought needed doing & didn't usually wait to be told or asked. So no doubt I probably got in the way on occasion, but anyway. (Day 25)

She also spent a week helping the teenagers with their school work, as a teacher's aide (which she found rather daunting), several days helping the manager in the office, and, in addition, she attended an event associated with Aboriginal rights, a school sports carnival, and accompanied the manager on a trip to a related agency in another city.

Brittany made her first diary entry after an introductory meeting with her supervisor, 5 days before the placement started:

1000 – 1130: Had a meeting with Conrad, my supervisor. I've got a feeling that he's as confused about this whole thing as much as I am. Conrad is friendly enough but didn't really explain what I would actually be doing.
I met a few of the other staff members who all seem really friendly. I'm hoping the kids will be also, but I'm not so sure they all will be.
I'm starting at 1230h on Monday & working through till 2030h, doing what, I still don't know. I'm not too sure what to expect, but I am looking forward to starting. (Day -5)

The first diary entry shows Brittany to have started her placement with some confusion, as well as some ambivalence towards the manager. It also shows her to have been foregrounding friendliness in the staff.

Brittany mentioned a few of the staff fairly frequently: the manager (Conrad), an 'aunt' (Aunty Cas), a houseparent (Cecil), a teacher (Caitrin), and 'Mr X', an elderly man who drove her to another facility (whose driving frightened her, lack of a sense of direction greatly frustrated her, and constant long drawn-out stories irritated her).³ She warmed particularly to Aunty Cas, by whom she was welcomed as a member of the family (for example, "You're part of the family now Brittany" she said; then gave me a big hug.) (Day 2). Brittany also greatly appreciated the supportiveness of Caitrin, the teacher, and the invitation out which concluded her week's work at the school.

Most of the activities she undertook were largely vehicles for making contact with the children, and building relationships. The family-like structure of the organisation

³ It may be that Mr X was none other than the manager, given that their helpfulness was described with similarly reserved appreciation, as opposed to Brittany's enthusiastic descriptions of other staff. Her lengthy, humorous account of a drive to another campus is probably indicative of a desire to render herself less accountable for her negative reactions (Eggins & Slade 1996: 116)

(houseparents and a domestic environment) also gave her plenty of space in which she could share her expertise in her sport, and extend her existing coaching role in a local team to the children of the facility. The staff proved very supportive of Brittany's interest in involving the children in her sport. They provided the bus for the group to travel to play, bought some team shirts, and went to watch the games.

6.3.3 *Brittany's notebook*

Brittany's diary is 14,530 words, and covers 28 typed pages. Just under half (41%) of her writing is about the placement experience. The remaining 59% of the work concentrates on the assessment tasks. After Day 26, when she completed the placement, all entries concerned the required activities. When she spent five days at a friend's house (Days 37- 42), these activity-related entries are relatively short.

Brittany found that she wrote more than she intended about herself and her reactions, but also left out a few things lest they affected her grade (BCS). Some of the materials in the Activities were fabricated to make them work (BCS). Brittany wrote as if she were writing the diary for herself (she had kept diaries before), although she found writing this one quite difficult. Nonetheless, the ideas appear to fall on the page in the order in which they come into her mind.

The only indications that there is to be another reader comes with an aside on Day 25⁴, and with her creation of a twenty first activity, where she offers the reader a smiley and a photocopy of a Macca's Instant Win token, and writes that ' If you are still reading at this point, you definitely deserve a break. This one's on me!' She mentioned the instructions about how to complete the diary once (revealing her awareness of the requirements of the diary entries), as, on Day 17, when she is taken on a long car journey to another facility, she is so frustrated by Mr X's driving that 'a combination of any 5 words in the 'Angry' colom of "The Vocabulary of Feelings" would suffice in summing up my emotional state'.

⁴ 'Please don't misinterpret my talk of 'wining people over' as some kind of egotistical thing, because it is nothing of the sort. Im implying this as a genuine break through relationship wise, involving mutual respect & trust.' (Day 25)

Other than her account of the drive, Brittany's diary constitutes a highly personal account of her experiences, and has the feel of my own early diaries, in which the day's events and responses to them just tumble onto the page.

6.3.4 The project of becoming a police officer

Policing as a project did not figure significantly in Brittany's work, nor did policing appear in the top rankings of her value system. Brittany ranked the police badge fourth, after her wallet, pay slip and car keys, which were highly ranked for practical reasons that all concerned her immediate needs. Despite this relatively low ranking, she, like Annabel, attached considerable value to what the badge represented, commenting:

This is of great importance to me because if I do end up with one, it will mean I have achieved a life long dream. The entire focus of my life at the moment more or less revolves around me getting into the Police Service & I don't know what I will do with my life if I don't achieve this ambition. (BA3)

Again like Annabel, there was nowhere in which it was made clear why policing had been a lifelong ambition. Whereas some of the informants provided further indications of what it was that becoming a police officer might achieve for them in terms of their social status, Brittany's consideration of class and status was light-hearted, and was written in such a way that it is unclear as to whether she was writing about her current aspirations, or something altogether different:

I guess I do have the opportunity to increase my social class or attempt to do so, financially if nothing else. This could be achieved through furthering my education to gain acceptance into an occupation that pays very highly, though I wouldn't necessarily be successful. On the other hand I could just marry a millionaire!! (BA3)

In completing Activity 19, she was able to fully synthesise the implications of her studies for the way in which police should do their work, remarking that:

The theoretical aspect, as well as the practical component of this subject, definitely opened my eyes & heightened my awareness about social inequality in general, along with the impact that policing has in relation to this, especially when police power is abused. (BA19)

In contrast, in Activity 20, she failed to identify the compounding effects of social inequality upon police responses to minor misdemeanours (she decided that a lower class boy should be charged for smoking marijuana, because he had come to police attention previously for unrelated matters, whereas the middle class smoker would not

be). In completing this last activity, in which she was to position herself as a police officer, she was very specific about what would be possible: 'Being a probationary constable I would seek the advise of my senior officers' (BA20).

In sum, then, Brittany's project appeared to have been one of *getting into* the police (BA3), and her imaginings of being a police officer were located in the realities of everyday police life as they would be for her as a novice in the field.

6.3.5 *Encountering the unfamiliar*

For Brittany, the unfamiliar and problematic aspect of her placement was one that was evident to her before she even spent a day there: as a white woman who was studying to be a police officer, how was she going to be accepted? (Day 4). She had never had any close contact with Indigenous people, and, as the only white person in the immediate environment, went into the placement with the intentions of learning, of winning over the students, of contributing, of being enthusiastic about, and having an open mind about, the experience:

I'm hoping to win the wary kids over; I am going to gain a great deal from these people, both personally & professionally. However, most of all, I would really love to be able to honestly feel that these kids have benefited in some way, or gained something from me also.

This is probably a little ambitious & probably even sound egotistical, but I guess this is a personal goal I have set for myself, & one which I am whole heartedly striving to achieve. (Day 1)

She had quickly noticed that some of the 'kids' were wary of her, and later mentions that she finds these responses reminiscent not of new workplaces, but of school (Day 1 and Day 8). On her first day of helping students with their schoolwork, she wrote that 'All those memories of my terrifying first day at a new school came flooding back. The constant stares from beady eyed school kids, the whispers and the suspicious looks from students and staff all trying to sus out the new face' (Day 8).

Brittany was, then, in an encounter with the new (being with a new group of children, as if she were back in school), and the novel (being the only white Australian). She made no mention of how the placement project might relate to the project of policing,

but focused solely on her own placement-specific goals. She judged these goals to be within her grasp.

Some of the skills which underpin her confidence in attaining her goals are evident in her awareness of, and the importance she attached to, other people's responses to her presence, and her own responses to such cues. For example, on Day 4, she wrote:

One of the ladys who works here is named Caroline. She is a wonderful person, one of those people who you immediately feel comfortable with as soon as you met them. She is Aboriginal & the kids here have an enormous amount of respect for her, & they all love her dearly. The kids call her 'Aunty Cas'.

A couple of times today I unintentionally called her 'Aunty Cas' as well, but I felt a little embarrassed or uncomfortable because I guess I felt intrusive & that herself & the kids would think I was out of line so to speak.

I was then very concious of not calling her by that name & called her Caroline for the rest of that night.

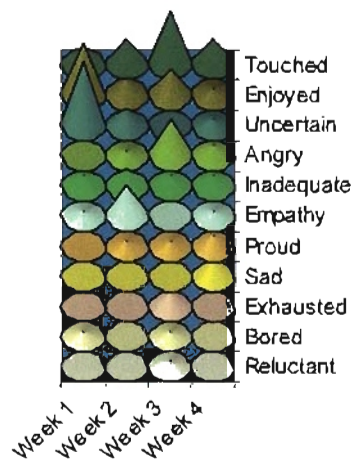
When I was saying good bye to her, she put her arm around me & said "You may as well call me Aunty Cas too love, cause I don't want you to feel left out, you're part of the crowd her now."

That probably doesn't sound like anything special, but I can't even begin to explain how that one little commant made me feel.

What was unfamiliar for Brittany, then, was the context, but the problems that she faced were ones she had faced before, in changing schools, for example, and she faced the unfamiliar situation with a wide range of useful relational skills.

6.3.6 Feelings about the unfamiliar

Brittany, compared to the other informants in this study, wrote about her feelings relatively frequently. Ninety six sentences mentioned her feelings, some of these being repetitions of earlier statements, reinforcing their significance (Eggs & Slade 1996). This level of comment about her feelings may have related to her interpretation of what was required in the subject, or to her interpersonal style. The following diaryscape depicts these diary entries over time.



Diaryscape 11: Brittany – feelings over time

By far the greatest number of mentions of Brittany's feelings ($n=27$) concern her response to the warmth and appreciation that was shown to her ('touched' was a word she used frequently to describe this response). The enjoyment she described ($n=19$) was always in response to the energy and enthusiasm of the children as they played around with her, or played sport. Also other-related were her feelings of empathy ($n=8$) for the situations faced by the children and by some of the houseparents, and of pride ($n=4$) for the achievements of the children in her sport and in the sports carnival.

Brittany expressed considerable uncertainty and confusion ($n=16$) about forthcoming experiences, particularly in the first week, and feelings of inadequacy ($n=9$) as she struggled with helping the children with their school work. She was angered ($n=9$), and exhausted ($n=3$) by her 11 hour day in the car with Mr X, which she had been reluctant to do in the first place ($n=1$). She was bored ($n=2$) by some of the readings. The expression of these emotions is confined to these specific situations. Brittany expressed sadness ($n=3$) when she learnt that one of the houseparents was one of the stolen generation, and as she left the placement.

Because of its closeness to a personal diary, Brittany's work provides a relatively clear window onto her feelings, as they shift from confusion, uncertainty, and nervousness to enjoyment, and leaving work 'on a real high'. She remarked on her first day at the

agency, that she 'was feeling very nervous', 'a bit awkward and shy', and 'concerned that the fact that [she was] training to be a police officer might create a bit of friction' (Day 1). That same day, she was 'looking forward to working again tomorrow', and the next, she 'left [the agency] with a smile on my face from ear to ear'. She had, she wrote, 'been laughing and joking around with the kids all afternoon' (Day 2). On her fourth day she was welcomed as a member of the family by Aunty Cas (as per the diary extract on page 169), and concluded that she did not think Aunty Cas 'even realised how touched I was, but maybe one day I'll let her know' (Day 4). When informed, on Day 11, that one girl had said that she 'was so happy I had come into her life [...], my tummy did about 8 back flips & I was holding back tears'.

She quickly came to feel empathy for the children's situation. 'It must be so hard for these kids', she wrote. 'I know how hard it was for me to adjust when I left home at 20, and even then I had my family and friends only a couple of hours away.' (Day 3). Later on in the placement, one of the staff disclosed that she was one of the stolen children, and 'had been taken from her home aged 14 and forced to work as a maid/nanny [...]. It brought tears to [her] eyes to here her talk about it all, & it made me feel ashamed to think that white Australians instigated all this.' (Day 25)

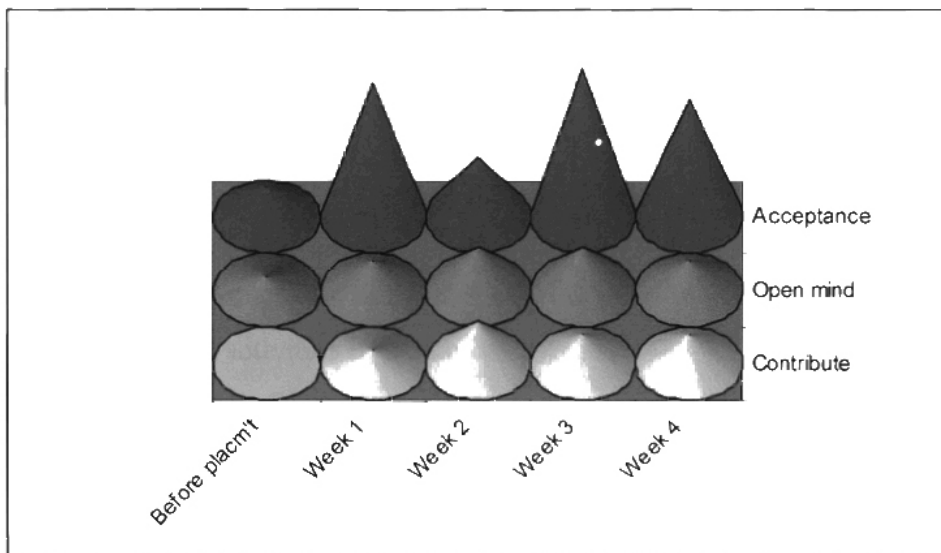
Brittany's uncertainties about her own capacities all related to helping the children with their school work as a teacher's aide. She wrote, 'I don't think I'm very good at explaining things [...]' (Day 9), and that 'I'm constantly worried that I'm not teaching them things correctly' (Day 10). Her anger and frustration was confined to defence of the children and to her day with Mr X. When a classmate joked about her charge finding simple tasks so difficult, Annabel stormed, 'It made me furious beyond belief & I was absolutely disgusted & pissed off with this little shit' (Day 10).

In sum, Brittany enjoyed her placement, and the relationships that she built with staff and clients. Over half of her entries concerned these aspects of her feelings. The bulk of her unpleasant feelings concerned her uncertainties about what was likely to be, or what was being, asked of her – the positions she was being asked to take, and how comfortable she felt with them. What this contrast between her pleasures and her pains reveals is her overall competence.

6.3.7 *Actions in response to the unfamiliar*

Brittany, in response to the unfamiliar context in which she found herself, set herself three inter-related projects, built around the lynchpin of ‘acceptance’ (Day 16, Day 20). ‘Acceptance’ itself involved ‘gaining trust’ and ‘breaking down some of the barriers’ (Day 26), as well as ‘winning’ people over (Days 1 and 26). The first of the associated projects was that of contributing, feeling that ‘these kids have benefited in some way’ from her (Day 1). The second associated project was that of undertaking the placement with ‘an open mind’ (Day 7), and of learning (Day 1). As the project of learning is not treated by Brittany as one of activity but of receptivity, it is dealt with under section 6.3.8.

The primary focus of her attention, then, was on relationship building across an ethnic and cultural divide. Brittany wanted to be accepted by the staff and the resident teenagers, and her diary chronicled her social conquests of the latter, particularly the girls. The avenue through which she achieved these successes was primarily her involvement of increasing numbers of the younger girls in her sport (her contribution), but, as time went on, included specific efforts to break down the barriers between herself and some of the older girls whilst engaged in, for example, ‘stuffing envelopes’ (Day 17). Keeping an open mind was positively influenced by the initiatives of the younger girls, and by Auntie Cas’s warmth. Diaryscape 12 shows how these projects appeared in her writing over the four weeks of the placement.



Diaryscape 12: Brittany – diary entries concerning her three projects

The diaryscape reveals that by far the largest group of entries each week concerned the focus of acceptance, and the ways in which Brittany was building relationships, and responding to the liking for her expressed by those in the placement. For example, on Day 17 she wrote:

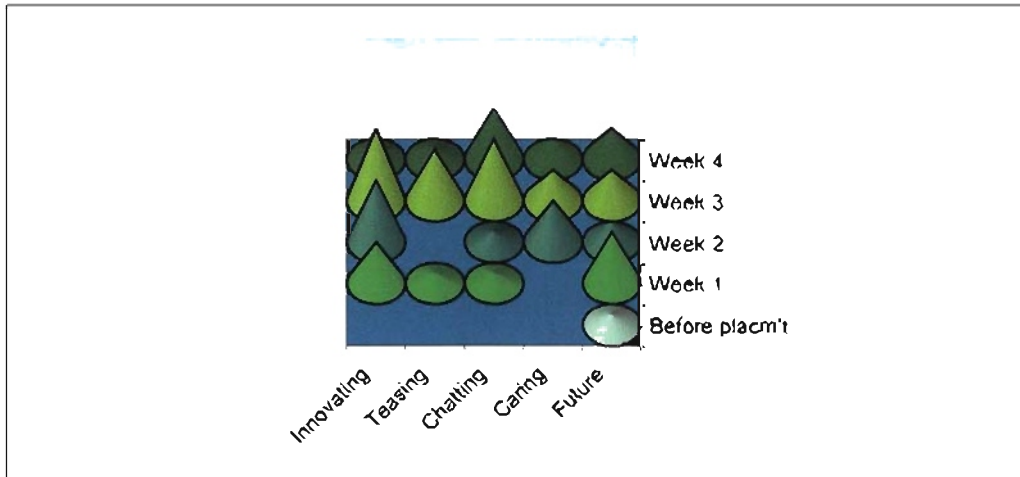
I am confident that I am gradually getting closer to all the girls, which was evident today in my 'bonding session' with Cassandra. I am still feeling really pleased about the whole incident.
(Day 17)

On this occasion, Cassandra had joined Brittany in 'stuffing envelopes' and Brittany had seized the opportunity to chat, which resulted in them joking with each other and 'paying each other out'. If, then, any of the residents made overtures, Brittany picked up on the cues, and exploited the opportunity. There are comments about the ways in which Brittany was drawn into the world of the girls. For example, on Day 2 she wrote that 'These kids have such spirit & energy & great senses of humour, that you just can't help but be drawn in by them and enjoy their company', and on Day 16 she enthused, 'The kids here have touched my heart & opened up my eyes & mind beyond belief. It is so emotionally rewarding being in contact with these kids & so personally satisfying'. On the same day, she writes about her progress in the 'contribution' project:

I would love to get them [the girls] all involved & am currently in the process of working things out with my club & the house parents. [The place] will almost have its own team soon at this rate!! (Day 16)

Brittany's involvement in team sports acted as a social lubricant for her relationships with the teenagers. When she discovered that some of the girls were interested in learning to play her sport, she brought in the equipment the next day. The first game with a few participants led to another with more, and so on, until there were nearly a dozen players towards the end of her stay, many of them playing with her club on the weekends. Brittany's contribution to the lives of the girls was to share her life and interests with them.

Diaryscape 13 depicts the times at which Brittany mentioned her project of acceptance, and the types of activities in which Brittany mentioned that her contact with a particular student had led to a 'breakthrough'.



Diaryscape 13: Brittany – interactions related to ‘breakthroughs’

Diaryscape 13 shows that Brittany’s intentions to build and improve upon her relationships with the clients were sustained throughout the placement. Initiating and fostering (‘innovating’) the girls’ participation in her sport built over three weeks, and was a *fait accompli* by the fourth. By the end of the first week she wrote that she had said she would try and ‘pop in over the weekend’, and, after a fortnight, each Saturday involved some of the girls playing sport with Brittany’s club, including a trip to another town. Brittany and her sister, on this long trip, taught the girls the songs they usually sang on such trips. She mentioned teasing as a component of her interactions with the younger girls in her first week, and with two of the older girls in weeks 3 and 4. Chatting was an increasingly important part of the relationship building process as the placement progressed. These types of interaction are typical of more intimate relationships and friendships, with teasing amongst women, in particular, only likely when people are familiar with each other (Eggins & Slade 1996).

This overall process of relationship development is in two distinct strands, framed around a conflict between the older and the younger girls (Day 3). Brittany first became involved with the younger group, who, she wrote, ‘wond me over a lot sooner than I won them’ (Day 6). It was with these girls that her sport was the bridge, on her part, and that, on their part, the girls’ ‘spirit & energy & great senses of humour’ (Day 2) drew her in. Her contact with the older girls was far less frequent (Days 15, 19 and 25), and here she had to work at overcoming the barriers she felt to be present.

She set about dealing with her goals by noticing her behaviours and modifying them if she felt they were inappropriate (as in the case of 'Aunty Cas'), sharing what she was good at (her sport and driving), and hesitantly helping where she was not as competent (school work). She placed high value on feedback in the process – and the image that was fed back to her from staff and students alike was that she was doing well.

The staff and the students welcomed her into their world, some of them cautiously, but others, quite literally, with open arms (Days 4 and 8). Brittany, reciprocally, offered 'the kids' some of her world. She responded to the girls' responses to her: 'A couple of the girls are really keen to join a team, so I'm trying to organise that for them. They are just so excited about the prospect of playing in a real team that I'm kind of making it my mission to see that it happens' (Day 3). The result was that both she and 'the kids' felt good about their achievements, and about themselves. The level of pleasure she took in this is evident in her '40 hour review':

40 hour review

My initial emotional response to the placement was deeper than I could ever have imagined. I never expected for a minute before starting here that I would be so affected by this whole experience. The kids here have touched my heart & opened up my eyes & mind beyond belief. It was so emotionally rewarding being in contact with these kids & so personally satisfying. Im really enjoying myself & couldn't have hoped for a better placement.

The staff here have all been really supportive & done their best to include me & make me feel at ease. I havn't had problems with anyone so far (touch wood). The working relationship that had established between the staff & myself had been totally positive.

I feel that I have really started to gain their trust because they discuss quite a lot with me, especially in relation to the kids & problems they are having or have had. I have a great deal of respect for every staff member here & I feel comfortable discussing just about anything with them.

My relationship with the kids was developing much better than I could ever have imagined. I am gradually gaining their trust & respect & each day certain things happen that feel like major break throughs. I'm attempting to communicate with them on their level & I think so far it had been really effective. They seem to have accepted me & enjoy my company, which made me feel great. [...]

From my first day at [the organisation] I wanted to be accepted by them all so badly, & now the place feels almost like my second home. (Day 15)

At this stage, the factional issue was not specifically mentioned, but later diary entries reveal that the process of building relationships with the older girls was far more difficult:

Initially I feel my major weakness was that I was tending to spend most of my time with one group of students. This was largely due to my lack of confidence in approaching some of the

other students who were somewhat standoffish with me at first. [...] I was worried I was intruding, or sticking my nose in type thing. It was probably also a fear of rejection from some of the students who I felt were a little untrusting of me. (Day 19)

Nonetheless, she 'slowly managed to get to know all of [the girls] reasonably well' (BR2). On the penultimate day of her placement, she gave the leader of the older group of girls a driving lesson, which broke down the barriers she had not previously managed to crack:

I guess gaining her trust or breaking down some of the barriers that stood between us was somewhat of a personal triumph for myself, in many respects. The fact that she did seem to be attempting to keep me at arms length probably made me more determined to win her over and I honestly feel that today I have managed to achieve this. Please don't misinterpret my talk of 'winning people over' as some kind of egotistical thing, because it was nothing of the sort. I'm implying this as a genuine breakthrough relationship wise, involving mutual respect and trust. (Day 25)

Brittany's diary thus chronicles her transition from the periphery to valued family member, and the reciprocity that underpinned this journey.

6.3.8 *The project as touchstone*

The project of policing has such a minor presence in Brittany's diary that it cannot be considered to be the project at all. Rather, she had an immediate goal within the placement, around which her actions occurred. Each little incident that occurred that indicated that she was on track brought a strong reaction on her part. With the younger girls, what she recorded was her emotions. When Aunty Cas told her that one of the girls said Brittany had 'given her so much confidence in herself and that she was so happy that [Brittany] had come into her life', she wrote, 'There is no way to describe how I felt to hear that, but my tummy did about 8 backflips & I was holding back tears' (Day 11). With the older girls, she remarked upon her progress. On Day 26, she took the informal leader of the older girls out for a driving lesson, and her comment was that, 'I guess gaining her trust or breaking down some of the barriers that stood between us is somewhat of a personal triumph for myself, in many respects'.

Perhaps because of the clarity of Brittany's goals, these goals guided her actions. She brought in the sports equipment, sought ways to accommodate the girls in her club, and took the opportunities that emerged to foster friendly relationships with the older girls (Days 15, 19 and 25). Any reflection that was evident in Brittany's diary concerned the

ways in which her actions had, fortuitously, brought her closer to her objective of 'winning over' the older girls, and the ways in which Aunty Cas's and the younger children's actions had brought her closer to them.

Keeping an open mind was an issue that Brittany mentioned as she started her placement. This appears to be a somewhat tangential reference to a pre-existing negative view of Aborigines. There are traces of her reservations:

All the workers at [the place] seem really enthusiastic to see [the girls] become involved & it would really mean the world to me *if I can get them to stick with it* [my italics] (Day 10)

Most of them think it is very unfair that it is compulsory for them to wear shoes in their races & a couple of them told me that they had actually been practicing running in shoes. I couldn't help but laugh. (Day 23)

More in evidence is Brittany's slowly increasing understanding of the difficulties faced by the Aborigines with whom she came into contact. This is initially indicated by her realisation that her life, to date, had been privileged (Day 3). The second indication lies in her defence of a child at school who she was helping (Day 9). The revelation (BA11) that one of the houseparents was a member of the stolen generation touched Brittany deeply. She was less certain about where she stood on more general issues concerning Indigenous populations, writing about National Sorry Day that:

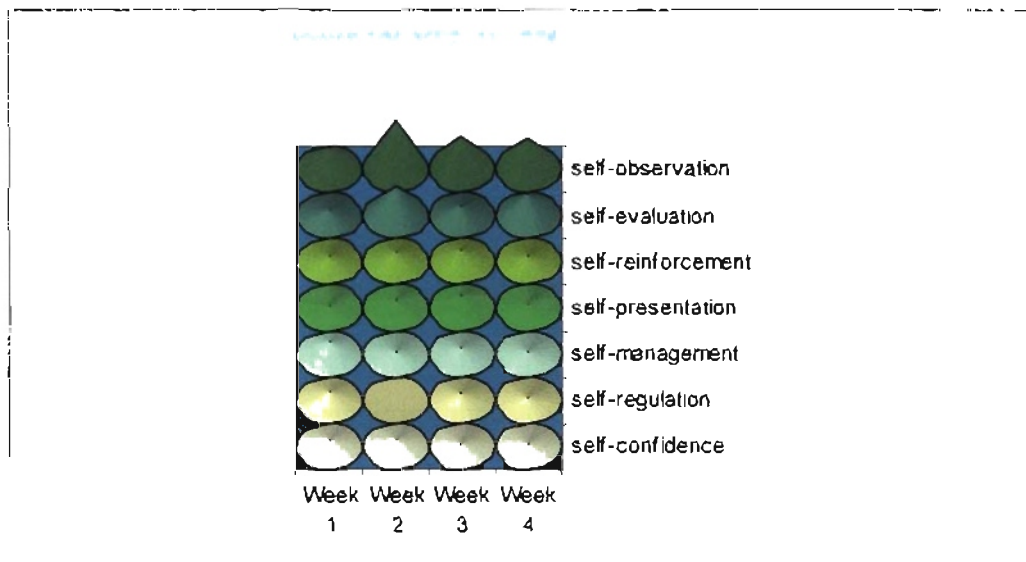
I feel that if more people were aware of this fact that there wouldn't be so much negativity surrounding the idea of 'Sorry Day'. It was all really interesting & in some respects has altered my personal beliefs to a certain extent. (Day 14)

This project, of learning and keeping an open mind was not so much a touchstone, rather it was a by-product of her other, clearer projects. On no occasion does she use what she discovers to check how this might contribute to her goal, whereas she does do this with respect to winning over the girls.

6.3.9 *Learning selves*

This section starts with consideration of Brittany's self-positioning, and how this changed over the period of her placement, if at all. I then go on to consider the different statements Brittany made about what she had learned.

Diaryscape 14 provides an overview of the diary entries that Brittany made that concern self-positioning.



Diaryscape 14: Brittany – summary of diary entries concerning self-positioning

By far the largest group of comments involve self-observation ($n=57$). These comments included many general statements about how she was feeling, such as ‘looking forward to working again tomorrow’ (Day 1), ‘really enjoying’ herself (Day 6), leaving ‘on a real high’ (Day 20), feeling ‘really touched’ (Day 25), and pride in what the girls were achieving (Day 21). On three occasions this involved comparison of her own experiences against those of the children, such as the experiences of being away from home, and being the new kid at school (Days 3, 10 and 15). Comments on how she responded to the study materials and to some of the days on which she did not enjoy herself are also included. For example, she commented that although the reading by Berger³ raised ‘some interesting points’, she ‘personally found the reading in general to be rather boring’ (Day 3), and that ‘Readings 3 & 4 were fairly interesting’ (Day 14). She spend her seventeenth day with the manager Conrad – ‘it was a little boring’ – and, after a day in the car with Mr X, she wrote that ‘To describe myself at this particular point in time as ‘frustrated’, would be like describing having to chew your own leg off to escape from a burning car as “a shame”!’ (Day 18).

³ Berger P (1963) ‘Sociology as an individual pastime’, in *Invitation to sociology* Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, pp. 16-24

The next largest group of coded entries concern self-evaluation (n=28). As Brittany incorporated her 40 hour reflection in the body of her diary, this number is somewhat inflated. That it is a characteristic of the diary itself, however, is evident in that the first evaluative comment occurs on Day 1: 'These kids have already opened my eyes up to how much I take for granted the life that I lead & the oppourtunaties I've had'. The second group of self-evaluations occurred as she worked with the children at their schoolwork, which she found difficult 'because I don't think I'm very good at explaining things to them' (Day 9), and she was 'constantly worried that [she was] not teaching them things correctly' (Day 10). The reading on observation skills also led her to attempt to improve her own skills, as she discovered they needed 'a lot of work' (Day 14). That she was monitoring what was happening, and evaluating her progress in meeting her goals, is most clearly evident in the 40 hour reflection. She wrote, amongst other things, that:

My relationship with the kids is developing much better than I could ever have imagined. I am gradually gaining their trust & respect & each day certain things happen that feel like major break throughs. I'm attempting to communicate with them on their own level & so far it has been really effective. (Day 16)

The remaining numbers of comments coded to each category were all far fewer than the first two categories described above. Self-reinforcement is identifiable in comments such as 'Well I survived my first day', 'Well I have survived the first week [...]' (Day 6), and that, considering the positive remarks that the children made about her, 'I'd like to think that these sorts of things mean that I am communicating effectively with them, & that I have developed a worthwhile relationship with both the staff & students' (Day 16).

Entries concerning self-presentation mostly concerned how she was being viewed by the people in the placement, as on the occasion when she felt embarrassed catching herself using the intimate form of address, "Aunty Cas", with Caroline, one of the houseparents (Day 4). There are only three instances in which it is clear that she was aware of the marking context. The first was when she had spent an 11 hour day in the car with Mr X, and she chose to describe the experience as a lengthy humorous story, rather than directly express her frustrations. As an example, referring to one of the

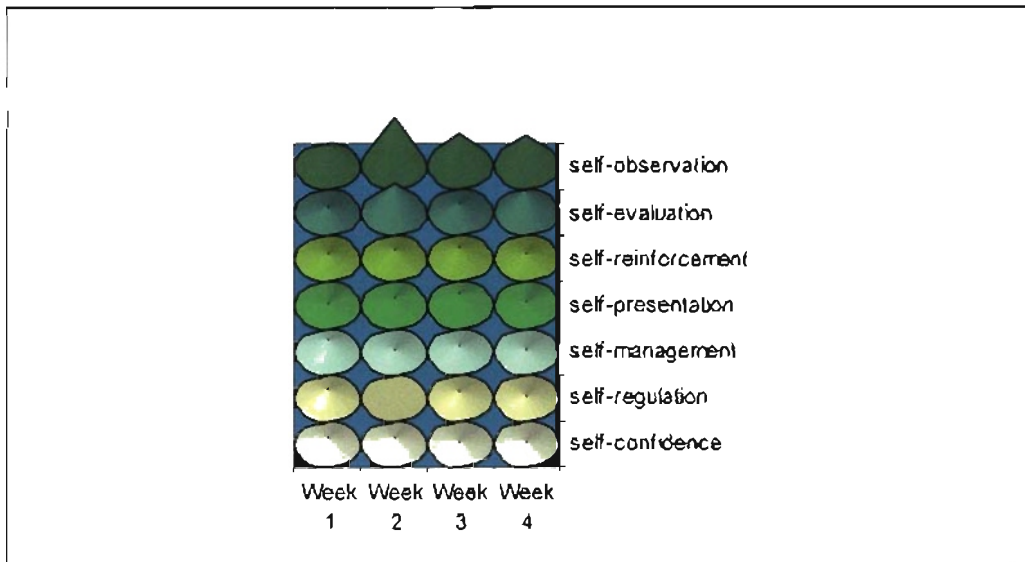
readings, she wrote that ‘Through critical awareness⁶ I alerted myself to the fact that I was in fact prejudiced against elderly people who wear hats while behind the wheel of a motor vehicle’ (Day 18). The second instance was after discussing her breakthrough with the leader of the older girls, when she addressed the putative reader directly, writing, ‘Please don’t misinterpret my talk of “winning people over” as some kind of egotistical thing, because it is nothing of the sort’ (Day 26). The final acknowledgement was pasting in a McDonald’s ‘Smiley face’ as ‘Activity 21: The Maccas Run’, commenting that ‘If you are still reading at this point, you definitely deserve a break. This one’s on me! 😊’

In terms of self-management, most of Brittany’s writing concerned the ways in which she intended to act to achieve her goals – hoping to win the kids over (Day 1), wanting the kids to have benefited from her being there (Day 2), and ‘kind of making it [her] mission’ to see that ‘the kids get to play in a real team’ (Day 3). The largest number of entries concerning self-regulation occurred in her account of her trip with Mr X (Day 18), but are also clear in the way in which she monitored her behaviour with Aunty Cas (Day 4).

To establish whether and how Brittany’s self-positioning changed over time, *Diaryscape 15*, overleaf, presents an image of the various types of self-positioning as they were mentioned over the four weeks of the placement.

Brittany’s comments about herself are largely evenly spread across each of the four weeks. This is partly owing to the fact that she often referred back to her initial perceptions and to her goal, and remained surprised and touched by the warmth and liking expressed by staff and students alike over the course of the placement. Self-observation peaks, and self-regulation disappears, in the second week’s entries, when Brittany was helping out in the school. This was the only week in which she felt uncertain about her own capacities, and had to adapt to what was happening, rather than take a leading role.

⁶ This is a reference to Sargent (1992), the second of the required readings in the Study Guide.



Diaryscape 15: Brittany – self-positioning across time

Brittany, during the course of her placement, built new friendships, which not only touched her deeply, but looked to extend beyond the four weeks of the placement. She appears to have *consolidated* her grasp of her own capacities to build relationships by achieving the goals she had originally identified as ‘ambitious and potentially egotistical’ (Day 1). Thus, as she herself noted, Brittany’s project of acceptance was inherently an individualistic one. Her expectation was that it was her task to win the children over to her, not that she would be involved in reciprocal relationships. Although her situation of being a white Australian amongst Aborigines was novel for her, for the children, being an Aborigine in contact with a white Australian was merely an encounter with the new. A distinction needs to be drawn here between the ways in which those in the agency responded to the situation. Aunty Cas acted as a guide and a model for the younger children, and for Brittany. The younger children, who saw her as an interested adult who wanted to do things with them, invited Brittany into their world. The older girls demanded of Brittany the sort of work she had envisaged doing – the active building of bridges. In this multi-faceted and reciprocal process, everyone introduced her to their world, and she introduced them to hers.

What is clear is that, by the end of the placement, she had an important position in her new ‘family’, and she recognised the emotional impact, and practical implications, of the relationships that she had built.

As she wrote on her last day:

Well today was my last day at [the agency]. I felt really sad to be leaving & I even had a tear in my eye after all the good byes. That place feels like a second home to me now, & I'm really going to miss all the kids & some of the staff also. I did have to promise that I would come back & visit as often as possible & some of the kids got my phone number, as a security measure to ensure I kept in contact. This last month at [the agency] has been one of the most rewarding few weeks of my life. It's amazing how such small things can be such big breakthroughs when you're dealing with personal relationships. These people have touched my life & opened my eyes up so much. I started [here] feeling very nervous & apprehensive, not knowing what to expect. However I had no idea just how much this whole experience was going to impact on me personally. I couldn't have hoped for a better field placement & I genuinely loved almost ⁷ every minute of my time [here]. (Day 26)

Brittany's last diary entry indicates the extent to which she had built warm relationships with people in the placement, and how her position had shifted from stranger to 'family' member. It is only in a relatively early consideration of some of the various learning activities that she delineated what she felt she had learnt. The two areas she mentioned were awareness of her own prejudices, and her observational skills:

As open minded as I thought I was, when I honestly thought this notion through I realised it was absolutely true. Because although I am generally very accepting of people regardless of their backgrounds, I realised that deep down inside I often do have pre conceived ideas about particular groups within society. And although these pre conceived ideas usually don't, as far as I know, influence my actions, I am now aware that they are actually present in my mind & I can admit that to myself. I have attempted to improve my personal critical awareness during my placement, & I believe that it has enabled me to have a much more insightful learning experience. (BR1)

The observation skills & techniques mentioned in the second lot of readings have encouraged me to be much more observant & I even find myself on occasion practicing some of the techniques the readings mentioned. I believe that I am more observant now when I am observing people interacting whether it be a student to student, or student to house parent etc. I pay more attention to detail & tend to take greater notice of body language & facial expressions. (BR1)

Her final reflection was very general:

This subject was very beneficial in increasing my personal awareness of social inequality in general, as well as in conjunction with the police.
The practical element of this subject was a great experience for me. It offered me an insight into Aboriginal culture that I would not have gained otherwise.
I feel this subject is totally worthwhile & I hope it continues to be a part of this course. (BR2)

6.3.10 Summary

Brittany's goal in the placement was unrelated to her longer-term project of policing. It was tailored to meet the demands of the situation in which she found herself, one in which what was going to be different was immediately clear. She used her goal (an

⁷ This is no doubt a reference to the day spent with Mr X.

immediate one) as a guide to action, and then reflected on how the actions she had taken had brought her closer to her goal.

The learning context was one in which it was highly likely that Brittany would move from the periphery to the centre, because of the interpersonal contact typical of quasi-familial contexts, and because of the ages of the clients. The quasi-familial context allows for ongoing and dynamic contact, with many opportunities to observe, intervene and participate. Indeed, it is this type of structure that forms the underpinnings of communities of practice in apprenticeships. When clients include young children, as was the case for Brittany, the children are likely to initiate as well as respond to interactions. As Donaldson (1992:44) points out, healthy children pursue their interests with 'vigour and passion', and they will make ongoing efforts to satisfy their curiosity (Davies 1989). They may initiate contact either because they are curious about a newcomer, or because the newcomer is seen as a resource to tackle a problem. In Brittany's case, these twin possibilities were aligned with her personal goals of building bridges.

The project of becoming a police officer was fully obscured in Brittany's work by her placement-specific goals, goals which intrinsically involved negotiation and the building of relationships that would reposition people. Fortunately for Brittany, the staff and the younger girls in the placement responded very quickly to her desire for acceptance, and it was only with the older girls that this repositioning involved dealing with resistance.

Because of the type of placement and what Brittany brought to it – a key role in a local sports club, a long history of coaching, and a willingness to involve the children in this – her world and the world of the children combined. The changes spread beyond Brittany to others in her social circle. Improvisation was the key to this repositioning, and was possible because the familial environment was familiar and Brittany was alert to the cues within it. Although she had seen her goals as ambitious, she saw them as achievable within a day of arriving at the placement.

The focus of Brittany's diary entries is prospective and reflective, in that she continually measures her progress towards her goals. Her work therefore suggests that

having clear goals fosters reflection, rather more akin to action research than it is to introspection.

Brittany's diary offers an account of her experiences that foregrounds the importance of mutual responsiveness in negotiating a place for oneself in a new environment, and of the need to recognise that students may bring skills and capacities to placements that can form the foundation of new developments. Agencies should not be seen as static environments into which students are fitted, rather, there is the opportunity for dynamic interactions that re-position several players. Joint activities, whether they are driving lessons, stuffing envelopes, or playing sport, and quasi-familial relationships, can generate opportunities for exploration and improvisation that are absent in highly ritualised staff/client relationships.

6.4 Denis

6.4.1 Biographical information

Denis was in his early 20s and was a tradesman, as his father had been, until getting a place in the policing course. He was one of several children, all of whom had gone into trades, which is what his parents had emphasised as an occupational choice (DA6). His parents currently ran a small business in the country town in which he undertook his placement, although the family had lived in a city suburb for most of Denis's life. The country town was where they had once had a week-ender, and had spent many enjoyable holidays. 'We could', he wrote, 'do things as a family unit that made us very close. Even if dad made us collect fire wood or help with the erection of fences it was a fun time for all of us' (DA9). He was very attached to his family, which had been through hard times. In sum, as he described it, his family:

[...] was just your average Suburban family that was living under Christian principals. I would say we were a midelle / working class family. (DA9)

All of Denis's schooling was in a private school with a religious affiliation. As a consequence, Denis wrote that the principles he lived under were 'basically the same as the church', with 'all of the things [he had] been taught over the years', 'like morals and

respect', now coming as second nature (DA1). He ranked the Bible as his third most valued item, while remarking that

Things also change over the years and as I grew up I started to realize things like the odd ale with my mates and the old killer girls. So the Bible is lower on my list than what my family expects but that's life, this is my thoughts. (DA1)

Like Kelvin and Annabel, Denis undertook his placement in the second half of the trimester, which was considered to be the least promising order for the achievement of the subject's aims⁸. He talked about his experiences in the placement with the people at the organisation and with his parents (DCS), but there is evidence in his diary that he also discussed some of the ideas raised by his studies with his friends.

6.4.2 *The agency*

Denis was placed in a charity organisation that ran a second-hand store and provided emergency relief. There was very little information on the agency in Denis's work. Being in the charity shop, besides the shop work, largely involved him in the sorting of clothes and 'sitting in with some of the welfare'. He also went out to people's homes (quite what he did there is not made clear).

In terms of the guidance available to him, Denis mentioned an initial chat with the manager, an active member of the religious organisation running the charity, and observing one welfare interview with this manager, but there seems to have been little other training or ongoing supervisor support. The other brief mentions of the manager covered permission given to have a day off (Days 12 and 26), the request that Denis conduct a welfare assessment (Day 22), attending a funeral with him (Day 18), and poor handling of volunteer staff (Day 9). As Denis wrote that he no longer adhered to the religion in which he was raised (DA1), the indications are that the two had little in common.

⁸ He wrote, 'The first couple of days I just did not want to be at my placement, because I thought that it was really doing nothing to help me in my placement'. This feeling may be an artefact of undertaking the police placement first, or of Denis's identification of the limited learning opportunities in the placement itself.

This lack of common ground may also have been the case with the other workers. Other staff are only mentioned four times in his diary. As Denis described it,

Because most of the people that I deal with are volunteers, it is a very laid back sort of a place. (DR1)

This does not mean that he did not get on with the staff, or that he was unappreciative of what they did:

One of these people is from a NESB country and we are always having a laugh because, everytime I ask her a question, she says to me "me no speak English" which she says all in jest. (DR1)

On Day 9, he wrote an account of an incident in which he felt the staff had been unfairly treated by the manager:

I just thought that I would take a chance to talk about the staff that work [here]. They do a great job and work for nothing and it is easy to see that when there is some trouble the staff seem to get upset because of the service they do give. (Day 9)

This is the only diary entry about staff; the other three entries arose from the completion of the activities.

Furthermore, the most detailed entries about the clients were related to welfare assessments, which involved forms of contact with clients/customers that were more interesting than the commercial transactions in the shop:

Just this morning a elderly man came into the [shop] that had a problem paying his light bill. The [...] manager and I were speaking to him and he went on to say that, he was on the old age pension and that he did not get paid to next week. It was easy to see that he had just ran out of money and that he had tried to pay all his bills but just could not get them all paid'. (DA2)

Denis found himself in an organisation in which the tasks were not particularly demanding, where the staff were volunteers, and where the only relatively skilled process was the conduct of welfare assessments. Within this framework, he was asked to work independently on at least one occasion.⁹ The only other task mentioned was a curious one, given a theme in Denis's work of fidelity as outdated (see section 6.4.5). He was specifically invited by the manager to attend the funeral of a man murdered by an angry, cuckolded husband (Day 15).

⁹ 'Today the manager asked me to talk to a welfare client, with regards to giving some food for him to eat.'

Denis had left behind the commitment to religion which had characterised his childhood, and was unlikely to reorient himself around a religious organisation and manager, or the team of dedicated volunteers. The type of work in which he was involved also offered him little opportunity to develop any relationships with clients, nor, given that his parents also had a shop in which Denis lent a hand, did it offer any intrinsic challenge. As a consequence, there was very little for Denis to write about (the affordances of the environment were minimal), and so he focused on the ideas in the readings as a way to pass the subject.

6.4.3 *Denis's notebook*

Denis had never written a diary before, and found writing this one difficult. He had, he indicated, left out a lot lest it affect his grade. In fact, Denis's notebook was the second shortest of those received in this study (27 typed pages long, 11,731 words). The majority of entries concerned the required activities (77.5%); the work-related component was a bare 16.5% of his writing, and home life was the focus of just under 6% of his work. The little he wrote about the placement was unevenly distributed over the four weeks (20% in Week 1; 54% in Week 2; 11% in Week 3; and 16% in Week 4). For 15 of the thirty days that diary entries were required, nothing was written, and on the remaining days, many of the entries consisted of just one sentence, such as 'Went to my Placement' (Day 3), and 'I spent the day in the family store [...]' (Day 4).

His work began in this way:

Day 1: In Mum's kitchen.

"Well the Epic Journey Begins"

The first day of my placement at [the charity] was mixed with apprehension and excitement. I found myself saying in my mind what the hell am I going to be doing at my Community placement.

I found that I have instantly made some new friends at my placement and I feel that I get on well with them all.

Just in the short time that I have been at my placement I have already found out that so many different people use [the charity] in many different ways. I did not know how much [the charity] is

involved with the Community today, and I can see that in the coming weeks I will find that there are many more services that [the charity] offers. (Day 1)

The first diary entry shows a fusion of styles – that of a school composition (the title of an ‘epic journey’), and of informal communication between mates (‘what the hell am I going to be doing’). It is the latter style that came to predominate in Denis’s diary entries. He worked ‘in Mum’s kitchen’ (Days 1 and 2); ‘at a mates place’ (Day 41); or ‘in my girlfriends spa bath’ (Day 27). He wrote of spending the day ‘putting a cold hand on a warm bum with a certain lady in my life’ (Day 20). He described helping out in the family business, repeated his grandmother’s sayings, and discussed his studies at home. His friends, his girlfriend and local characters all found a place in what he wrote, as he peopled the pages with characters outside of the placement itself, with arguably more significance for him than what was happening in the placement.

He provided the scantest of information about the activities in which he was involved in the placement, and with whom. The experiences he described are largely accounts of other people’s behaviour that trigger reflection or ongoing investigation about an idea he found of interest. Curiously, then, his work was one of the more reflective of the notebooks submitted for this study.

More significant, though, was the sort of marker to whom Denis was addressing the material. Denis must have seen the marker as a person who would be concerned that he was doing the reading and thinking about it, as well as thinking about how the placement experience related to becoming a police officer. It would seem that he thought the marker would recognise in his style the mark of a typical police officer – he had left out the things he thought might negatively affect his grade (DCS).

There is a tension in Denis’s work between communicating in ways that are typical of low-contact and distant relationships (through the relatively frequent use of narratives and exempla), rather than accounts of his own experiences of events, and the highly personal, intimate remarks about his family life, whose mundane content is more typical of high

contact relationships¹⁰. It is as if two totally different conversations are being held at the one time, the first concerning what Denis felt he ought to be writing about, and the second asserting, often seemingly unselfconsciously, his social positioning. While one interpretation of this could be unfamiliarity with the medium in which he was working, it is also possible that Denis was deliberately positioning himself as a man who was suited to policing (in terms of the stereotypes of what this involves) dealing with another man who understood that positioning as desirable.

6.4.4 *The project of becoming a police officer*

Denis wrote that, since the age of 12, he had wanted to become a police officer, and that, having mastered manual work, he would now like to contribute something to the community. In terms of what Denis valued, the police badge came first, for the following reasons:

When I get the Police Badge it will be a symbol to me of all the work that I have done over the years to get it. Being a Police officer is something I have wanted too do since I was about 12. So the badge will be very special.

The Badge will also be a symbol to some of the work that I do for the community which is important to me as well.

Although I always wanted to be a Police officer, one of the main reasons for leaving my old job as a [...] Supervisor was that I felt that I was meant to do something more with my life and to put something back into the community. So by having this badge I can do this.

It also means a lot to me because if I lose it I will get my arse kicked, so I will guard it with my life.
(DA1)

Denis's account of why he valued the badge incorporated many of the reasons that are documented in the literature as the reasons for entering the police (Reiner 1992), but finished with a statement indicating he understood the insider's perspective on the badge. His use of slang increases the importance of the remark, and the statement can be interpreted as a suggestion that he is already a member of the in-group (Eggins & Slade 1996: 134, 123). That he already felt that he understood what being a police officer involved is also indicated in Activity 10:

¹⁰ Storytelling, according to Eggins and Slade, common in casual conversations, is used as a resource for assessing and confirming affiliations, and indicating aspects of social identity (particularly gender, class and ethnicity) (1996:229). The different styles of storytelling are also indicative of social distance.

I was quite surprised after reading the reading from Chan & Delattre. I did not think that racism was that evident in the NSW police service. I've have met many officers in the last twelve months and have known a lot of officers for many years as well and I have never found any of them to be racist in any way. (DA10)

There is only one entry outside of the required activities referring to police work:

The whole time I talked to him I found myself wanting to tell him to "fuck off" and leave me alone but it was a good learning time for me, and in the end I was glad that he came because I was able to get through it and remain calm and polite which is what a police officer needs to be able to do. (Day 11)

In sum, Denis placed a high priority on becoming a police officer, and had an image of police work that was closer to the portrayal of police culture by Reiner (1992) than it was to the direction of policing following the Wood Royal Commission. Some of this image was based on friendships with police.

6.4.5 *Encountering the unfamiliar*

As indicated above, there was much that was familiar (at best), and, at worst, irrelevant, in Denis's placement agency. Denis's expectations of clients prior to the placement were not high:

When I first started working so to speak I thought that only the bums and dregs would be the people that I would be in contact with. (DR1)

This does not necessarily mean that he was prejudiced:

I heard a comment from my Nana one day many years ago and she said "she would like to think that she could sit in the gutter and have a beer with a bum, but still be able to sit with the Queen and have dinner." I guess this was the attitude that a police officer should have in todays community. I think that this was a big part of being impartial. Thank God for the comment that my Nana told me many years ago, it had helped me to open my eyes up to people. (DR1)

What he found was that there was very little to do that was of any value to him (working in the charity shop, or sorting out clothes, was very much akin to the help he provided in his parents' business). For Denis, what was interesting, because of the contrasting value-system, was the way in which the elderly people within the local community viewed marriage and fidelity. His interest in the difference between their attitude to relationships and his own was stimulated by a customer in the charity shop on the second day:

One thing that I would like to comment on is today a lady in her eightie's that has Dementia came into the [shop] and was talking to me, she started to talk about her husband (which had been dead for quite a few years). She said that he was having an affair with some other lady up the road and that he had been doing this for some time.

She called this other woman every name under the sun which I did not believe would come out of a lady of her age.

After she had finished talking I asked her a question to what she felt about her husband, with her reply it showed the difference in the generation. She still loved him and would stand by him no matter what he did.

This made me think off all the ladies of her days and how most of them would much prefer to just put up with things to save face with the local community and to keep the family unit together.

This poses a couple of questions which in the near future I hope to answer.

Is the family unit that important, that we much keep it together at all cost?

Is what the rest of the community things of you important?

One more thing that I will endeavour to find out whether in the past the old ladies husband had had a lover in the past. (Day 2)

The relationship of these concerns to the learning materials is tangential, and therefore indicate either that nothing much happened in the shop, that Denis came to the placement with these questions in mind, or that the reflection on the place of religion in his life (reduced by 'the old killer girls' – DA1) had caught his attention and had made him notice this customer rather than any of the others. At any rate, the encounter led to the development of some immediate goals.

The other novelty for Denis was the ideas in the readings, and, on several occasions, he mentioned how he went about exploring the ideas with his friends and his family. The issues which drew his attention, above and beyond fidelity, were class and drinking.

6.4.6 *Feelings about the unfamiliar*

Denis was able to negotiate the new work environment drawing on his existing knowledge. It was most likely that what was left out of his notebook (DCS) was his frustration at the ongoing irrelevance of most of the work to his goal of becoming a police officer. Of the work he was doing, he wrote, 'I really enjoy that part where I go out and talk to people, because it teaches me to be able to understand different sorts of people and to also be community based as well' (DR1).

I got the sense of some discomfort around poverty and pain, through his comments about clients (Day 25), on his Nana's stories of raising six children (DA9) ('[...] some-times this is hard to listen to because she has gone through so much'), his wish that a close relative were still alive (DA6), and a one-off mention of his paraplegic sister (also DA6). The placement involved him in sides of life he just did not want to look at when contemplating a bright future:

With some of the clients I find it hard to talk to sometimes because their outlook on life is not positive, even if you try to make it for them, which is hard for me to understand, because I am always looking on the bright side of life. (DR1)

Other than these indications, and the occasional expression of frustration in dealing with a particular client, there is little material in Denis's diary about his emotional responses within the placement.

6.4.7 Actions in response to the unfamiliar

The largest part of Denis's work concerned his family and community life, and it is here that any action in response to the unfamiliar is played out. Denis firstly concentrated his efforts on exploring the attitudes of the older generation, in the rural town in which he was based, towards sex and marriage. As mentioned above, he set himself a threefold task as a result of this encounter: finding out whether the family unit was so important that it must be kept together at all cost; whether what the rest of the community thought of a person was important; and, finally, 'whether the old lady's husband had had a lover in the past'. The nature of the tasks reveals the social distance: these questions are about the Other. Implicit in this, too, was a self-image – I am not like this person.

The questions were more than idle speculations, as Denis did record the answers (Day 10). In answering his first question ('was the family unit that important that we must keep it together at all cost?') he talked to two different age groups, older couples and younger couples/people. He wrote that the older generation were very proud and stated that the family unit was one of the most important things in the world, and no matter what went on

it was far more important to keep the family unit together, and found another local example to illustrate his findings:

I found a good example for this, Mum's next door neighbour came in [to the shop] and constantly complains about her 84 year old husband telling us how much of a bastard that he was. I asked her a question to why she firstly married him and than why she stayed with him, her answer in some ways was quite funny, but also quite sad. She said to the first question "that their was not much too choose from at Jolimont at that time". And the answer she gave to the second question, was that "when I married him I married him for life".

So this really backs up the investigating that I did. (Day 10)

In answer to the second question ('was what the rest of the community thinks of you important?'), Denis did no research, merely stating his belief it had changed over the years, with counsellors available to give people the confidence to leave and not to worry about what other people think. He concluded that, 'I feel the answer to this question was that it has changed to the fact that people have become more independent and don't rely on the family as much' (Day 10). That he attributes the answer to a reduction in attachment to the family was somewhat paradoxical, given the extent to which he turns to his family for answers to the questions he poses. There is, though, no need for horizons of meaning to cohere (Schutz & Luckmann 1964). In answer to the third question, whether the old lady's husband had a lover, he unearthed 'some fling' in the late sixties, and he found it sad to think that 'one of her lasting memories of her husband was of that.' None of these research questions were raised again in the notebook, although the themes of sexuality and fidelity were (Day 18).

His investigation strategy in response to this experience is typical of his responses to other unfamiliar concepts or world views: he turns to his family, friends and local networks for answers. He asked his father about whether there was any class barrier at the golf club. He had known the person that he chose to interview on gender based harassment for 3-4 years – she was his 'mate's wife'. For his interview of a person of NESB about an incident of individual racism, he chose the wife of an old work mate. For his interview with an Aboriginal person, he chose to interview the former captain/coach of his local football side. In other words, he turned to existing relationships. He also shared his developing understanding of difference with his mates and his girlfriend:

We sat on a verandah and watch the band and people below. I decided to bring up the subject about what people do and why they do it. There were some young men and woman really putting in the “hard yards” so to speak and we all found it interesting to watch. This made me think that we all have been guilty of this at least once in our life, god knows that I have done it, but it was also sad in a way that people need this to “brake the ice” so to speak, or to be themselves. (Day 14)

My girlfriend and I went to “Home World”, this is a place where you can look at houses and walking through the houses, I found that people have different tastes and different styles and they vary according to their up-bringing. I mean people from the Western suburbs tend to want to have nice size blocks and things like BBQ areas and the size of the house was not the most important thing for them, but some of the so called “upper class” people wanted houses that were very large and of the expensive nature. (Day 27)

It was, then, with his family and friends and his dreams for the future that Denis’s real life was going on, and where his studies in JST121 came into play.

Denis did write about five clients (an old lady suffering from dementia, a young alcoholic, a happy family in the shop, an elderly man with paranoid delusions, and an old man unable to pay a bill). What he wrote concerned something that they said, or a particular situation the person was in, and on only two occasions did the writing concern an interaction that he had had with a client. In these latter two instances, his concern was to indicate his competence as a police officer (looking for injection track marks on the arm of a young man, and restraining himself with a paranoid client).

For Denis, it was common sense, rather than exceptional intelligence, that mattered: ‘I think that the only way to handle [problematic situations] is to use your common sense and just try to keep calm and a level head on your shoulders’ (Day 9). His example of this was the way in which he dealt with a young alcoholic, checking the veracity of the story he was told (Day 22).

This focus on common sense does not mean that Denis ignored the study materials. He reflected on what he read about and considered this related to his own and his family’s experiences (Days 27 and 30). His contact with dedicated volunteers led him to see those living in Housing Commission houses as not all bad (against his initial assumptions), and he wrote that when he came in contact with people that live in these areas in the future, he would deal with them with an open mind, and treat people as he found them (DA7).

Overall, then, Denis started his placement with the intention of performing well, and of demonstrating to the marker that he was a mature man of the world and a suitable person to become a police officer. Unlike the other informants, he was faced with an unpromising situation in which there was little challenge and no hierarchy of skills to negotiate, and his strategies for dealing with his placement were relatively unsuccessful.

6.4.8 The project as touchstone

Denis saw the police as the resource to which the community turned when in need, and that the onus was on the police to be impartial and professional (DA1). The only example of this was his account of dealing with a client who had paranoid delusions (Day 11). All other references to policing in Denis's work were generated by the required activities.

Nonetheless, he was faced with a problem when the woman, the wife of a mate, who he interviewed about an incident of racial discrimination she had faced, described an incident of police racism. Looking at this incident, Denis found it hard to judge whether the police officer's actions were correct, or wrong. It showed him that, if the officer was not even thinking of being racist, the way he conducted himself portrayed something different. He concluded that,

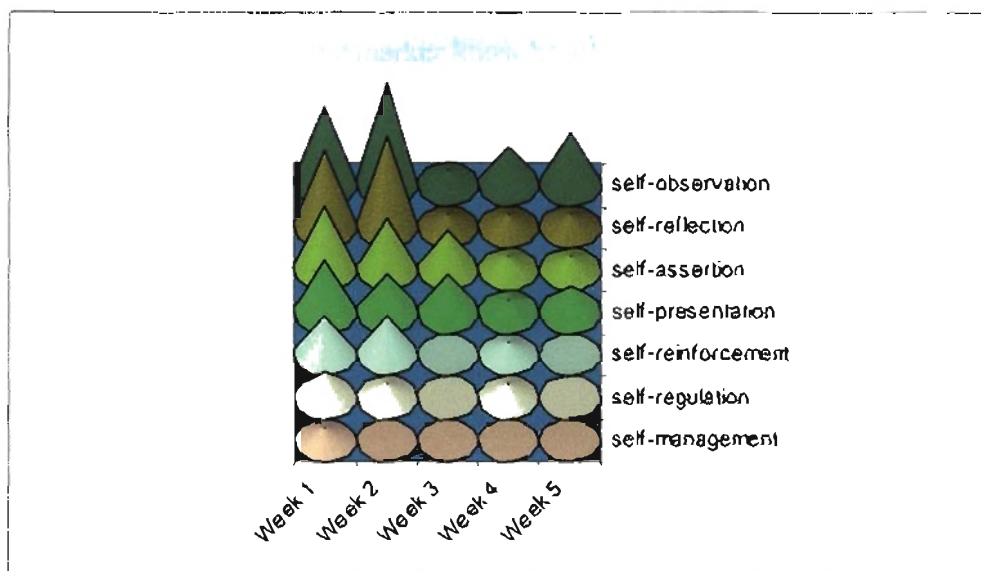
This was why officers must try to be polite to all even if they are having a bad day. The way the lady that I interviewed perceives the Police after this incident was very sad to think that she still does not trust the police. (Day 44)

Despite the paucity of entries concerning policing, it may have been that Denis's concept of policing was the major touchstone in his understanding of the placement as a whole. Although he expressed a view of policing as being one of service, he showed more enthusiasm about investigation, both in the personal tasks he set himself, and in conducting welfare assessment interviews. This greater enthusiasm for investigation may indicate disinterest in the service role, with Denis seeing himself more as a traditional crime fighter. Moreover, as his writing style indicates that he saw himself as a member of the police, it

would appear that it was the project of policing itself that defined the placement situation as irrelevant.

6.4.9 *Learning selves*

Denis’s apparent reluctance to write about what he really thought of the placement (there was no final evaluation, and the sketchiest information was provided elsewhere) meant that, despite the informality of his style, Denis himself, and any learning, remained elusive. Most of his learning was derived from his readings. The strategies he used in dealing with what he did not quite understand were annulment (police racism), checking his existing frameworks (his Nana’s view of social equality), and research using available tools (he turned for help to those with whom he was familiar). Diaryscape 16 shows the pattern of his self-positioning over the course of the notebook.



Diaryscape 16: Denis – summary of notebook entries concerning self-positioning

Diaryscape 16 shows that the majority of the material in Denis’s work that revealed the ways in which he was positioning himself is present in the first two weeks. Underlying the image is the relative paucity of material, with 22 comments concerning his own responses to experiences or readings at most (self-observation), and 1 mention of self-management

(the decision to investigate the issue of fidelity). Because he focused more on the required activities than the placement, his work contains relatively frequent reflective remarks (n=16), some of them about the application of the ideas to his everyday experiences, such as at the pub (Day 14) and at a housing exhibition (Day 27). Unusually amongst these informants, Denis asserted his own opinions fairly frequently (n=14), for example, about the value of the Bible, the need to focus on the future rather than the past, and his preference for money *and* happiness (Day 5), the need 'to be relaxed at anything you do' (Day 7), and, on the volunteers, that 'no one should be subject to abuse' (Day 9).

The final group of more numerous comments concerned self-presentation (n=13), and these either concerned ways in which Denis directly recognised the lecturer as audience (on six occasions), or ways in which he unselfconsciously presented himself, man to man. Examples here include the headings 'Dealing with a slight hangover' (Day 14), and 'The damm flue', and letting the marker know how he spent his time with 'a certain lady' in his life (Day 20) and that he had just got out of his girlfriend's spa (Day 27). Had I included mentions of the locations in which he wrote each diary entry, this group of comments would have formed the largest number of entries.

Denis's diary offers the smallest of doorways on how placement relationships might have contributed to any changes in self-positioning. Any mentions of clients concern his preoccupations with generational differences, conventional expectations of the reasoned behaviour of others, and his perception that it was important to be optimistic. He may have had insights about others (that older people are more committed to relationships than he, for example), but he did not go beyond using himself as a yardstick for what was 'normal' behaviour to feel empathy for any of those with whom he came into contact.

6.4.10 Summary

Any interpretation of Denis's project of policing, and whether and how it was sustained or eroded in the placement, can only be inferred from the semantics of his writing. My interpretation is that his project was sustained intact, and that the only negotiation about his

position occurred in the introductory conversation with the manager, and not thereafter. In a loosely structured organisation dependent on volunteers and a context in which other policing students were unlikely, Denis was a special type of transient amongst other transients. Denis was detached from the workplace demands, sympathising with the displeasure of the staff, but not identifying with them. As far as Denis was concerned, the only bearing that the placement had on his project was to act as a reminder that he should avoid pre-judging people on the basis of their appearance or their home address.

Despite the constraints of the learning environment, Denis actively improvised with the tools he had to hand. He set himself learning tasks (which, once completed, he did not mention again), he diligently completed the required activities, and he drew on available resources in his immediate circle (the people in the pub, shop customers, and his father) to explore the ideas he found interesting.

There is little of the future in Denis's work, but, because of the extra work on the activities, there is, in its place, a reflective exploration of the ideas in the readings. This consideration of novel concepts with his friends and family may have led to changes in self-positioning, not just for Denis but also for those with whom he spoke, but there is no evidence of this in the diary.

In summary, Denis's notebook entries show no evidence of learning occurring through the work. There is no evidence in his diary of him having negotiated any sort of position in the workplace, other than briefly siding with the staff against the manager. On the contrary, all the active learning and re/positioning in which Denis engaged was undertaken in his private life, with parents, friends and family, members of the local community – and the lecturer who would mark his work. Denis's diary, then, was an example of where projects and intentions do not result in the expected actions – the orientation Denis had to his experiences was a miscalculation in this learning context¹¹. Having identified that work in the charity shop offered him nothing new, rather than notify the Field Training Unit, he set

¹¹ My assumption was that Denis failed the subject, if nothing else, owing to insufficient notebook entries.

himself some related learning tasks, and appealed, man to man, to the lecturer who had provided the briefing.

6.5 Hector

6.5.1 Biographical information

Hector was in his early thirties. Prior to his studies, he had been in the armed services, where he had practiced a trade. In so doing, he was following in his father's and an older sibling's footsteps. Education was valued, and he was taught that, 'it doesn't matter where you come from, if you work hard enough, you can be what you want'. He commented that his sister had set him a good example by 'qualifying [...] in a field that was difficult to get into', and, later, by changing to a totally different and demanding career (HA6). He was the only one of his family to have migrated to Australia.

His early childhood was spent in housing provided by the military in a village near the base, and he attended local schools. Moving into their own home in Hector's early teens was construed, at the time, as 'another step up the ladder' (HA6). He saw this country existence in a homogenous neighbourhood as possibly involving 'bunkering', a process that was, in part, 'cancelled out', because the local school was heterogenous. Some of his friends had lived in public housing and 'they were always seen as "rough kids", ideas which came partly from our parents [but mostly] from the playground'. 'In a way', he concluded, 'we were institutionalised by my father's occupation' (HA6).

Hector had not worked with children, 'especially not in a school environment' (HRI), prior to his placement, which took place in the first half of the trimester. He spoke about his experiences with his partner, a fellow student in the placement, and the people at the organisation.

6.5.2 *The agency*

Hector was located in a holiday-school for children in difficulty: perhaps a parent had died, or the family had split up, and the children either had heavy familial responsibilities as a result, or were withdrawn and in some distress. Each group of children stayed for two weeks, and the demands of being with each of the two groups were quite different.

Hector worked first with children from the bush who were over 10 years old, and then with city children under 10 years of age. Hector provided rich descriptions of the activities, the way the staff managed the children, psychiatric assessments of children needing careful observation, and the children themselves. He described the team-building games, trips to the pool and bike rides, playground behaviours and their management, after hours and rainy day activities, a concert the children put on, and so on.

Hector mentioned the work of four staff: the manager, the two teaching staff with whom he was teamed, and a casual, but also mentioned how supportive and interested the staff were generally. Both teachers with whom he worked provided explanations of what was to be done, and why it was done in a particular way, and relied on him to continue with needed teaching should they be absent. The environment they were creating for the children fostered Hector's learning needs as much as it did the children's.

Hector's position in the placement seems to have been that of a temporary, and valued, helping hand. The staff was accustomed to short-term relationships with the children, and perhaps Hector's position was not dissimilar – another person with learning needs who should be fostered and would leave. Thus, the learning context was one in which the move from the periphery to the centre, and then out again, was inbuilt – for Hector and the children alike. On the other hand, the staff, particularly the first teacher, Phil, explained to Hector what they were doing and why, so that, unlike the children, he did not have to speculate about what was happening. Moreover, he had access to specialist resources, such as background information on the children, which he used to supplement his own

observations of the difficulties the children were facing. This was, then, a community of practice.

6.5.3 *Hector's notebook*

Hector's notebook was the longest in this study (21,299 words, 38 typed pages). He completed at least one entry for every day of the placement, frequently at work (sometimes more than once a day), and with an extra review at the end of the day often added. Almost two thirds of his notebook concerned the activities (with a large 12% of this on his review of his placement experience), and the remainder, the placement. He wrote comfortably about his feelings and opinions in the first person, and commented that conversations about both were an integral aspect of the interactions amongst staff at the placement (Day 29).

Hector had kept a diary before, and he wrote this one 'to excel'. He helpfully cross-referenced the children he mentioned, revealing his awareness of the marker. The diary was peppered with asides and comments about feelings (albeit often quite indirectly) and observations that make it resemble the 'hundreds and thousands' of Woolf's comments about the form (Monteith 1996: 60). It was perhaps closer still to Rainer's (1978: 11) view of the diary as immune to any formal rules of content, structure or style, and therefore very close to how Hector was thinking:

This group is really wearing me out. You've got to have eyes in the back of your head. I'm going home at the end of the day totally exhausted. Its been interesting seeing how the different cultures in this group interact. Also, with the [...] refugees being here, it has produced quite an unsettling effect on some of the children. Some of them have been openly racist. For example, there was a [...] boy who constantly refers to them as 'them blacks'. You keep have to reinforcing that they have names and they should be used. If you come down too hard on them, then it would only have a negative effect. (Day 24)

Reflective observations are interwoven with incidents, recounts of events, and feelings, and the helter skelter of his daily experiences comes through strongly. This slithery material underpins the larger number of coded entries that his relatively lengthy diary generated.

6.5.4 *The project of becoming a police officer*

Hector had, he claimed, been working for some time towards becoming a police officer, a goal which he felt was consistent with the way in which he was raised. He ranked the police badge as his most valued item, although he wrote of his reasons in a comparatively prosaic way:

The police badge is what I am working to gain. It will mean I have successfully completed the course and am able to start a career in the service which I have been trying to achieve for a couple of years.

Despite the high ranking he gave to the badge, only two of the 40 references to police in his work were in his diary or reflections, with 38 of them generated by the exercises. This may have been because he was so enmeshed in his experiences in the placement that he did not have time to think, or, at least, write about policing, or it may have been that he took this change of career as the normal consequence of truncated careers in the military, as had been the case for his sister, and therefore did not see it as something worth writing about.

Nonetheless, it was clear that it mattered to him, and that it was a factor in the way in which he related to people:

Pat Palmer is the other CEP student on placement with me. Having her with me has been a great help as we start the day by sitting down discussing readings activities etc. We have only known each other since the beginning of the placement and have a very good working relationship. Its been a great help comparing classes and discussing how the day has gone. We can relate as we both have the same ultimate goal. (HR1)

In reflecting upon the ranking he gave to the police badge and the value he ascribed to it, Hector thought it could be argued that placing the police badge first not only indicated that obtaining one was a personal goal, but also that it was placed first because he saw ‘it as upholding the law & what is good in society’ (HA1). Hector did not believe that the value he placed upon it was any indicator of whether or not he would be ‘an impartial & unbiased police officer’ (HA1). In considering the qualities needed in a police officer, he opined that the management, supervisory and administrative skills required, although ‘taught through initial training to assist in their development [...]’, ‘are inherent in people who choose this

career path' (HA3). That is, Hector positioned himself as someone who already had these qualities, so this was unlikely to be a focus of his attention in the placement.

Unlike most of the students in this subject, Hector identified, in his analysis of the final case study (HA20), that the police needed to be cautious in assessing what to do about two youths caught smoking marijuana. The Sergeant had to ensure certain things, but he also went into the pressures he would face as a Probationary Constable in some detail, remarking that he would want to do the best job possible, and would be 'concerned as to whether [he] had got all the facts'.

In sum, Hector seems to have had a clear idea of why it was he saw policing as being a worthwhile occupation (his upbringing), how his personal characteristics suited him to the occupation, and the practical demands that being a police officer would place upon him. Unlike the younger students, while he had been working towards becoming a police officer for two years, this was not a life-long dream, but a change of direction.

6.5.5 *Encountering the unfamiliar*

Having had no previous contact with children, Hector's initial feeling about the placement was one of fear (Day 1, HR1).

I had spoken to Mr. Pudman prior to starting this morning. However, I was still a little apprehensive of what to expect from the kids and what was expected of me. The type of kids that attend here had been described to me as "the mad, the bad and the sad". I really didn't know what to expect. I haven't read the application forms of any of the kids yet, but having met my class, they really aren't as troublesome as I had imagined they would be. Having never worked directly with children before, I had managed to get myself worried without reason. (Day 1)

My response to the children can only fairly be described as fear I think! I really didn't know what was going to happen. (HR1)

The teacher, with whom Hector first worked, Phil, was extremely important in easing Hector in to the required roles and relationships. Phil's rationale for gaining the co-operation of the class interested Hector, quite possibly because it contrasted strongly to his own childhood experiences. He was very surprised by the effectiveness of the strategy:

The teacher I am currently working with put me well at ease before we met our class. He explained to me the ways in which he gains the co-operation of the class, by simply introducing rules as time goes on instead of bombarding them with rules and regulations to start with. I was amazed how well it worked. Whether these are particularly good kids, I don't know, but they remembered the rules better than I did! (Day 1)

Hector provided much detail about each day's events. The remainder of his entry on the first day of his placement, provided here in its entirety, illustrates the novelties he was encountering, as well as the level of detail he included about his experiences:

The first activity was a name game. Obviously, the idea being we all get to know one another's name. This was done by us all sitting in a circle on the floor. Phil introduced us to Mr. Ball. Mr. Ball is a tennis ball that goes everywhere with the class. The ball was passed from person to person. When you had the ball you had to list the names of those before you and finish the list with your own name. This proved to be harder than I thought. Again, the children seemed to grasp this very well which surprised me. A couple of them knew others in the group but not by name. It proved to be a very effective activity. After half an hour, everybody knew everyone else by name. The use of first names is encouraged rather than the use of nicknames. This is simply to ensure no-one gets stuck with a nasty name but to also ensure we don't forget who is who.

There is a strong emphasis on friendship. One of the rules, the kids get told is 'Be a good friend to others', a lot of the children have come from areas where they may be isolated from other kids or where they just don't fit in. So if they come to a place like this and feel the same, they may well feel there is no place anywhere for them. Although they are only here for 2 weeks, they can at least go home feeling better about themselves which may help them fit in better when they get home. All their problems can't be erased in 2 weeks.

The afternoon was spent at Paradise Reserve where we had lunch and spent the rest of the afternoon playing various sports. Initially, some of the kids sat back not quite sure whether to join in or not. However, once they see the others starting to join in, it doesn't take long before they wander over to join in. I had a group kicking a football around to start with. This soon turned into a free for all with any ball they could get their hands on. Kids were coming over and asking to be shown how to kick a ball. I started to realise that I wasn't just there to have fun with them but they were also looking to me to show them how to have fun. I found this quite hard to take at first. How could kids not know how to have fun? Once they started to see what it was all about, there was no holding them back. Keeping in touch with them wasn't a big problem either because we were in amongst it with them. I think they just saw Phil and I as big kids!

After all this, it was back to Prudence House for their first afternoon assembly and then they go to their dorms and the evenings activities. They have supervisors for the evenings and play games on the beach or go out on trips to the cinema [...]. I imagine they'll be pretty tired by the end of the day. (Day 1)

Hector was in an ongoing encounter with novelty, at least during the first two-week holiday, in a context in which modelling and guidance were immediately available. This was fortunate, as Hector simply did not know how to relate to the children at the start of the placement. He commented that, on his first stint of 'playground duty', he was not at first sure what to do, but that 'It soon became evident when children started appearing with cuts

and scrapes. There are a lot of kids who crave attention and just hang around you in the playground all the time' (Day 2). Hector, left alone for the first time with a class, felt 'a little apprehensive', but soon forgot he was on his own as the demands of the children increased. He later commented that being included in everything was a great help, as he 'felt a bit of an outsider to start with' (HR1).

What I found interesting was the extent to which it was the children who guided the relationships that Hector built. In the following example, it was Penny's attempt to understand what was happening that structures the interaction:

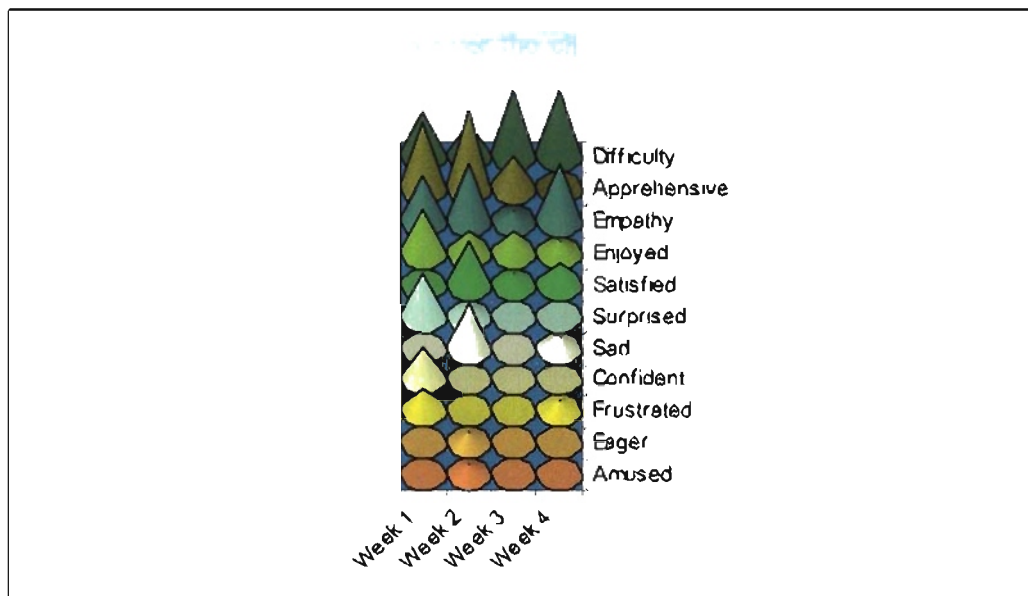
Penny is a 10 year old from another class. I was talking to her about going home and whether she was looking forward to it. She told me all about how her parents had split up when she was 'little'. She then turned the questioning around on to me. She asked about my parents, where I came from etc. When she found out that my parents weren't together she said 'is that why we are all here?' I hadn't really thought about why these kids think they are here. Never mind working it out. Penny then told me that all the girls in her dorm came from broken homes. Pretty good work for a 10 year old. (Day 10)

Although the detail in Hector's notebook reduced with the second group, there is a similar pattern to the entries in each two week block, where staff and his own involvement in the action (interventions) are mentioned more in the first week, and relationships with the children more in the second week. His role appears to have become less peripheral as the weeks passed, because the number of descriptions of what the staff did reduced. Hector was also much more involved with, or interested in, the first group than he was the second, as the number of entries reduces in week 3, and still further in week 4, after a high in week 2. He certainly found the second group much more difficult to handle – there are fewer positive feelings mentioned in the second two weeks.

6.5.6 *Feelings about the unfamiliar*

Given the length of Hector's notebook (21,299 words), and the detailed accounts he provided of what he observed, Hector wrote relatively little about his feelings (there were 82 entries). What he did express was not always easy to interpret. While he mentioned his own apprehensiveness quite freely ('I was still a little apprehensive of what to expect [...]'), he was not very clear in his descriptions of other emotional states, as in, 'I found

this quite hard to take' (Day 1), 'It's been a hard day' (Day 3), '[...] it was long' (Day 8), 'It wasn't too bad [...]' (Day 12), 'The hardest thing to deal with [...]' (Day 13), and so on⁸. The pattern of his diary entries that mention his feelings, or make reference to an emotional or physical response to the day's experiences over the four weeks of the placement, are illustrated in Diaryscape 17 arranged in order of their overall frequency (i.e., 17 mentions of difficulty, and only 1 of eagerness or amusement).



Diaryscape 17: Hector – feelings over time

Hector found working with the second, younger group of children more difficult than the first group, and the level of difficulty did not diminish in the fourth week. These younger children were from diverse cultural backgrounds, and were city children, far more prone to fighting with each other, despite the rules, than were the older group of country children. Hector wrote that '[...] these are tougher kids. They are harder to control and play rougher. I've noticed they like to pinch, punch and kick and that's only when they are playing' (Day 26). One day later, he remarked, 'This group is really wearing me out. You've got to have eyes in the back of your head' (Day 27).

⁸ As some of these comments clearly concerned physical and mental tiredness, and other statements provide insufficient information to interpret them, they were all coded under 'difficult'.

Hector's next largest group of entries about his feelings concerned apprehensiveness (n=16), which was highest with the first week of each group, and had entirely disappeared by the fourth week. Entries about his fears in the second week were made in the second reflective exercise the day after he had left the placement.

Despite the differences between the groups, Hector made comments revealing his capacity to feel for and with the children over the entire placement (n=15). Having looked at the children's files, he remarked, 'I can understand why some of these kids don't know how to have fun.' (Day 2). His feelings about the children's circumstances underpin another comment he made that day, 'Its hard not to give them the attention they want'. He also records some instances of his failure to grasp the totality of the children's experiences: 'I can't begin to imagine what some of these kids must be feeling' (Day 12). On one of the refugees who is continually fighting in response to racist taunts, he writes, he 'has probably been fighting for a large part of his short life. I must admit, I don't blame him' (Day 27).

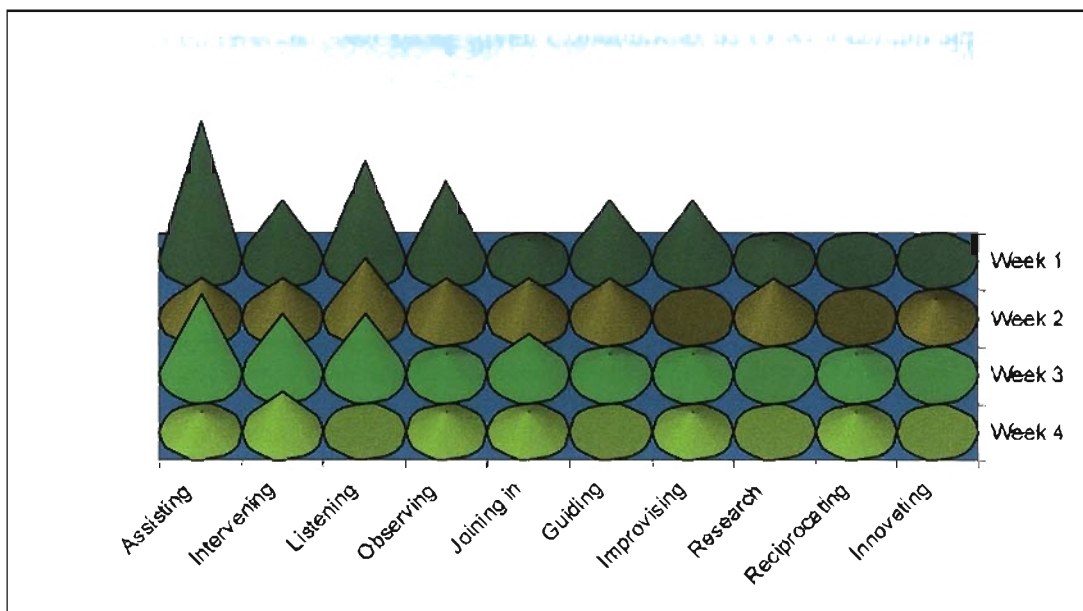
Hector also enjoyed (n=9) many of his days, and mentioned his satisfaction with various occurrences (n=7), such as seeing the 'kids re-united with their parents' (Day 28), supervising the use of bikes (Day 18), and having 'been part of the happier times for these kids' (Day 13). He mentions his surprise at the children's capacities and understanding 5 times, from the small things, such as remembering each others' names (Day 1), to a boy who hoped his brother's marriage would survive, 'because its lonely' if you split up – 'I was lost for words', he wrote (Day 9).

On the day each group of children left, Hector wrote about feeling sad (n=5). On Day 12, he penned, 'You can't help but feel a little sad now that they are going', and, on the following day, he was more personal, 'I felt a little sad myself, as you can't help but form a bond with some of the kids' (Day 13). About the placement itself, he concluded 'Now the placement has come to an end, I feel quite sad' (Day 28), and that it was because 'some of them always seemed to connect with you and that's what made the goodbyes a little harder' (Day 29).

There are occasional mentions of other feelings (confidence, frustration, eagerness and amusement), but the overall tenor of Hector’s work is factual. Even in writing of his feelings, he uses terms such as ‘I felt’ only in relation to apprehension, fear and sadness, and he often impersonalises their expression – ‘its a little harder working with the younger kids’ (Day 16), ‘its been a hard day’ (Day 3), or ‘the readings are a bit too heavy’ (Day 9). The contrast of these forms of self-expression with the detail of his observation of others tended to reduce my awareness of the level of feeling in his work. Nonetheless, it is clear that Hector became very attached to some of the children, and had to work hard to deal with these unfamiliar feelings.

6.5.7 *Actions in response to the unfamiliar*

Hector’s diary showed many examples of ways in which he participated in the workplace, some of them, as illustrated above, extremely detailed. The diaryscape below shows the focus of his diary entries concerning what he was doing over each week of the placement.



Diaryscape 18: Hector – participation in workplace activities over time

Hector's position was that of assistant to the teacher from the moment that the children first arrived:

The interaction with the staff has been relatively easy. They are keen to learn about us and the course we are on. The working relationship with the staff is as equals. Nothing is being held back and they are more than happy to help with any problems. The teacher that I am currently working with insists that we are a team and readily includes me in any talks we have with the class. (HR1)

This role was most frequently mentioned in the first week of each of the two groups of children's presence. As already mentioned, he realised very quickly that assisting did not involve waiting to be told what to do, but one of active intervention – and, as with the assistance he gave, his interventions are more frequently mentioned in the first week that he deals with each group.

Participation has been active. Very active. Initially I did try to sit back a bit but the children come over for advice all the time. To them you are just another adult and, in this environment, you are there to help them. So in a way they get you involved from the start. Now I go around the class and make sure they are ok and help those that need it. (HR1)

An ongoing component of the environment involved being present during discussions about individual children, and being given explanations as to why certain approaches were being taken. This listening role diminished each week, and was unmentioned in the last week. The context itself allowed for information to be gleaned about the children and how they were responding:

Like any group of kids, there is always the odd one out. In this class it is Pete who has a love of cows. Last week he was teased a bit by some of the older kids. Today he was proudly showing one of his older peers his wood burning of a cow he had drawn himself with the words 'I love cows' around it. I admit, I prepared myself for the teasing to begin. To my surprise he was told that it was a 'great wood burning' which was all he wanted to hear. Both children had their backs to me and were unaware of my presence. (Day 8)

Hector also mentioned what he observed in considerable detail, at least in the early stages when everything was unfamiliar, but, as with 'listening', his observations reduced over time. Observing was, in fact, his original intention:

Initially, I wanted to sit back a little to see what the lay of the land was but the kids don't allow that. To them you are an adult and therefore they will come to you with questions. (HR3)

In the early stages at least, Hector's observations are merely descriptions of a sequence of events that he presented as inherently interesting, accompanied by a concluding

observation (such as the description of the icebreaker mentioned in section 6.5.5). As time went on, these observations reflected an increasing grasp of the social dynamics of the environment:

Watching the kids in class, when they are doing something they enjoy, there is no shifting them. But you soon know when the activity they are doing holds no interest for them. They get very restless. I've also noticed that the groups that developed early within the class, appear to have split up. They all mix in one way or another. Its also interesting to note how the older members are much more tolerant of the younger ones and more willing to assist them. Maybe its this group, but they seem to have bonded well to each other. (Day 18)

He made several mentions of simply joining in with what was happening, for example, window painting and judging a sand sculpture competition (Day 2), making jewellery & fridge magnets (Day 10) and responding to children's requests:

I was positioned at the bottom of the waterslide by some of the children. There turned out to be two reasons for this. The first was so I could see how well they came down the slide i.e. body shaped and huge grin and secondly, I provided an easy target for soaking. (Day 9)

The remaining types of participation in the workplace that Hector described were ones in which he was much more active, guiding the children, improvising responses to the children's behaviours, researching the children's backgrounds according to a strategy he had developed to minimise unfairness in his evaluations, as well as reciprocating the children's overtures, and innovating. In other words, these were moments in which Hector was working as an equal team member. As he described it:

I really am enjoying the responsibilities that have been handed to me. It's a situation where you cannot just sit back and hope things will sort themselves out. The problems, for the children, are immediate and require an immediate solution. I'm really learning to think on my feet. (Day 2)

There were two classes mixed together and a great deal of the afternoon was spent sorting out problems with teary children! Every time I turned around, there was another little kid crying! The most effective pasifier was the face paints. So, if they were crying you told them to go and be painted which soon cheered them up. After they were painted they didn't cry for fear of having the paint run!! (Day 18)

Even though this group is very lively and often get the upper hand with me (especially in the playground) I've developed the skills to control them sufficiently. (Day 22)

He saw that, although 'it would have been easy to be all "pally" with the kids', 'you have to remain the disciplinarian without being insensitive' (Day 4). The initiatives that the

children take form a temptation (which he successfully resisted) to become part of their world (to position himself as a big child) rather than remain aligned with the teaching staff.

6.5.8 *The project as touchstone*

In section 6.5.3, it was indicated that there was very little material in Hector's diary on policing, and his image of what it might entail had to be gleaned from any comments he might have made in completing the required activities. His project of becoming a police officer was not mentioned, perhaps because his assiduous approach was an expression, in and of itself, of his dedication to this. His focus was on the subject and its associated placement.

One of Hector's goals was doing the best he could at meeting the requirements of the subject, which can be inferred from the detailed approach he took to both his diary entries and to the completion of the activities, a goal borne out on the supplementary cover sheet by his checking the box for 'doing everything possible to excel in the subject'. As mentioned earlier, this was the largest of the notebooks, and he assiduously completed all of the activities.

The second of Hector's goals was described after he had finished the placement, and the various incidents that reflect it are only identifiable as part of a goal-oriented process by these later reflective remarks. This goal concerns how to communicate with children and gain information from them. It may, rather than being an isolated goal, have been linked to gaining a skill of value in police work. There are several incidents in which he describes ways in which conversations with the children began. He discovered the usefulness of one-to-one interactions on Day 2:

The next activity of the day was window painting. I just had to assist those children who may have difficulty using their hands. This I enjoyed as it was real interaction between myself and the kids one on one. Up until now, I had mostly been dealing with them in groups. It gave me the opportunity to get to know them better and they start to trust me a little more and are not afraid to ask questions or come to me with problems. (Day 2)

The importance of these interactions became obvious to Hector on Day 5, during a bus trip when he sat and talked with one of the children, Pedro:

What did become evident to me, was how communication had opened up. By simply showing an interest in what he was saying, opened the lines of communication up dramatically. Although we had talked previously, it had never been for too long. Now, having found a common denominator, the relationship had changed and he could relate to me better. He rarely left my side for the rest of the day. (Day 5)

This was an insight upon which Hector drew:

Communication with them has been something I have had to learn. I found that if you find a subject that they have an interest in they will open up. With Pedro its cars, Peter its animals, Paula loves speedway and so on. Although you start of on their pet subject, they always tend to end up talking about their families. However, the children brought me out of myself. (Day 9)

One conversation with a 10 year old, Penny, led to his admiring her perceptiveness, and may well have contributed to the sense of closeness he had with her. This was an unintended by-product of the ways in which he was building relationships through communicating, and leads into the third goal of his placement experiences:

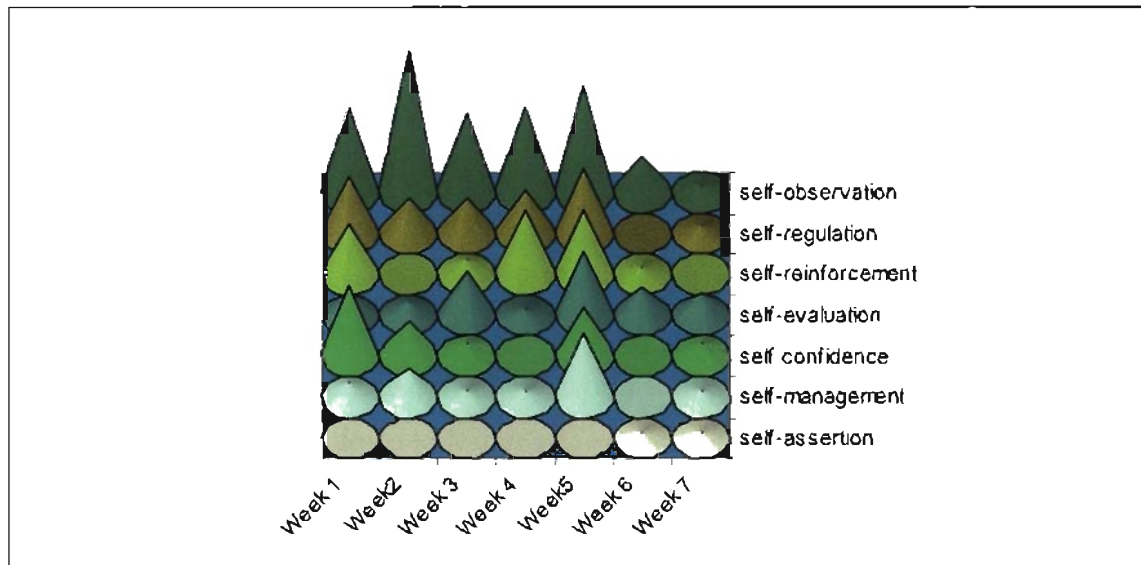
Penny was the toughest to say goodbye to. (see 2100h, 26/5/99). She never left my side all morning. She/d been trying to run off with my hat all week so I let her keep it this morning. After it was adjusted, she proudly put it on, stood up with her hands on her hips and said 'I'll always have good luck now because I've got this hat.' I really hope that's true. (Day 12)

This final goal concerned Hector's feelings. As the first group of children left, he faced the problem of how to handle his sadness because the children were returning to difficult situations. He asked the staff about how they handled their sadness, and they said that, over time, you get used to it (Day 12). He developed his own rationale, that at least he had been part of some happy times in their lives (Day 26).

6.5.9 Learning selves

This section reviews Hector's self-positioning during, and following the course of the placement, and whether or not this changed in any coherent way over the course of his experiences and reflections. Hector spent four weeks in the placement, but three further weeks in completing the required activities. As a consequence, he continued to reflect on

his early apprehensions and how he overcame them, what he was aiming to do, and how it was he achieved his objectives. Diaryscape 19 introduces what he wrote about.



Diaryscape 19: Hector – self-positioning over time

By far the greatest number of entries Hector made about himself were observations of his responses to events and experiences ('self observation', n=76). Feeling 'amazed' at the success of the name game (Day 1), finding his eighth day not the toughest, but 'long', feeling 'really good' to know he had been part of the children's holiday (Day 12), and 'having difficulty' in working out what he was supposed to be getting from the readings' (Day 29) are all responses in this category.

'Self-regulation' (n=34) also figured relatively prominently in Hector's work, particularly in Weeks 1 and 4, and most strongly in his reflections in Week 5 (that is, these are often reiterations of his positioning). On Day 2, he found that 'Its hard not to give [the children] all the attention they want', and that encouraging them 'to join in and play with the other kids is quite tough as they really don't want to!' After finding out about the children's home situations on Day 3, he remarked that 'The problem is trying not to treat them any differently'. He also found that when his 'patience was starting to wear thin [...] it was simple enough to keep it in check' (Day 8). In reviewing his responses on Day 29, he

wrote, 'I did let my frustration show a couple of times which I feel I should not have let happen'.

Comments which indicated Hector was reinforcing himself for his successes (n= 28) peaked in Weeks 4 and 5. On his 25th day in the placement, as the second week with the second group began, he wrote that enjoying getting to know the children was a plus, because 'Its helping with the way I deal with them although I do still get a little frustrated [...]'. In Week 5, he commented that he 'adapted well to situations thrown at [him] by the children. [...] It all came down to learning to communicate with them on their level which was something else [he] learnt to do quite successfully' (Day 29).

Within the four weeks of the placement, Hector engaged in self-evaluation most frequently in Week 3 (n=28). 'I think this class is going to test me more than the last one' (Day 17), and 'I'm getting on very well with this group although they are a lot harder work than the last class' (Day 21), are examples of his stepping back from his experiences to judge how he is faring. Comparison between the first and second groups, and the children's lives and his own 'normal' (Day 29) childhood, form the seedbed for many of these comments. In his concluding reflection (Day 29), he wrote that

The whole experience has been very positive for me. I tapped into resources and skills I never knew existed in me. I found I wasn't dwelling on their backgrounds so much with the second group but was taking them more on how they were with me. I felt it was a fairer way of treating them. (HR2)

Hector made almost as many comments about his level of confidence in the encounter with the children (n=26), both the lack of initial confidence and his growing sense of ease as he got to know individual children. The question about his capacity to handle the situation was uppermost in his diary entries in the first week, and diminished from that point. As he described the process, 'Once I got over the initial nerves and apprehension I really settled in' (Day 29).

Interestingly, it is only in his fifth week of completing the diary that the issues of self-management (what it was he found useful in reaching his goals, and, indeed, what those

goals were) (n=18) came to the fore. Prior to this point, while the incidents that contributed to his progress and the conclusions he was drawing were individually described, that learning 'how to gain information from kids' (see below) was a goal had not been articulated.

Sitting down and working with the children was the only way to get them to talk. It was harder outside because there were so many distractions. In the classroom, they would talk to you about all sorts. The bus was another good place for this. It was helpful to me because I was having to find ways to communicate with them so I could learn more about them and their backgrounds without going to their application forms. I certainly learnt how to gain information from kids. Mind you, they got as much out of me!' (HR2)

It was only in the final two weeks that Hector self-asserted (n=2), and, on both occasions, it was about the way in which various topics were written about in the study materials. In the first instance, he questions the phrasing of the topic (which concerns whether people in the organisation 'fudge' the rules), finding the term puts the issue 'very strongly', and preferring to consider 'the use of discretion' within the placement organisation (HA14). The next week, he 'found the reading from Wertheimer [¹³] very negative' (HR2).

What helped Hector make the transition from someone who was neither familiar with children, social differences, nor children in school, to someone who felt confident in his capacities to work with children and who saw his own circumstances, and therefore those of others, in a new light, was not just the attention which he paid to the study materials and how they linked in to his experiences, but the role the staff played:

From day one they made us feel like members of staff ourselves. Nothing was too much trouble and we were certainly made part of the team. [...] both teachers I worked with made it clear that I was very much part of their team. What this meant was they could rely on me to hold the fort should they have to leave class for a short while. I even got to take a pottery class. [...] At the end I was told that I had made their job a lot easier which felt great. (Day 29)

The combination of a skilled and supportive teacher, involvement in group processes, and the children's reliance on him, similar to their reliance on the teachers, all helped Hector overcome his fear and become an integral part of the work environment. His final review of his learning shows that those things he was learning about class, as he worked with children with limited life-chances, changed his understanding of class, and of his own life

¹³ Wertheimer R (1975) 'Are the police necessary?', in Viano E & Reiman J (eds.) *The police and society* London: Lexington Books, pp. 49-60

chances. His entry on the last day of his placement indicates the end point of his journey from stranger in a strange land to someone with knowledge of the land:

All the kids have gone now. Myself and Pat Palmer took the van full of luggage to [the] Station. It was nice to see the kids re-united with their parents etc. We left early, around 0900 to beat the traffic, so it was a pretty rushed morning. The kids were gathered up for assembly, put into bus groups and we were away.

At the station, a lot of the parents just grabbed their children and were gone, just like that. Yet there were others who asked how their child had been over the past two weeks and passed the time of day with you. There was one mother who told us that she had been working 7pm - 7am shifts and had just come straight from work to pick up her son. Why she had to tell us that I don't know. I think that her son may be in for a lonely afternoon because mum has to catch up on her sleep. He didn't look to happy about going home. Her first question to us was 'how has he behaved?' I don't think she believed us when we said he'd been great. I got the impression that he played up at home. Maybe he doesn't get the attention he needs? I don't blame his mum. She may have to work these long hours to make ends meet but he won't understand that yet. I think it illustrates how simple it is for these things to get started.

1500h

We had morning tea when we returned. Myself and Pat Palmer were thanked and given a gift each to remind us of our time there. I don't think I shall ever forget it. The staff here do an incredible job and have to be so flexible which they all seem to do so well with the minimum of fuss. I'm glad I had the opportunity to work with them and the children. (Day 26)

6.5.10 Summary

Hector's diary indicates that his project was not one of becoming a person of a particular sort (he believed that policing attracted people like him who had the requisite capacities), rather it was one of making a successful transition from one occupation to another, as had his sister. As such, and in combination with the immediate, and structured, demands of the school/residential environment, his overall project faded into the background, and his attention turned to learning how to communicate with the children.

As was the case with Brittany, the children themselves were the major drivers in building relationships, and, like her, Hector discovered that one-on-one interactions fostered the types of contact that built relationships. However, unlike Brittany, whose goal was articulated very early in the placement, the extent to which Hector valued the children and the relationships he was building with them only emerged over time. None of the interactions were described in terms of 'breakthroughs', for his concern came to be one of

being a positive part of the children's lives. He was genuinely interested in each child and their circumstances, as well as the ways in which the teachers fostered group cohesion, and good behaviour. He asked the teachers how they handled the sadness of the farewells. Also unlike Brittany, he had entered the placement without, he thought, any relevant skills, and found, to his surprise, that he had some, and the placement itself offered him a structure in which he could learn and legitimately contribute.

In this way, Hector's placement appears to have resulted in a significant shift in self-positioning, from self as incompetent to someone who made the experts' job easier and who knew how to build relationships with children. Perhaps because of the supportive framework, Hector's work shows little evidence of thinking about the future (it would not have seemed very risky), but considerable evidence of reflection. His reflections on his experiences include his identification of how frightened he had been, that he had learned from the children, and how the support of the teachers had helped him take on various responsibilities.

6.6 Kelvin

6.6.1 Biographical information

Kelvin was a former tradesman in his early thirties. Kelvin's parents were both born in Australia, and worked in sales and clerical areas. His father had matriculated and his mother had not. He had been raised in the suburbs (KA9), in a fibro-brick house, and the neighbourhood was 'very much like an extended family' (KA9). The family attended church, and Kelvin commented that, as a child, he 'tended to pray when things were tough or perhaps when something was desired' (KA9). Both parents, he wrote, 'instilled in us [...] a respect for fellow human beings & doing the right thing' (KA9).

He identified his family as being working class, and, perhaps because one of his siblings was already in policing, or because he had already undertaken the police station placement, saw his class position as unchanging with his change of career.

It is possible to glean more about Kelvin's world and views than is possible for informants other than Denis, partly because he gave his opinions as he completed the

required activities, and partly because he wrote about his family life in the diary entries made after the conclusion of the placement¹⁴. For example, on class, he wrote:

The student likes to think that he is not at all bothered by the category into which he may or may not fall. If the individual is bothered by where they may rank, then that is their problem. Perhaps the student's comments seem too negative and the personal rankings given above may reflect this. However, if the job is offered and ambitions begin to be fulfilled over the years, this exercise itself may be beneficial.

Personal experiences have allowed the student to observe people (mostly socially) from the "service class" & "cadet level". If one is to be fortunate enough to be seen as climbing the ladder at all, the student would hope to maintain the grass roots values. (A3)

In another activity, he wrote that he saw 'respect' as being more important than class: 'Respect is a quality this student holds and hopefully this respect will be returned, especially from family and friends' (KA6).

Kelvin talked about his experiences in the placement with his partner and with people in the organisation, and had never worked or lived closely with the client group prior to the placement.

6.6.2 *The agency*

Kelvin spent his placement weeks working in a hospital for aged people with psychiatric problems. Kelvin's first week of the placement was spent on three different wards, all for people with severe dementia, and involved in diversional therapy. There were sing-a-longs and bus trips, TV watching and card games, and taking the residents for walks. Kelvin was relieved at the end of his first week not to have been involved in tending to residents personally, other than feeding, walking and entertaining. After this initial week, where the residents had a minimal capacity to communicate, he was moved between different wards and diversional therapy groups, in one of which day care patients and residents were combined. This allowed him to observe and talk with family carers of people with dementia. It also gave him access to some assessment procedures which determined who would obtain one of the increasingly rare places in the facility.

¹⁴ Kelvin took 37 days to complete the notebook, and had completed the placement within 26 days.

At the end of his first week, he mentioned that his involvement with the staff had been 'with a smallish number' (KR1), but, because, in subsequent weeks, he moved between different wards, he worked alongside many more. He was so successful in ensuring that staff were not identifiable that it is unclear as to how many staff he was in contact with, whether or not the person who supervised him remained the same, and so on. What is clear is that he was impressed with the staff he encountered:

The student has found that he is in the middle of some well educated people who show a keen interest in what is, to them, a new concept. (Day 8)

Today it was interesting to partake in a conversation with several of the nursing staff educators. Their positions are essentially that of administrators. However in general discussion regarding the Centre they show a genuine concern for the welfare of the residents. Quality people when you consider that these residents would (have been) be termed by many as rejects or a burden to our society. (Day 19)

Took opportunity to converse with a 50 years old trainee male nurse and a 22 year old Asian (male) social worker. Its great to be around people who are so sincere and committed to their work. (Day 22)

Kelvin also showed considerable sympathy for the position of the staff as they faced the downsizing of their organisation, and were dealing with the paucity of respite and nursing home care facilities for the aged. 'No wonder', he wrote, 'the assessor sometimes hates her job. She tells me Mr. & Mrs. Y are "just a drop in the ocean"' (Day 17). The problems within the agency were clearly on staff minds (Days 7, 10, 15 and 19), and Kelvin had several opportunities to hear of their concerns:

More involvement with residents, mainly walking, but also tapped in to some of the discussion between workers regarding the looming changes re downsizing. (Day 19)

It was also clear from Kelvin's diary entries that he took notice of the advice he was getting from the staff about how best to conduct himself, for example, with the interviews (a required activity about which he was worried):

Discussion earlier in the week with the supervisor established that to approach the interview with a set of questions pre written was probably not the way to go. The better way would be to have broad ideas ready to discuss. Time to get on with it. (Day 14)

There was certainly a concern on the part of staff that Kelvin should gain the maximum from his placement and understand the situations of dementia sufferers and their carers. He was interviewed at the end of his first week, and moved to wards in which a greater degree of interaction was possible (Day 5); he was invited to observe assessments (Days 17 and 19); and a 'final debrief was held between the deputy nurse administrator,

the head nurse educator, the community field assessment officer' and Kelvin, because there were to be more students placed there and the staff were 'keen to maximise the opportunities given to these students' (Day 26).

It would seem from these, and other, comments about the context that Kelvin was the first policing student the agency had dealt with, and that the staff were not sure as to how best to guide his learning. He had a legitimate, peripheral role alongside people who he acknowledged as experts in their field and as people who were admirably professional in their conduct in difficult circumstances (Days 8, 9, 19 and 22). The absence of a common context with policing, or of an established learning process, meant that Kelvin was 'cut loose' from the policing framework, and tied his experiences in to what he knew of the elderly from his own family life.

6.6.3 *Kelvin's notebook*

Kelvin's notebook was 10,549 words in length, the shortest of the notebooks received, reflecting brief responses to the required activities more than brief diary entries (44% of the work). He had never kept a diary before, but did find writing this one quite easy. He indicated that he had written more than he intended to about himself and his reactions, as well as everything that he thought was relevant to the subject.

Despite his view of his diary as covering more than he intended (and quite possibly this referred only to his post-placement entries), the brevity of the diary means that links and explanations are minimal. Later entries allowed me to deduce exactly what he was alluding to in a previous entry (for example, on Day 2 he refers to spending time in a sing-along and on a bus trip; on Day 3, he wrote, 'Diversional Therapy again today'), but this was not always the case - his diary had the loose ends typical of the medium. He successfully disguised the identity of all of the staff, to the extent that it was not possible to distinguish whether the person of whom he was writing had figured in the diary previously.

The use of the third person across the majority of Kelvin's diary entries draws continual attention to the work as an assessment item. The diary also contains comments and asides to the marker which show how the question of audience was an important

component in Kelvin's approach to the task (Days 12, 21, 29, and in his concluding remarks). For example, on Day 12 he wrote:

Just completed assignment no. one, will get it in the post this afternoon. The student has been guilty of not thoroughly reading study guide and subject outline. One feels these may have been more beneficial presented in the one booklet (sorry to whinge). (Day 12)

Kelvin's summary of the placement experience shows the extent to which Kelvin was conscious of the context:

Just some comments regarding the self. I wonder if you may be annoyed by the style of writing eg. The student this and the student that. I'm never sure which way to go. Also the quality of the writing has, I'm sure, deteriorated. If it has remained legible than the student is thankful. The student is Kelvin Graham Gray, the wife is Gloria, son Geoffrey, daughters are Gemma and Grace. Mum is Greta, Dad is Gus and I am lucky. At [over 30] this job would mean a great deal to me. I hope my ramblings on the family have not distracted me too far off the subject co-ordinators desired learning objectives.

Lastly, thanks Dr Heller-Wagner, for showing me what I have to be thankful for. Heaps. It must appear that the student is doing a bit of "sucking up" to the good Dr. A Pass would be divine. (KR2)

p.s. I never got to ask you if that was a Disney character on a red tie you wore. (Day 37)

In this instance, Kelvin's diary entry shows that his presumed or actual relationship with the marker was not a fully subservient one, and that he was attempting, through humour, to distance himself from his plea for clemency¹⁵. In fact, Kelvin's sense of humour is a distinctive feature of his work, starting with his first notebook entry (Activity 1). He was unsure as to whether his choice of the third person had been appropriate, and was more direct than Denis in his man-to-man appeal.

In the last weeks of his work, the tenor of Kelvin's diary changed from the awkwardly formal and the humorous to recounts of his personal life that are seen by Eggins and Slade (1996) to be typical of high contact relationships:

Mum's gone visiting with the kids so here's a quick entry. Busy day spent participating in "working-bee" at son's kindy. Met several other parents and now it's time to get the fire going. (Day 37)

The four extracts provided thus far show the combination of consciousness of self and context, and his need to build an appropriate relationship with the lecturer, as well as the later recording of family life, more typical of a close relationship either with the diary or with the lecturer, that together characterise Kelvin's diary.

¹⁵ A strategy identified by Eggins & Slade (1996: 166-167).

6.6.4 *The project of becoming a police officer*

Kelvin ranked the police badge at number one, and, as his explanation of his ranking, wrote that the badge meant:

A great deal at this stage of life; both for self and others (immediate family). I'm getting on a bit. (KA1)

There is no mention of a dream, rather, in a dryly humorous way, the focus is on meeting family responsibilities and on the importance of success in his studies because of his age. As his final reflection (provided on the previous page) also mentions his age, it appears that Kelvin's light tone is intended to mask some anxieties about what he perceives to be a late career change.

There are some indicators of how Kelvin viewed policing and his intended role within it in the required activities. For example, in Activity 10, which concerned police racism, he concluded that, while it merely reflected the 'racism of the broader society', 'Lets hope we can change it somehow. The student believes that maturity (or lack of it) is a major factor' (KA10). Thus Kelvin was seeing himself as a mature character who would contribute to the diminution of police racism.

In Activity 13, students were required to discuss whether police were necessary, and Kelvin concluded that 'the police are essential but definitely not to become (if they haven't already) a tool of the bourgeoisie'. Then he made an aside which is rather cryptic and therefore difficult to interpret: 'Pessimism used to be so easy, its amazing how becoming a parent can change ones outlook. Perhaps the head is in the clouds but the value and standards talked of by Mr. Ryan seem worthy and achievable.'

His policing placement had led to ongoing social connections with at least some of the police in the station, as there is a diary entry related to having borrowed a book from one of the detectives, and another about a day on the driving track with a police officer. He was one of the students who, in Activity 20, would have treated the two marijuana-smoking boys in exactly the same way. At one level, then, Kelvin was positioning himself as suited to police work, and, indeed, as someone who was already a member

of policing networks, but, on another, he appeared to be quite anxious that his performance in his studies might not be good enough.

6.6.5 *Encountering the unfamiliar*

Kelvin's first entry in his diary was made the day before the placement began, and was composed of the first of the required activities. Typically brief, he indicated that the readings themselves constituted an encounter with the unfamiliar:

Already this subject is challenging me. Perhaps at this early stage I'm tied up with the second last sentence of Reading 2^[16]. At the moment the student thinks he has a pretty good chance of maintaining impartiality. He also looks forward to developing an ability to stay calm and not get too involved. If this keeps up one may enjoy this subject a great deal. (Day -1)

In this encounter with sufferers of dementia, Kelvin's main goal, then, was that of remaining impartial. One of the mechanisms he used to establish some distance between himself and what he encountered was humour:

I've been on a tour (guided) of this amazing old complex, several heritage buildings. The lady who has looked after me during this introductory period has kindly given me the opportunity to work several twelve hour shifts. Good preparation and good for family life (for me anyway). Real life is bloody sad, and hidden from many. There are many special people hidden away in a place such as [this]. The residents are special as well.

Staff have the ability to attend to the residents needs in a matter of fact way, however there is an undeniable compassion and concern shown by these workers.

On a previous day of introduction an admin. staffer pointed out one or two wards where those who argue in favour of euthenasia would base their argument. They could put forward a strong case but, as with capital punishment, my feelings are that as humans we should be against the voluntary taking of a life. It's the easy way.

The residents tend to cruise around in a shared wardrobe. I'm told they can become aggressively agitated, this will be noted when viewed. (Day 1)

As an encounter with the unfamiliar, Kelvin's account of his first day shows more surprise at the quality of the buildings than it does at the people he met. The humorous remark about the 'special people' who were hidden away is suggestive of black humour, as well as positional negotiations with the lecturer, and Kelvin's final comment, that resident agitation 'will be noted when viewed', of considerable detachment.

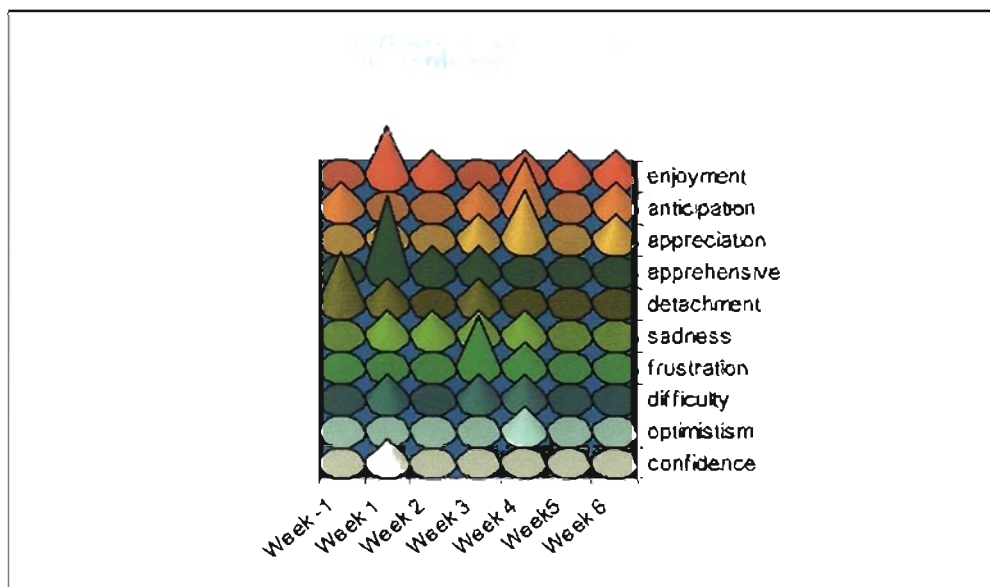
¹⁶ The second last sentence of this reading was, with regard to the personal demands of engagement in critical sociology, that 'All this is not as desperately hard and serious as it may seem provided we are involved gladly and not reluctantly' (Sargent 1992: 10).

In his 40 hour reflection (which occurred after three working days owing to the twelve hour shifts he was permitted to do), he does indicate the scope of what was demanded of him in the first week, and how determined he was to see the experience in the hospital in a positive light. When asked to describe how he was developing empathy with the members of the client group, he wrote that it was:

Very much a physical activity. Eye contact, face to face communication, the ability to use touch have all been developing. Any student (committed) would benefit from a placement to this centre. The response from the residents is greatly varied and quite often non plussed. The student is determined to maintain a good attitude. (Day 4)

6.6.6 *Feelings about the unfamiliar*

As mentioned in the above section, Kelvin’s aim was to ‘stay calm and not get too involved’ (something he mentioned the day before the placement started). Either as a consequence of this, or of his sardonic approach to pleasures and displeasures alike, there is very little material in Kelvin’s diary that directly expresses his feelings. Diaryscape 20 below summarises the spread of the 37 entries that concern his feelings.



Diaryscape 20: Kelvin – feelings over time

Enjoyment was most frequently mentioned (n=6), and anticipation and appreciation of his own life circumstances or other people’s thoughtfulness towards him each had five mentions. The issue of remaining detached was mentioned 4 times, as was finding the

situation of the aged sad (using Kelvin's terms, 'bloody sad', and 'tragic'). It was only when specifically asked to provide an account of his emotional reaction to the placement (in the 40 hour reflection) that Kelvin mentioned any of his feelings, or their basis. The basis was, unusually, not anxiety about the placement's unfamiliarity, or the challenge of the readings, but about the potential impact of the experience on his views of the elderly, based upon some earlier family experiences:

Emotions were mixed, having witnessed grandparents go through old age and the potentially demeaning atmosphere of a nursing home / aged care centre the student was unsure from the outset. Being a firm believer that the senior citizens of our society have done their share and deserve the utmost respect one was possibly a little vulnerable to losing that respect. (Day 4)

The lack of much direct expression of emotions can serve to obscure the fact that Kelvin was affected by his experiences. The job began to touch him when he saw an assessment process for the first time (which determined whether or not an elderly person was admitted to the hospital), and he turned to thinking about all of those in the hospital with whom he had come into contact:

There was no "typical" resident. Some sit all day, some walk all day, some feed themselves, others need assistance. This experience is unique. (Day 9)

What touched Kelvin were the life stories he gleaned of once successful and competent men now reduced to agitation, violence, or silence (Days 8, 9, 12, 16 and 18).

6.6.7 *Actions in response to the unfamiliar*

Kelvin intended to remain detached, and this is what he appeared to do, as his diary contains brief accounts of events, occasionally with humorous coda indicating that these are wry stories about others rather than descriptions of what he was feeling or doing. For example, on his second day in the agency, he wrote:

As the student is inexperienced he takes the word of the staff that the residents love to get out in the bus. They certainly weren't complaining. The staff seem to enjoy the change of scenery also. (Day 2)

He observed interactions between staff and residents, and family members and residents carefully, often remarking how he found the care and dedication in adverse circumstances admirable (Days 1, 2, 5, 9, 19 and 22). He also listened to what staff had to say, both about how best to complete the required activities (Days 8, 14 and 22) and their concerns about the future of their jobs and of aged care.

Kelvin was impressed with the standard of care and concern for what he rapidly understood as a forgotten group in contemporary society, and in politics in particular. He took whatever opportunities he could to talk to staff, and admired their compassion (Day 1), their ‘sincerity’, ‘commitment’ (Day 22), and ethical conduct:

[...] The level of standard set and adherence to this standard are admired by the student. Hopefully my thoughts on the ethics of rule compliance are being strengthened. (Day 23)

He pointed out on Day 8, after a debrief with the supervisor, that he found himself in the middle of some well educated people who showed a keen interest in what was, to them, a new concept (he admired educated people) (Day 34). Staff concerns about the parlous state of aged care formed 21% of his work-related diary entries.

He took particular note of the family carers, when they attended to their relatives at the beginning and end of day care, and when he observed and participated in some assessments. He was very concerned about the fate of Mrs. Y, whose previously kind husband of 37 years was now violent, who had herself lost 10 kilos in a year, and who spent the interview with tears welling in her eyes. He was very pleased for her when it appeared that her husband would probably obtain the only available place in the next month. He wrote, too, about the carer whose partner suffered from the same degenerative disease from which Kelvin’s father now suffered.

The patients were less easy to develop relationships with. Many he worked with in the first week were unable to communicate or to understand what was being said to them (pencil and paper did work with one). Nonetheless, on Day 2 he wrote that ‘Dinner time was a hands on affair and the student feels that he is making some sort of contribution’. Day 4’s entry shows the type of relationship he was able to build with the residents:

Today was another satisfying one. Much to do and not a lot that stands out to reflect on. Being beaten 11-2 in a game of eucra (cards) by a resident was ashamedly not reported on yesterday. However today the student squared the scoreline a little and further learnt that the aforementioned resident had not played cards for years due to a mathematical defficiency (according to his mum). (Day 4)

It was not all easy: he had trouble taking a group of residents for a walk (one wanted to wander off), and he commented that,

It could be difficult consoling a lady who continually calls out loudly “help me”. Some may just want to know when they’ll be going home, or continually yell out their name: (Day 2)

Kelvin, then, did what was required of him by the staff, and sympathised with them, with the carers and the clients, but the types of involvement that the placement offered were always on the periphery.

6.6.8 *The project as touchstone*

Kelvin's desire to become a police officer was closely tied in to his family responsibilities, as evidenced in his justification of the ranking of the police badge (Day -1), and his comment, that it was 'amazing how becoming a parent can change ones outlook' (KA13). His aim in the placement, as described above, was to remain detached, but this does not appear to be a new issue for him, nor does it appear to resolve in the course of the placement:

More time today with wife and children, how lucky can a fella get. We read to the kids every night and at times everyone should hear the nursery rhymes.

A wise old owl lived up in the oak,
The more he saw the less he spoke;
The less he said the more he heard,
Why can't we all be like that wise old bird. (Day 24)

As the student reflects on the experiences of [the place] one cannot help but go back to the wise old owl sitting up in the oak tree. Often I'm frustrated by an inability to sit back, look and listen. Much effort must be applied to develop this skill. (Day 26)

Kelvin's project of policing was interwoven with other projects about the sort of person he wished to become, and the question of detachment seams his diary, in terms of not just what is written about, but also in terms of the writing style, and, in some contrast, through the presence of vignettes of family life. These latter instances were the primary content of the diary once the placement had finished, but were also evident in week-end entries during the placement period:

A long bushwalk with wife and children on a beautiful Sunday morning. Time for reflection on how fortunate the student feels at this stage in life. Time also to consider the developmental stage of this social investigator. Doubt and uncertainty are feelings that still hover around. (Day 14)

Sunday, dinner at mum and dad's, priceless. (Day 21)

Kelvin's project, then, was to remain detached from the experience, and it was played out against a background of what was, for Kelvin, satisfying domesticity.

Remaining detached was not always easy:

Sadness experienced by the student when assisting a carer (wife of respite patient) take her husband out to the car for the journey home. This chap was suffering [from a degenerative disease] and was managing well. The student has a father who suffers from this unfair (another one) ailment. The chap observed today was twenty years older than Dad, at times its bloody difficult. (Day 14)

This was the first mention in Kelvin's diary that the encounters he was having were, on occasions, closely connected to his personal circumstances. It was his own, and, most particularly, his parents' future that was being brought to his attention:

Another day of 'leisure'. Mum at uni today so dad calls on grandpa to come spend the day. Gramy and nanna are both nearby as Thursday is tennis day for the old girls and the courts are just over the road. Dad (mine) is slowing a fair bit and mum insists she is coping. My old man is a great man and its just bloody sad what him and mum have been served up for their more senior years together. I suppose this placement at [the hospital] has been a godsend in the fact that I've seen so many others who are a lot worse off than dad. Mum is just as great a woman. (Day 25)

A day of manual labour with plenty of wood to load and then chop. Spending much of the day at mum and dads collecting the said wood, the student was utilized by the parents in completing a number of chores. I'm only too happy to assist however its another strong reminder of how little poor old dad is now capable of. It must be so bloody frustrating for him and he never shows any sign of being annoyed. (Day 36)

For Kelvin, then, the placement tied in to the ways in which his own life circumstances were related to his choice of becoming a police officer. He was clear that becoming a police officer would not just prove an appropriate way to support his family, but also that it had ramifications for other aspects of his life. Prior to a social gathering with his friends, he commented:

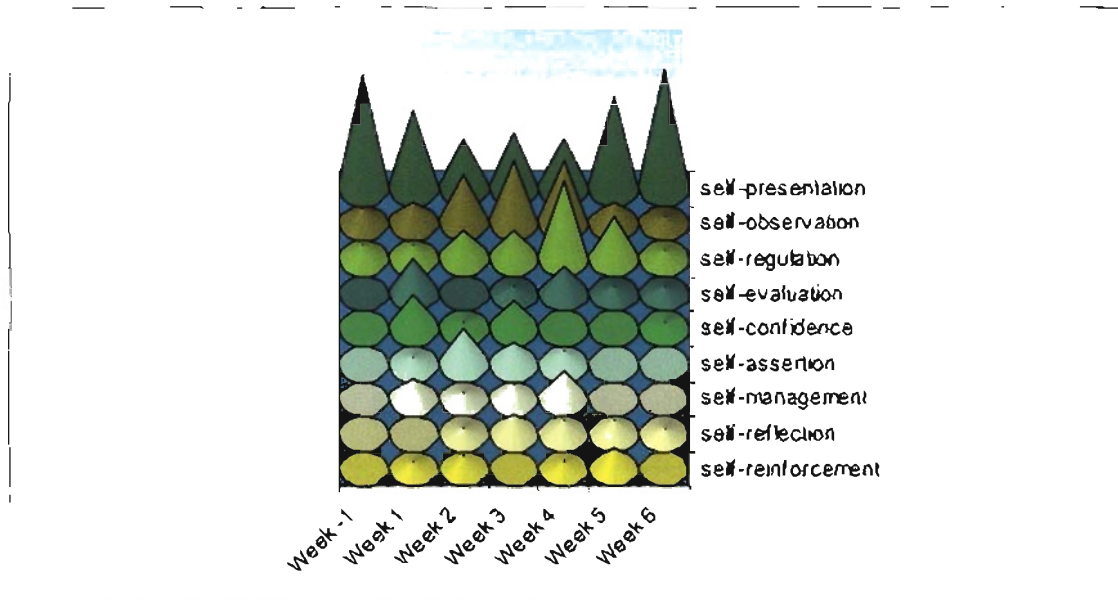
A social gathering this evening should be interesting. Getting together with a number of old friends who haven't seen the student since study began early in the year. In the past we have passed the odd "joint" around so it will be a good opportunity to observe other peoples attitudes towards the new student. (Day 27)

An early start with the kids still asleep. What turned out to be a late night for them (the children) as a pretty early night for dad. Taking on the driving duties suits the old bloke fine these days especially when the kids are involved. One can only reflect with bewilderment at the crazy amounts of alcohol that used to be consumed at such social gatherings. No sign of green weed or water pipes at the party last night, I think its was all done behind closed doors. The subject seemed to be avoided bar the odd raised eyebrow informing the student that he won't be able to have a puff anymore. Not a problem say I. Off for another bushwalk. (Day 28)

6.6.9 *Learning selves*

Kelvin entered the placement with the position of a mature family man who had made a decision to join the police to support his young family. His past experience in a trade had not equipped him with strong study skills, and, as has been illustrated thus far, his

work was focussed on presenting himself and his understandings in what he hoped would be the appropriate way. This impression is substantiated when the notebook is examined from the perspective of the positioning expressed in Kelvin's work over the seven weeks in which he made notebook and diary entries.



Diaryscape 21: Kelvin – self-positioning over time

By far the greatest number of remarks that reflect the positions that Kelvin was taking relate to self-presentation (n=79). This type of entry was to the forefront at the start and conclusion of his work. The proportion of material can be set against the paucity of information that was available on Kelvin's feelings (as described under section 6.6.5), to highlight the extent to which self-positioning was a major issue in Kelvin's work. The majority of the material coded as self-presentation (n=40) related to his self-conscious way of reporting on his experiences (many examples of which have already been provided), and the rest consists of comments that positioned him as a family man, as an older man, as 'a duffer' amongst the educated, as a working class battler, and as a man in dialogue with another man. The final entry in the notebook, provided in section 6.6.3, exemplifies many of these entries.

Overall, this high number of entries concerning self-presentation indicates that Kelvin's work was oriented towards a specific audience, and presenting himself to that audience in this way would foster the achievement of a pass. Most difficult for him was that he

was unsure of how to do this, against a background struggle of his disinclination to study and plenty of family models of people who were managing to do so.

Recording the ways in which he was reacting to his experiences ('self-observation', n=34) peaked in the latter half of the placement and the week after it had finished, and his need to organise himself to complete his studies and to otherwise regulate his behaviour (self-regulation, n=30) assumed greater importance after the conclusion of the placement. As he mentioned it, 'It's still a battle for the student to stay focused and he knows that soon will come the realization that this study caper is a lifelong affair' (Day 26), and, of the family's disapproval of his mother-in-law's 'mate', that he has 'learnt to hold my tongue long ago' (Day 30).

The remaining features of his work related to self-positioning were relatively few in number, reflecting initial anxieties about interviewing more than being in the placement, managing to control an unruly resident, and stating where he stood on particular issues, such as class, the healthiness of change, and how the subject might be better organised.

Whilst scrutiny of the components of Kelvin's work suggests that little change might have occurred in his self-positioning, this is not borne out by the overall 'story-line'. He started the placement with the aim of detachment, but his observations of the care extended to the elderly dementia sufferers by staff *and* family members of the residents eroded this aim. He finished the placement concerned about the lack of funding for aged care, and with new insights into the problems that lay ahead of his parents, and of him.

6.6.10 *Summary*

Kelvin's diary has a focus on self-management towards a desired future, in the light of family responsibilities. The drift to the personal and familial can be partly attributed to the reduced number of days he spent in the placement because of his long shifts, combined with the requirement to make daily entries until all the work was complete. However, as even his ranking of the police badge concerned his family, some of the focus on family appears to reflect what was, and would continue to be, most important

to Kelvin. That just over one third of the diary entries about his family occur before the conclusion of the placement supports such a view. As the diary progresses, the extent to which the problems of aged care touched Kelvin's personal life became increasingly clear.

Kelvin did not view policing as requiring much more of practitioners than maturity, which he already possessed. In order to align himself with police, he had already made some necessary adjustments, such as not smoking marihuana. Thus the project of policing was not so much about becoming a person of a particular sort, but that of surmounting the remaining hurdles. As such, the negotiations he was making were not in the placement, but with the lecturer he imagined would mark his work. Without any reciprocity in the relationship, his negotiating position remained unchanged throughout the notebook – one of joking subservience.

Besides self-presentation, Kelvin's other concerns were to retain respect for the elderly, and to develop a level of detachment that would allow him to observe situations rather than leap into premature action. The interactions to which he was party, particularly those between family members and the dementia sufferers, eroded his attempts at detachment by the mirror they provided into his parents', and his, future. It was this personal dimension, as well as his tendency to procrastinate, that meant that his diaries became documents recording everyday family life well beyond the conclusion of the placement itself.

The learning for Kelvin sprang from the placement, but was not about the placement, or about policing, but about the thing that had taken him into policing in the first place – his family. His work is an interesting illustration of the artificial distinction drawn between public and private worlds, and shows how each can disrupt and augment the value of the other. His conclusion as to the value of the placement? 'Bloody great'.

6.7 Summary

This chapter has considered the projects and trajectories of five of the informants. Their diaries point to a tumbling kaleidoscope of experiences, learning, and trajectories generated by community placements. Work practices in which informants engaged

ranged from the familiar to ones to which members of the public do not have access, from brief encounters to intense physical proximity, from paperwork to playing pool, and from teaching to shopping trips. Positions taken by informants in the placement ranged, relationally, from family member to self-defined stranger; in terms of student participation, from stressed participant to bored outsider; and, in terms of learning, from raw beginner to skilled player. In this summary, I focus on three main aspects: the nature of the various projects and goals, the roles these played over the course of the placement, and whether or not any re-positioning of selves appears to have resulted.

Of these five students, only Annabel clearly iterated the overarching project of becoming a police officer as something that framed her behaviour. Brittany had a lesser goal, also clearly spelt out, that related to her placement, that of winning over the girls. Hector's and Kelvin's goals were less clear cut, and concerned deficiencies in their capacities that they wished to address (those of communicating with children and remaining detached respectively). Denis and Kelvin both shared the goal of convincing the marker that they were highly suited to the job of policing, but in quite different ways and for quite different reasons.

For Annabel, the project of becoming a police officer was her sustenance as she negotiated her way through a difficult and unpredictable placement. Brittany used her goal as a benchmark for her experience, continually measuring the extent to which a particular interaction had contributed to the achievement of her goal. Denis and Kelvin both focused on the notebook (activities or self-representation), rather than the placement. The goal of communicating with children was by no means immediately apparent in Hector's work – his own concerns were at first subsumed by the strangeness of school life and of the circumstances of the children – but became a theme as his experiences accumulated.

In teasing out the types of repositioning that were evident in these five notebooks, it became apparent that there were three types, the first confined to the immediate context ('local'), the second concerning the student's private life ('personal'), and the third concerning the broader social milieu, and the social justice issues that underpinned the subject as a whole ('political'). The two latter are forms of learning that intrinsically

extend beyond the immediate context for the learning. Table 6 summarises the changes in positioning evident in each of the students' work.

Informant	Local	Personal	Political
Annabel	Yes	Yes	No
Brittany	Yes	No	Uncertain
Denis	No	Yes	No
Hector	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kelvin	No	Yes	Yes

Table 6: Changes in self-positioning

None of the five students' work shows the same pattern of repositioning. Hector experienced change across all three dimensions, and Denis only one. Change at the personal level was more common than the other types of repositioning, and a new understanding of the position of the client group was least common.

Other patterns were discernible. In terms of the placement context, working with children and disabled people led to high levels of interaction and participation, stimulated by the quasi-familial working context and by the clients themselves. The interactive circles on which students drew to deal with any problems they faced were largely local and highly personalised. Only when the situation was in some way problematic was the overall project of policing in evidence.

The analysis of the diaries also shows the highly individualised nature of the learning experiences in community placements, and how the key factor involves the *interaction* between students and contexts and the possibilities inherent in both the student's orientation to the placement and in the context itself. Both have affordances (Gibson 1972, cited in Burkitt 1999). Put Annabel in Denis's placement, and there may have been some relationships developed, at least with the staff. Put Denis in Hector's placement, and the pull of the context would have demanded greater involvement.

In the next chapter, I consider the extent to which the information about the learning experiences of these informants in the placement, as recorded in their work, answered my research questions.

Chapter Seven

Discussion:

Stepping Back

7.1 Answering the research questions

This chapter draws on the analyses in chapters 5 and 6 to look at the extent to which my research questions have been answered. I also consider the information contained in the other two sources of data employed in this research (students' comments in placement debriefings and my own comments on students' work). As such, this is very much an etic and constructed perspective on the ways in which the informants positioned themselves, and whether or not I could detect any changes. The interpretation is not based on an aggregation of the data across informants, but on comparisons between the various sources of data against my research issues.

The focal question of my research was that of the extent to which long-term projects were modified by the demands of the present, and how this affected selves. In examining this, the sub-questions included identifying what the projects might have been, the level of unfamiliarity with which students were faced, how they responded, the resources upon which they drew, whether or not the project had a place in their writing over the course of the placement, and whether any changes in self-positioning were identifiable. In this chapter I also assess whether or not similar patterns of experiences were evident across the various empirical materials on which I drew.

7.2 The demands of the present

The leading assumption in this study was that the immediate demands of the placement situation would take precedence over the long-term project of becoming a police officer. *This assumption was not confirmed.* Table 7, overleaf, summarises the findings as they relate to each student's diary.

Student	Project	Goal(s)	
		Placement-related goals	Lecturer-related goals
Annabel	Explicit	Explicit	Explicit
Brittany	Absent	Explicit	Inferred
Denis	Inferred	Explicit	Inferred
Hector	Absent	Explicit	Inferred
Kelvin	Absent	Explicit	Explicit

Table 7: The presence of projects and goals across diary entries

Table 7 shows that the ways in which projects and goals manifested themselves in the students' work were different for each of the students. The most demanding of the placements (Annabel's) was the placement in which my initial assumptions were most clearly negated, and the least demanding, that of Denis, also cut across my expectations, in that his was the placement in which the project of policing appeared to subsume any focus on the placement itself. For these two students, at the very least, their immediate circumstances did not take precedence over their long-term project.

Of these five students, only Annabel clearly iterated the overarching project of becoming a police officer as something that framed her behaviour. For Annabel, the project of becoming a police officer was her sustenance as she negotiated her way through a difficult and unpredictable placement. Brittany had a lesser goal, also clearly spelt out, that related to her placement, that of winning over the girls. Brittany used her goal as a benchmark for her experience, continually measuring the extent to which a particular interaction had contributed to the achievement of her goal. Hector's and Kelvin's goals were less clear cut still, and concerned deficiencies in their capacities that they wished to address (those of communicating with children and remaining detached respectively). The goal of communicating with children was by no means immediately apparent in Hector's work – his own concerns were at first subsumed by the strangeness of school life and of the circumstances of the children – but became a theme as his experiences accumulated. Denis and Kelvin both shared the goal of convincing the marker that they were highly suited to the job of policing, but in quite different ways and for quite different reasons. Denis and Kelvin both focused on the notebook (completing the activities carefully or in the way they presented themselves), rather than the placement.

Notwithstanding this challenge to my central assumption, all students did express some placement-specific goals. For Brittany, Hector and Kelvin, the placement-specific goals were clearly articulated in their daily entries, whereas the project of policing was not. For Denis, the goals of an inquiry into views of fidelity were satisfied within a week. For Annabel, the goals concerned the better management of risk to ensure she could pursue her project of becoming a police officer. The stimuli for these goals included the study materials linked to chance events (Denis), danger and disgust (Annabel), social contacts that were likely to be 'too close to home' (Kelvin), awareness of incompetence (Hector), and a desire to be a team player (Brittany).

My assumption that projects would be pushed into the background by the demands of the present had been developed in the light of the situated learning literature (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder 2002; Billett 2001a, 2001b; Tennant & Pogson 2000; Lave 1999; Tennant 1999; Wenger 1998; Lave & Wenger 1991, and so on), theories of selves that focus on the immediate social environment (Connelly & Clandinin 1999), and the importance ascribed to the pragmatic motive by Schutz and Luckmann (1974), when people address problematic experiences in everyday life. Interestingly, it is the broader situatedness of the ecological perspective (Burkitt 1999), Bourdieu's (1981 [1977]) notion of the habitus, Berger and Luckmann's (1985) articulation of the sociology of knowledge as it relates to social relationships, and Boud et al.'s (1997, 1996, 1991, 1985) set of assumptions underpinning their approach to learning from experience that emerged as more relevant.

Burkitt's (1999) and Bourdieu's (1981) work act as reminders that actions over time build selves, and therefore any one situation in which a person is located will have multiple connections to other times and other places and practices. This broader context affects what are seen to be the affordances of a particular environment, and the extent to which those affordances will have any priority. A holistic stance on the nature of learning, as is evident in Boud et al.'s five assumptions about the nature of learning from experience (where learning involves active processes of construction blending unique pasts, current experiences in particular milieux and intentions), emphasises the complexity of the processes involved. Moreover, a clear distinction cannot be drawn between inner and outer worlds (Mannion 2001: 105), for experience is transactional (Boud, Cohen & Walker 1996: 11).

Thus it is that Berger and Luckmann's (1985) and Berger and Kellner's (1979) articulation of the varying relevance of different social worlds in sustaining identity is particularly pertinent. Immediate contexts are embedded, for the individual, in other contexts that may have more salience for them than the current one. For students of policing, either the family or the police were likely to be more important than the unfamiliar people with whom they only had to spend 160 hours. Perhaps here lie some of the reasons why, while Annabel and Hector learned new ways of relating to people that allowed them to see themselves, at the end of their placement, as different to what they were at its beginning, and Brittany built relationships without changing much herself, of these five students, only Brittany could foresee a future in which those in the placement would have a part. The meaning-making about the placement was occurring outside of the placement, with family, friends, police and fellow students, as well as within the placement, and these intimate, longer-term contacts were likely to have been very influential (Berger & Kellner 1979).

Each individual account revealed a different array of factors in play. For example, as Ng's (1998) research suggested could be the case for some students, Denis's approach to his placement appears to have been heavily influenced by his belief that he already possessed the requisite qualities and knowledge, and/or that the placement was irrelevant to his purpose. At the same time, as Chen & Darst's (2001) study of the influence of tasks on learning indicates (uninteresting jobs do not stimulate learning), the duties in Denis's placement were not very interesting or demanding, and provided a limited range of affordances for him to exploit. In contrast, Annabel drew on her project as sustenance in tolerating the unpleasant aspects of her placement (as Damasio 1996 suggested might be the case), partly because the environment itself offered limited guidance and structure in dealing with the most difficult client.

For these students, then, while learning could be *stimulated* by the immediate context, it was also simultaneously *channelled* by the individual student's wider social and temporal context. The students' various backgrounds, resources, and understandings of the task at hand all contributed to the ways in which they addressed the problems they faced in the immediate context of the placement. The demands of the present, for two students at least, could in no way be separated from the ways in which they understood

their futures, whether the understanding was based on imagination (Annabel) or alignment (Denis). For Annabel, any negotiations that took place were to bring the placement into line with her understandings, not vice versa. For Denis, negotiation was unnecessary – the placement was irrelevant.

It was to be anticipated that students would participate actively in their placement, as required by the subject, as implied by the broader frameworks for learning mentioned above, and as evidenced elsewhere in this study, through the number of students who overcame the limitations of their learning context. All of the students engaged with their situation in some measure, but for quite different reasons and in quite different ways. Only Hector and Brittany, both of whom worked with children, indicated the ways in which they had negotiated a position in the placement, against a background of ignorance and difference respectively. Both of them needed to ‘seize the moment’ as they interacted with people, and the initiatives taken by these two students and those around them clearly built relationships *and* took precedence over the long-term project of policing. Kelvin did not build any relationships in the placement in which negotiations were required, rather, the most significant levels of involvement for him were observation, and how this reflected on his own family situation, as well as his dawning understanding of the politics of aged care.

Simultaneously with undertaking and writing about the placement, students were building a position for themselves vis-à-vis the lecturer who had introduced them to their study requirements prior to commencing the session. This mediated relationship was one that only permitted an assertion of a position, and not its negotiation through ongoing interactions. Without articulating this belief when I began this research, I had assumed that the student’s relationship with the lecturer was not worth considering. This was despite my parallel awareness that students’ behaviours are often assessment-driven (Morgan & O’Reilly 1999: 2; Fry, Ketteridge & Marshall 1999: 42, 71; Nightingale et al. 1996: 6; Brown & Knight 1994: 12), and the way in which they would understand the task would differ (Boud 1995: 38).

Communicating with the marker about suitability for the job of policing proved to be an important component of the diaries. Annabel explicitly addressed the lecturer on several occasions, conversationally seeking reassurance about her approach to diary-

writing, her responses to her trying days, and to her decision to persist with the placement despite the difficulties it presented. Brittany merely made a couple of last-minute gestures towards the marker, trying to ensure that her pleasure in relationships built was not misconstrued as rampant competitiveness, and making the friendly, relationship-building gesture of the Macca's sticker as her concluding remark. Denis asserted his suitability through focusing on the activities, presenting himself as a mature man, and giving examples of his conduct that showed him to be able to restrain himself and to investigate effectively. Hector's diary provided little indication in and of itself of his goals in relation to the marker, but his indication on the cover sheet that he wrote 'to excel' means that his detailed approach was a considered strategy, not simply a matter of personal style or discipline. Finally, Kelvin's view of the marker was embedded in his use of the third person (this was an assessment context that he did not quite know how to manage), and in his appeals to the marker on the grounds of his age and his family responsibilities. All of the students, then, used strategies in writing their notebooks that were intimately linked to the achievement of their long-term project.

This finding throws the issue of situatedness into relief, in that immersion in a specific environment clearly does not extinguish other facets of a person's life, even if, and maybe even particularly when, the immediate circumstances are distressing. Projects and goals can feed off and into each other, with the focus shifting as circumstances allow.

7.3 The new and the novel

A key distinction that I have drawn is that of the difference between the new and the novel (Schutz & Luckmann 1974). In an encounter with the former, it is possible, and relatively easy, to employ existing skills, and, with the latter, it is not. Table 8, overleaf, summarises the types of encounters with which the informants in this study were dealing.

Only Hector was immersed in a totally unfamiliar situation. The other four students had some relevant background experience as they began their community placements. Annabel knew some of the clients and had a disabled relative, and the activities in which she was involved with the clients were those typical of everyday community life.

Student	New	Novel
Annabel	Minimal	Extensive
Brittany	Extensive	Minimal
Denis	Extensive	Minimal
Hector	Absent	Extensive
Kelvin	Minimal	Minimal

Table 8: Encounters with the new and the novel

Brittany had a great deal of experience of working with teams, and was in a quasi-familial, team-oriented placement. Denis's family owned a local shop, and he was therefore familiar with customer service and stores work, and Kelvin had some relatives who suffered from the same illnesses as the clients, and others who were as educated and dedicated as the staff of the hospital.

The response of the students to *new* aspects of their placement was not uniform. In Brittany's case, her understanding of the dynamics of community participation and of relational issues meant that she not only quickly adjusted to the demands of the environment, she also found a way of contributing to that environment in a way that had long term implications for her own sporting life and for the lives of the girls. Although many of the community placement tasks were familiar for Brittany and for Denis, Denis's response was very different to Brittany's. Familiar with the demands of shop work, perceiving little common ground between himself and those he encountered (because of age, values, and levels of optimism), Denis initially participated, but withdrew very rapidly. These differences between Brittany and Denis reveal that it is not just the level of familiarity with a client group or nexus of practices that will affect the ways in which students respond to their community placements, but that the specific contexts, and the students' approaches to those contexts, have an important role to play. Brittany found a clear point upon which to focus in a supportive environment, and Denis's interest was derived from a chance encounter, was short-lived, detached from the activities within the workplace and tangentially related to the study materials.

There was greater variety amongst the informants as to the level of *novelty* that they had to deal with in the placement, with Annabel and Hector in extensive contact with the unfamiliar. As with the case of familiar situations, it was not unfamiliarity alone that proved important in the students' trajectories. Whereas Hector received sufficient

guidance for him to rapidly develop confidence in dealing with the children, Annabel had first to recognise that an occurrence was problematic, then explore whether or not her perceptions were correct, in order to initiate some change in her circumstances.

Many authors across diverse literatures mention the importance of the unfamiliar as the starting point for learning (Teekman 2000; Billett 1996; Schein n.d; Mezirow 1990; Brookfield 1987; Kuhn 1975; Dewey 1933). My findings suggest that, rather, the unfamiliar should be seen as a *potential* starting point for learning, one that is critically influenced by factors such as the learner's understanding of the situation, his or her value system, the 'pragmatic motive' (Schutz & Luckmann 1974) and level of self-confidence (see section 7.4 below). *Newness* appeared to lead to the adaptation of existing skills (as with Brittany, with Annabel's initial assumptions, and with Kelvin's decision to be cautious) or rejection of the environment (Denis), whereas *novelty* demanded new behaviours, whether or not these were seen by the students as having any long-term relevance (Annabel and Hector).

7.4 Learner orientations

Recent work on learner orientations to the completion of certain tasks, albeit in a narrow domain, suggest that it is what learners bring with them to learning situations that is a primary determinant of the learning outcome (Beatty, Dall'Alba and Marton 1997). In my research, the learning orientations of each of the selected informants were indeed very different. Denis saw the task as involving the demonstration of the attributes of a police officer (investigation and masculinity). Annabel, pushed by the difficulties inherent in the learning context, saw the demand as learning how to deal with an unpredictable, unpleasant and aggressive man. Kelvin presented himself as the lecturer's competent equal, learning how to become detached from painful circumstances (and, ironically, doing the reverse). Brittany viewed her role as being that of building relationships across an ethnic and cultural divide, and Hector focused on performing well in his notebook work and in his contact with children. Not detailed in this study, but evident nonetheless, is that there are similar levels of diversity across all of the twenty three informants.

In chapter 3, I suggested that the orientations that Beatty, Dall’Alba and Marton 1997 had identified in a structured and narrowly defined learning context might be adaptable to a broader experiential context. Table 9 below summarises the learning orientations of the 5 informants against this modified framework.

Student	Increasing knowledge	Memorising /reproducing	Applying	Understanding	Seeing things anew	Changing as a person
Annabel	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Brittany	No	No	No	No	No	No
Denis	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Hector	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Kelvin	No	No	No	No	No	No

Table 9: Learning orientations towards the subject

Only three of these learning orientations were in evidence in the students’ work, increasing knowledge and reproducing and applying it, as evidenced in Hector’s intention of learning how to communicate with children and copying of staff behaviours, Annabel’s intention of increasing her knowledge of the cues to Ben’s moods (and her initial assumption that she would be able to apply her existing skills), and Denis’s decision to apply his readings to events and occurrences in his daily life. Totally excluded from the modified framework I had created were the important *social* goals (such as Brittany’s desire to belong) and *emotional* goals (Kelvin’s wish to remain detached) that are intrinsic to practice contexts, and which inevitably concern self-positioning and trajectories. Also excluded is the extent to which unexpected aspects of the placement situation could negate or redirect particular learner orientations – being in the placement involved experiences *over time*, and examining learners’ orientations over time is *not* akin to studies of students’ orientations to one particular instance.

In the absence of a stimulating context, Denis turned to demonstrating his knowledge and his comprehension of the study materials. In a chaotic placement, Annabel struggled at several levels, trying to apply what was happening with Ben to the role of a police officer, and trying to employ staff tips on spotting escalations in Ben’s moods. Brittany was aiming for a change in self-positioning, from outsider to someone who

belonged. She incidentally found herself questioning her previous understanding of the life situations faced by Aborigines. Kelvin aimed to limit his involvement, but found the way he understood what was happening to his parents was changed by his observations of other families. Hector followed the principles modelled by the teachers (reproducing), and, previously unfamiliar with children, came to understand how to communicate with them. Thus, although some of the positions identified by Beatty, Dall'Alba & Marton (1997) were evident in students' work, these were not learner orientations *tout court*, but the product of the ebb and flow of experiences and interactions.

My interpretation of the evidence in the students' diaries is that, either because of the small numbers of students' work studied, or, more probably, because the issues in learning in work-related contexts are more complex, the framework of learners' orientations is far less valuable than Lazarus and Folkman's (1984, cited in Milner & Palmer 1998) notion of the importance of risk assessment, and how equipped one is to cope with these risks. Such an approach links in with conceptualising the learner's orientation in terms of the need for survival on the basis of one's existing capacities and understandings, as in the ecological perspective, and, in terms of phenomenology, of the pragmatic motive (Schutz & Luckmann 1974). Annabel was facing the familiar (she assumed), and she prepared to care and be caring: she thought she had the resources to cope, then worried that she did not, and her time with Ben became a significant stressor. Brittany was facing being different, and her strategy was to join *in* and join *with* people. Denis was unsure as to what he would be facing, and decided to treat the potentially irrelevant placement by focusing on the marker and proving his police-like qualities. Hector was also unsure of what he would face, and Kelvin felt he was facing the loss of his image of the aged as deserving respect: both students decided to sit back and observe what was happening.

Della Fish (1989), in examining learning through practice in initial teacher training, itemised the ways in which people might deal with an unpredictable world. While the relationship-building delineated by Giddens (1991), and evident in Brittany's work, was not mentioned, the other four strategies were:

- keeping to the known and trusted against all odds (Denis and perhaps Kelvin);

- expanding current systems to cope better in future (Hector);
- using intuition and instinct – trusting one’s luck (all of the informants);
- experimenting, using systematic trial and error, using intuition, but turning it into insight by thinking about it during and after action (reflection-in-action, based on Schön’s ideas) (Annabel was closest to this).

In terms of Fuhrer’s (1993)¹ seven possible responses to uncertainty, all the reactions that he mentioned were present. Brittany recalled corresponding activities, that is, starting a new school. Annabel found herself very confused by the unfamiliar. Some tried to manage the impression they made on either those in the placement (Annabel and Brittany), or on the marker (Kelvin and Denis). Brittany and Denis, each in their own way, were concerned to avoid being seen as different. Annabel, Brittany, Kelvin and Denis all expressed embarrassment at some aspect of their performance.

It is also worth noting that, in looking at these responses, there were gender and agency-related differences amongst the informants selected for intensive study. The more unstructured the environment, the more risk-management strategies were evident in informants’ work: both of the women (Annabel and Brittany) were in small organisations in which there was considerable leeway for independent action, and Brittany’s work shows six of the seven strategies Fuhrer mentioned, and Annabel, five (this is compared to two each for each of the men). These differences in the data may also be due, in part, to gender-based differences in writing style, and/or to men’s greater adherence to forms of narrative that present them as heroes (as pointed out by Mary Gergen 1992). Nonetheless, Ben represented for Annabel, on an ongoing basis, all the forms of uncertainty that Aristotle once identified². Hector encountered many unfamiliar situations, but, unlike Annabel, received consistent advice and guidance on how to handle the various risks. Brittany initially experienced the strain of ‘who or

¹ These were not knowing what to do; recalling similar situations; acting more or less successfully in pursuit of one’s goals; feelings of confusion; self-consciousness; avoidance of exclusion from the group; and performance anxiety (Fuhrer 1993). The evidence for my conclusion is provided in more detail in section 7.7 below.

² Aristotle suggested there were ten predicaments (‘supreme genera’): substance (who or what is this thing?); quantity (how much or how big?); quality (what sort of thing is it?); relation (to what or whom does it refer?); activity (what does it do to another?); passivity (what is done to it?); when (at what point of time?); where (where is it?); site or posture (in what attitude?); habit (how surrounded, equipped; how conditioned?) (<http://radicalacademy.com/philaristotle2.htm>)

what is this?’ but, finding she had the tools to contribute, largely surmounted her anxieties. Neither Kelvin nor Denis expressed any particular anxieties about what they encountered, although Kelvin was worried prior to the placement that he might lose respect for the aged, but they both chose to act, more or less successfully, in pursuit of their goals. I was unable to identify which of these potential sources of difference were in play, because of the interactive characteristics of the learning situations.

7.5 The role of feelings in learning

The research has provided support for seeing feeling as one of the several ways an organism responds to and acts in the environment (Damasio 1996; Batson, Engel & Fridal 1999; Peters & Slovic 2000), although this remark needs to be tempered with the comment that students were specifically requested to write about their feelings. Table 10 summarises the evidence in the five diaries of pleasant and unpleasant feelings.

Student	Pleasant feelings	Unpleasant feelings
Annabel	Yes	Yes
Brittany	Yes	Yes
Denis	Yes	Yes
Hector	Yes	Yes
Kelvin	Yes	Yes

Table 10: Evidence of feelings in students’ diaries

All of the students described, or wrote in ways in which indicated, pleasurable aspects of their experiences, although these were not always placement related (Denis’s pleasures lay outside the placement, as did the majority of Kelvin’s). All of the informants in this study expressed nervousness and uncertainty (classed here as unpleasant feelings) about what they would be doing in their placement prior to its commencement. The experiences of four of the informants (Annabel, Brittany, Hector and Kelvin) support Brookfield’s findings that feelings of inferiority, loss, incompetence and uncertainty are commonly associated with learning as an adult, without, owing to the nature of the informants’ placements, the expression of pleasure at learning alongside others that is evident in classroom-based learning.

Unexpected was the intimate association between feelings and visceral responses to unpleasant physical stimuli (e.g. Annabel³), despite my awareness of their importance (Damasio 1996; Postle 1996; Brookfield 1996). I had not expected that smells, in particular, would play the important role they did for Annabel (and also for the two students who worked in the hostel for homeless men). Embodiment means that bodies are as involved in the responses to the unfamiliar as are minds, and nauseating smells can lead to aversion as much as dangerous behaviour or different views of the world. As a consequence, I have come to wonder whether it is not just 'Potero ergo sum' that is central to the sense of self, but also '*Sentio ergo sum*', with bodies and minds in a complex inter-relationship.

This leads on to another facet of feeling, which is that much of the feeling content of the diaries concerned relationships ('I *relate*, therefore I am'?). Annabel was overwhelmed by Bruce's responses as she read a book with him. Brittany's heart was warmed when staff and children expressed their acceptance of and care for her. Hector was touched by 10 year old Penny, giving her his hat as a memento. Kelvin frequently wrote of his joy in being with his family, and even Denis, whose work largely eschews feeling, mentioned that he still missed his father, who had died when he was young.

While emotions may be but one of the responses of the human body to experiences (corporeal or relational), they are also seen as guiding actions and judgements (Slovic 2000; Mellers 2001; McKenzie 2000; Damasio 1996). In contrast, others suggest that some feelings are so strongly unpleasant that they are denied or rechannelled (Lofland & Lofland 1996). Table 11, overleaf, shows the patterns of these responses (actions/judgements influenced by feelings, and denial/rechannelling) for the five informants.

³ Visceral responses such as Annabel's were also evident in the work of Perry and Gareth.

Students	Guiding actions judgements	Coping mechanisms
Annabel	Yes	Yes
Brittany	Yes	No
Denis	No	Perhaps
Hector	Yes	No
Kelvin	Perhaps	Perhaps

Table 11: Consequences of feelings

Students who acted on their feelings, or who made judgements about what ought to be done, may also have needed to draw on various coping mechanisms (Annabel, see below). These responses are not mutually exclusive. The table does (inevitably) oversimplify what was happening for students, as, for example, firmness of purpose (not a consequence of immediate feelings, but a manifestation of the long-term project) could be used to over-ride the desire to escape from the unpleasantness (Annabel).

In terms of actions arising from feelings, Billett (1999) suggested that learners might ask others how they handled their feelings, and there is evidence of this in the work of Annabel and Hector. In terms of judgements, Cowin (2000) found that graduate nurses, after suffering from emotional exhaustion, feeling inadequate, and frustrated, exhibited a final loss of ideals – and Annabel showed all of these, including in her concluding remark that she liked all of the workers, but not the clients. Feeling *with*, as outlined by Van Manen (1998), was particularly clear in Kelvin’s diary as he watched the patients’ families as they tried to cope with the increasing debilitation of their loved ones, and this feeling does appear to have guided his judgements about his parents, if not his actions of support towards them.

There is also evidence that some informants used the strategies that Smith & Kleinman (1989, cited in Lofland & Lofland 1995) identified, of contact avoidance (as Sophie did at first, and Denis may have done), using the patient (Annabel focussing on Ben’s feelings on Day 1, not her own), laughter to ease discomfort (Kelvin⁴), transforming the contact⁵, and accentuating the positive (Annabel’s reliance on the good days).

⁴ This was a strategy also found in Frances’ diary.

⁵ Perry, who worked with homeless men, often repeated that the experience was ‘character-building’. The use of defensive strategies appears to have been interactively based (that is, a matter of student *and*

Given the literature on gender differences in awareness of feelings and the capacity to express this (Gergen 1992), I also checked through the diaries to assess whether the differences I was identifying were more to do with gender than they were to do with interactions of individuals in particular contexts. Brittany and Annabel consistently wrote in a more intimate way about their experiences and feelings than did any of the three men in the group selected for intensive study, but this does not mean that feelings were absent from the men's work, or that all of the female informants wrote in a manner typical of their gender⁶. Although informants such as Denis and Kelvin adhered clearly to masculine positions in the way in which they wrote about their experiences, this was not true of Kelvin in terms of what he wrote about his attachment to and concern for his parents, wife and children, or even Denis, who made a passing remark that he missed his father, who had died quite some time ago.

All of the students mentioned the anxiety and uncertainty they had experienced prior to, or during, their first day in the placement. That students adopt survival strategies has traditionally been seen as a problem in the literature on field placements, where particular understandings of the role of the professional are being promoted. This represents a severe underestimation of the role of feelings in learning, and how essential feelings are to guiding behaviour in unfamiliar contexts. Perhaps the adoption of survival strategies needs re-conceptualising as *the* most important creative strategy that students take with them into unfamiliar situations – their capacity to improvise in the face of uncertainty.

What guidance does is support students through the survival period, reducing anxiety, and feelings of isolation, and increasing their openness to learn new ways of doing and being in the world. Hector, guided and trusted through his first day of working with children, not just by the teachers but by the children's acceptance of his presence as a helpful adult, learned how to deal, and empathise, with children⁷. Being trusted, being accepted as a person capable of understanding what was happening to and for the clients (attending clinical discussions, or reading files) built confidence and the

placement), as Molly and Gareth (both older students) also worked with homeless men, and neither of them drew on these types of defensive strategies, with Molly accepting part-time work in her hostel.

⁶ Molly, in particular, had a very sparse style.

⁷ Cameron's experiences in the methadone clinic showed similar features.

capacity to take on either new tasks or new ideas. Brittany's experiences also exemplify this. As soon as it became clear that her initiative of introducing her sport to the children was a welcome one, she was in her element, and could use her initiative to develop the children's participation in a local team.

The guidance in all of these cases was subtle, unstructured, responsive to the student's needs and therefore situationally relevant. Setting up formal mechanisms may have limited success, as they separate the guidance from the immediate problem, although the guidance on how to interact with the clients proved critical⁸.

Where the interaction with the client involved low levels of skill, or was seen by the organisation as requiring low levels of skill, staff seemed to see no reason for guidance. They may have had none themselves, or have been so used to relying on unskilled volunteer labour that they had become blind to the complexities of the situations that students were encountering. Annabel's diary points to the wide range of survival strategies available in highly problematic situations such as this.

Some of these strategies are physical (losing one's appetite or repeated showers to get unpleasant smells out of the nostrils). There can be cathartic releases of feelings, such as anger and frustration, through swearing or related slang expletives. Actions can include telling white lies (benign manipulations), seeking reassurance that one's experiences are not unique and that one's responses are appropriate, attending more closely to environmental cues to reduce the risks, and making personal appeals (that someone needs to do something, or that no other students should be sent to the place while Ben is a client). Stoic forbearance is another form of action in which the person's action is to attend the placement and be involved in the required activities whilst their desire is not to be there. Finally, there are many cognitive strategies in evidence: counting down the days and hours; respecting those who do the job all of the time (seeing one's presence as finite); reframing (seeing the toxic experience as a learning opportunity); reaffirming one's own competence, in that one can survive the experience; rationalising that the experiences are 'character building'; hoping that life

⁸ The informants collectively placed in an agency catering for the intellectually disabled (who included Chloe and Edgar) were provided with briefings and weekly debriefings, but were largely left to their own devices with the clients. Chloe was certainly fed up with it all in the last week.

improves for others, when all the evidence suggests that it will not; using comparison to distinguish between pleasant and unpleasant episodes within the week's work (slicing up the time); and choosing to think about something else.

The dismissal of survival strategies as not what is wanted of a professional denies the resourcefulness and the creativity of learners as, isolated from their supports, they struggle to cope with the difficulties with which they are faced. These strategies draw on all aspects of experience, from the corporeal to the imaginal.

7.6 Problem-solving

The literature on the ways in which people deal with problems suggests that there are many factors which ensure that problem-solving is not a logical process, with interruptions and diversions attributable to biological, practical, emotional and motivational factors (Schutz & Luckmann 1974; Scribner 1997; Damasio 1996).

The nature of the diaries means that information about these factors is somewhat fragmented, as it is not, for example, possible to identify when and if an informant might have jumped to a conclusion when only the actions that resulted from a particular conclusion are written about. Diaries do not consistently allow for the identification of matters such as temporary and/or motivated interruptions in attending to a particular problem, or what the somatic markers might have been underpinning a particular type of response⁹. Madge (1978: 87) suggested that diaries may disappoint, and in this case they disappoint, to the extent that the students' work merely provides the iceberg tips of their experiences, and themes and developments largely have to be inferred from these tips.

It is possible to identify some of the problem-solving mechanisms, though. For example, Annabel turned her attention away from Ben on several occasions, she contrasted Ben with other clients, she searched for information, experimented, and checked her understandings. There were no rigid algorithms (Scribner 1986) to which

⁹ For example, the experience of the first day led several informants, including Grace and Perry, to make a decision (and mention it in their diaries) about how they would handle their situation as of their second day at work. Whether any discussions with either staff or family underpinned this decision is unclear.

she could adhere. Hector could adhere to an algorithmic framework (the objectives of the program), but was guided by the flexibility of the staff into how flexible he, too, needed to be.

The study has indicated that informants in very difficult situations turn, as Damasio (1996) suggested, to their project for sustenance (Annabel¹⁰). Those whose placements were less challenging had to expand their view of how they might successfully achieve their goal: Denis set himself research projects, and focused on the completion of the activities, and others tried to comply with the guidelines in the subject outline, completing daily entries when nothing much was happening, recording their boredom, and so on.

The suggestion in the phenomenological approach outlined by Schutz and Luckmann (1974) is that there is a range of alternative problem-solving strategies, with their selection based on what they termed the pragmatic motive, and I have reframed as the pragmatic imperative. Their examples range from a cognitive shift in categories to consideration of the risks to one's personal survival. These approaches to addressing problematic experiences were only apparent in the informants' work to the extent that the students incorporated the way they had understood the problem in what they wrote. For example, when Brittany drew a parallel between her first day at the placement, and as a teacher's aide, with her own experiences of school. Without such cues, it is only possible to hypothesise that a student such as Denis had a similar reaction – ah, just like helping Mum in the shop. In both cases, the experience would appear to fit an enlargement of an existing category.

However, the schema that Schutz & Luckmann established goes off the track for learning in everyday life when it comes to their view of active experimentation as a quasi-scientific process of discovery of the nature of the problem. The demands of living in the situation (and of an assessment context) means that students must rapidly choose what to do in the light of their appreciation of the situation in which they find themselves. In other words, it is the need to survive in the context (in Giddens' 1976 terms, the students' intentions) that means that *actions*, not inquiry, are required.

¹⁰ This was also the case for Perry.

Involvement in the action supersedes the problem solving; it is not that there is time out for research¹¹. Involvement in the action calls for yet other actions, and so on – there is an improvisational quality once a person has decided upon a particular solution, however rudimentary their attention to the issues. There are, nonetheless, circumstances when a more cautious approach that involves the ongoing gathering of information is possible (Kelvin, for example, has low-key involvement throughout his placement, and plenty of time to reflect on what he observes of carer/patient interactions). In field placements, the risk is to one's personal survival, and, in such situations, it is worth seeing observation and intervention alike as *forms of experimentation* (not separating these out, as did Kolb 1984, into reflective observation and active experimentation), with the former subjectively far less risky than the latter.

The absence of meaningful activity was in itself a problem that informants addressed by turning to worlds outside of the immediate circumstances but seen as possibly contributing to their success in the subject. Boredom (whether the result of familiarity with the tasks, tedious or irrelevant work, or no work at all) turned informants away from the immediate environment, towards their studies, or towards their life outside of the placement. It is not that there was no interest, rather, that the channel through which the interest was expressed was diverted.

7.7 External resources drawn upon in addressing the novel

This section concentrates upon the resources students used in addressing their projects and goals as well as unfamiliar aspects of their placements. The types of resources which were evident in these students' work were the people and documents in the placement context, people in the local community, family and friends, police, and the study materials. The table overleaf summarises which resources upon which the five selected students drew.

¹¹ Students decide that there is no alternative but to start conversing (Grace), that the only way to deal with the boredom is to show interest (Gareth or Chayne), that there is no need to pursue the problem of how to engage with the children, they do it for you (Hector).

Students	Resources				
	Placement	Locals	Intimates	Police	Readings
Annabel	Yes	No	Claimed ¹	Yes	No
Brittany	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Denis	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Hector	Yes	No	Claimed	No	No
Kelvin	Yes	No	Yes	No	No

Table 12: Resources drawn upon by informants

Family and partners proved more of a resource for all five students than any other type of resource, and people in the placement were a resource for four of them. It is Denis's experiences that are the exception here, as he turned away from the placement, and towards his family, friends, lover and members of the local community, as triggered by the study materials. Brittany, Hector and Kelvin all drew on the same types of resources, with Annabel being the only student who sought to understand, and deal with, her situation by talking with the local police. None of the students mentioned contacting either the Field Training Unit or the lecturer. Of the entire group of informants in this study, only one student mentioned media images of police work, and one other turned to an external source (the library) to better understand the plight of the clients.

It would appear, then, that the students turned most frequently to other people in the immediate contexts of their lives to address any problems they faced, and that the advice and support was not confined to the placement context. This finding may be related to a perceived peripheral role for the placement in the larger context of their lives, but, alternatively, may be a part of the everyday processing of work experiences when sharing concerns and questions is most safely conducted at home, that is, the key site for the negotiation and maintenance of identity in the West (Berger & Kellner 1979; Berger, Berger & Kellner 1973).

¹² While the diaries do not include any mentions of conversations about the placement with the family or a partner, these boxes were ticked on the replacement cover sheet.

7.8 Negotiating selves

Ng (1998) identified a range of what he called ‘self-structures’ in diaries written by students about their experiences of learning mathematics. In analysing the data, I borrowed some of his terminology and its meanings (‘self-reinforcement’, ‘self-regulation’ and ‘self-evaluation in particular), changed some to more strongly indicate the relationship to selves (‘mastery’ to ‘self-confidence’), and found still others that were specific to these students (‘self-presentation’ and ‘self-assertion’).

Despite the failure of this study to confirm my leading assumption, analysis of the students’ work clearly indicated that students were negotiating positions and were therefore changing through participating in the subject (at least), and the placement. In teasing out the types of repositioning that were evident in these five notebooks, it became apparent that there were three types, the first confined to the immediate context (‘local’), the second concerning the student’s private life (‘personal’), and the third concerning the broader social milieu, and the social justice issues that underpinned the subject as a whole (‘political’)¹³. The latter two are forms of learning that intrinsically extend beyond the immediate context of the learning. Table 13 summarises the changes in positioning evident in each of the students’ work.

Informant	Local	Personal	Political
Annabel	Yes	Yes	No
Brittany	Yes	No	Uncertain
Denis	No	Yes	No
Hector	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kelvin	No	Yes	Yes

Table 13: Changes in self-positioning

None of the five students’ work shows the same pattern of repositioning. Hector experienced change across all three dimensions, and Denis only at the personal level. Change at the personal level was more common than the other types of repositioning,

¹³ Repositioning vis-à-vis the lecturer has been described under section 7.2.

and a new understanding of the position of the client group was least common¹⁴. Although Brittany expressed sympathy with the positions of the people in the placement, I could not be certain that this new self-position had fully translated across to other Indigenous or disadvantaged people.

The interactive circles on which students drew to deal with any problems they faced were largely local and highly personalised. This result is of interest because of the challenge it poses to the notion of situatedness. The latter is generally conceived of as a geographical phenomenon, with relationships embedded in specific communities in specific localities, but these students' work indicate that situatedness may need to be conceptualised in terms of individual life-worlds, in which circles of experience intertwine and interpenetrate, particularly if the work context is one in which participation is relatively free-form.

One other pattern was discernible which again supports the Berger & Luckmann (1985) and Berger and Kellner (1979) viewpoint of the centrality of intimate relationships to identity-maintenance. In terms of the placement context, working with children and disabled people led to high levels of interaction and participation, stimulated by the quasi-familial working context and by the clients themselves. Those with more fragmented, ritualised contact with adults who did not get the opportunity to personally explore others' situations with them (such as working in a shop) changed least.

7.9 Cross-checking my interpretations

This section provides information on the information I acquired through attending debriefings of the placement, and through examining the comments that I had written on the work of 148 students. Both of these forms of empirical materials were collected after the students in this study had provided me with their work.

¹⁴ As Bowles *et al.* (2002) have identified that the subject's aims were largely met, this result is likely to be a consequence of my focus on the diary component of the notebooks, rather than the activities, and the fact that few students completed the activities in tandem with their placement. Nonetheless, the indicators are that immediate experiences of disadvantaged groups do not in and of themselves extend to the broader population.

I attended two debriefings conducted in the Academy for students upon their return from their placements, over one year after the informants in this study furnished me with their work. Their comments indicated that there were a range of reasons for finding the placement worthwhile or fruitless, all of which I had found in the informants' work. Table 14 summarises the information received.

What was good	What was bad
Relevant work Good preparation	Staff and client hostility Being exploited as an unpaid tradesman
High status in the agency Being treated as already a police officer	No identified role or tasks Clients not knowing they were to be police Getting the hard jobs Staff 'passing the buck'
Variety of areas	Sitting in the corner Repetitive, boring days
Not feeling affected by seeing a dead body	Feeling drained 'Work I hated'
Helping children	Staff were apologists for clients

Table 14: Views of the community placement expressed in debriefings

Even with scant opportunity to make their views known, as described in chapter 4, the opinions that students shared in the debriefings reflected themes evident in the informants' work: the importance of the placement being related to their intended career; the importance of making a meaningful contribution; the importance of being recognised as a legitimate peripheral participant in that environment; and the feared, and actual, emotional impact of what was encountered.

There was also specific confirmation of the impressions I had received about the organisations in which two of my informants (Kelvin and Denis) had undertaken their placements. About Denis's agency, the comment was, 'All I did was sell second hand clothes, and furniture pick-up – I only had contact with drug addicts and those wanting food as clients'. The comment about Kelvin's placement was that 'It was very isolating – they have everything they need, and day care was the most important'.

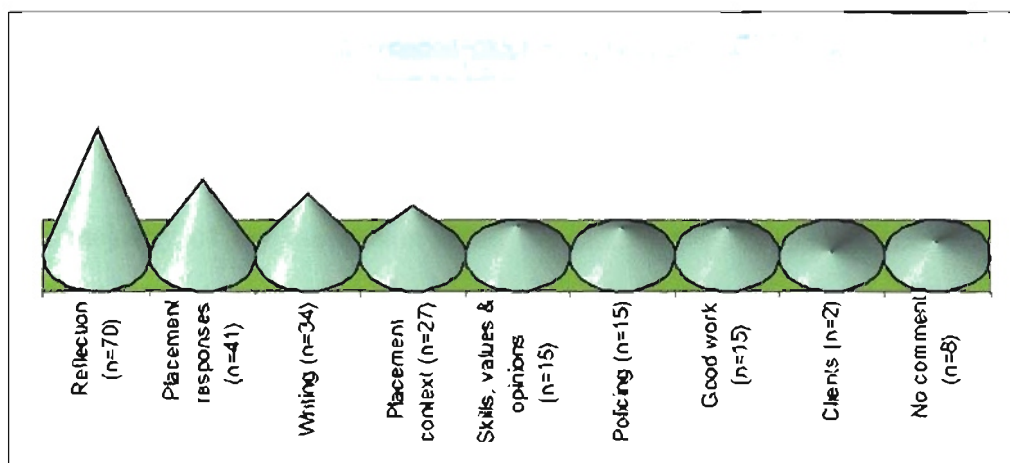
In the debriefing sessions, students were also asked how they had found writing the diaries. There were no comments that the students had found them a useful practice, with the complaints being that they:

- could be monotonous;

- were difficult if students did the same thing every day (perhaps this was Denis's problem?);
- would have been easier if students had been given an example, or told whether or not to use the first person, because they didn't know what to write, and 'didn't know what you were looking for'. As one student put it, 'You told us to use colourful language, and I did. I was told I swore too much for a future cop, but this was how I felt!'

In sum, then, these sessions provided no new perspectives on students' experiences. Everything that was mentioned was also to be found in the diaries I had received.

Turning to the comments I had made on students' work that related to the diary component of their notebooks, the issues raised reveal similar patterns. The first of the diaryscapes depicting my comments (in a slightly different colour-way to those depicting students' work) provides an overview of all of the comments on the 148 Assignment Cover Sheets (coded comments total 228).

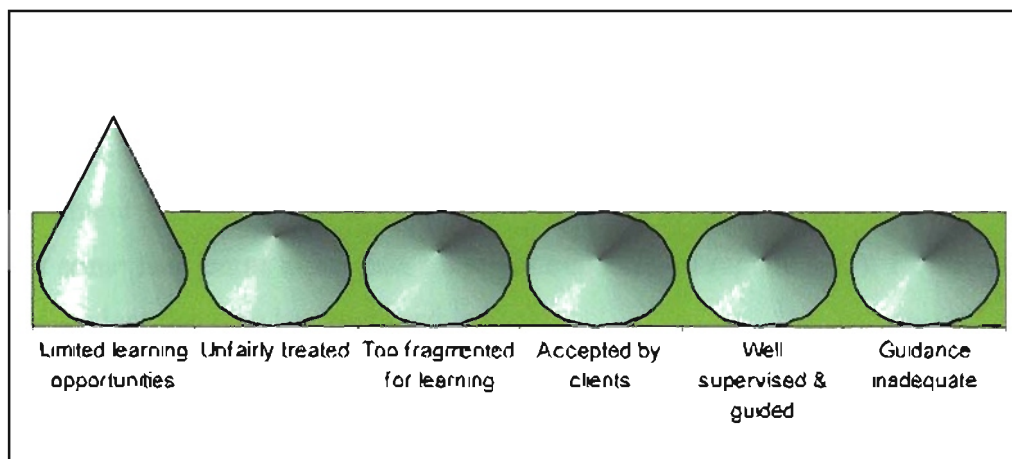


Diaryscape 22: Overview of comments on student work

Most of my comments concerned the use, or non-use, of readings to support reflection in the diaries (31%) and the placement itself (30%), either its characteristics (placement context), or how students had handled what they had encountered (placement responses). Other comments centred on students' writing (15%), the skills, values or opinions they had brought to the placement (7%), policing (7%), and clients (1%). In the case of the latter, one comment was that I thought the student had genuinely wanted

to see clients' lives improve, and the other, that the students had not understood why the clients' lives were stuck in a rut. The remaining comments were general statements about the quality of the diary (7%). Just 4% of the comments I made on students' work did not include a specific mention of the diary – I can only suppose I thought that there were sufficient comments in the body of the work.

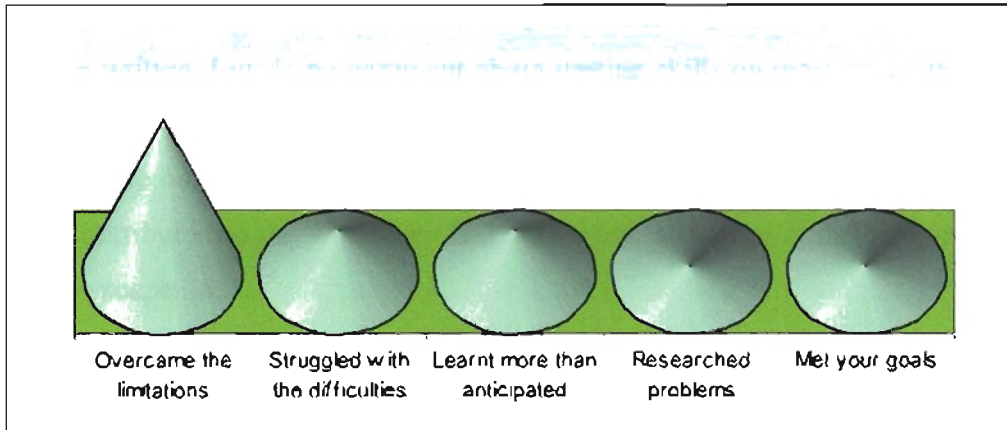
In this section I focus on those areas of comment of relevance to this research, starting with the placement context.



Diaryscape 23: The placement context

The majority of my comments about the students' placement concerned the limited learning opportunities the placement offered (n=18), mostly an absence of client contact. The comments I provided to 4 students reflected unfair treatment, either students being discriminated against (2 women), being used as a free tradesman (1 man), or working in a context in which the practices were unfair (but, in this case, there is no indication of the matters to which I was referring).

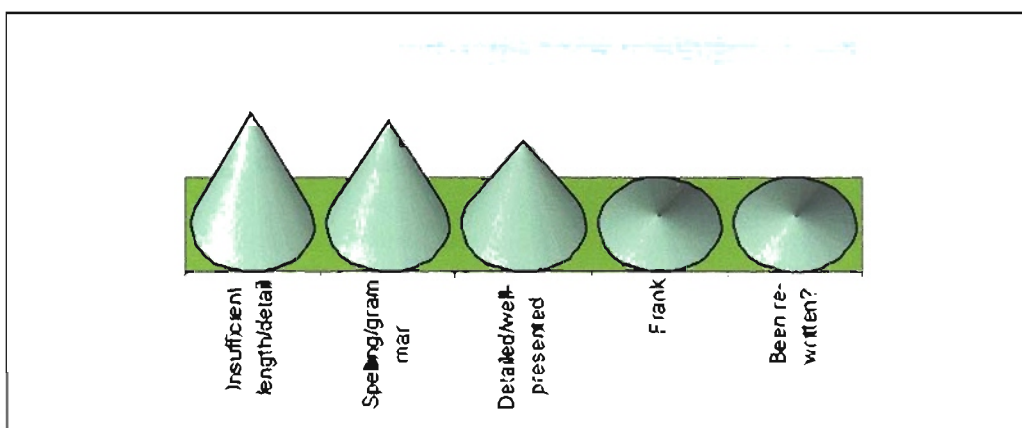
Diaryscape 24 shows the comments I made about what I had seen to be students' responses to their placement experiences.



Diaryscape 24: Responses to the placement

Diaryscape 24 shows that most of the comments I made about students' responses to the placement (n=25) were about the students having overcome the limitations that their placement presented. While I felt that some had struggled with the difficulties (n=7), and some had learnt more than they had expected to (again, n=7), I only remarked to one student that s/he had met her/his goals.

The next diaryscape illustrates the comments I made about students' writing skills. In some cases, there was more than one comment about a particular student's work.

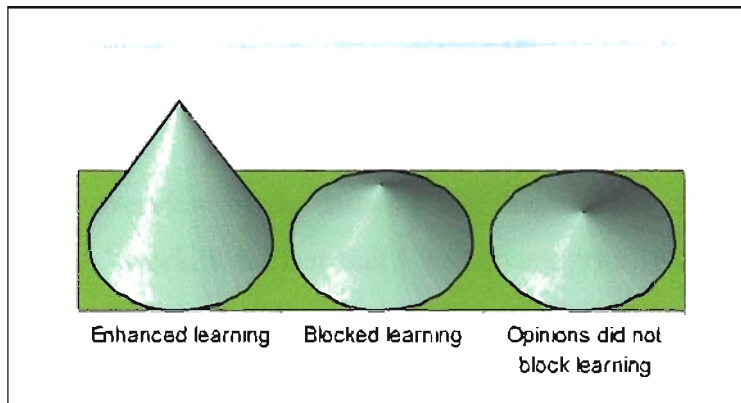


Diaryscape 25: Students' writing skills

I judged 12 students' work to be limited by its brevity, and 11 students' work to have sufficient problems with spelling and grammar to be referred to the Learning Skills Advisor. I found 9 students' work to be well written and/or rich in descriptions of their

experiences, 1 to be frank, and 1 so tidy and carefully ordered that it may well have been re-written. I made no comment about writing skills on most students' work.

I also made comments about the ways in which students' previous experiences might have contributed to the work they had submitted, and these comments are summarised in Diaryscape 26.

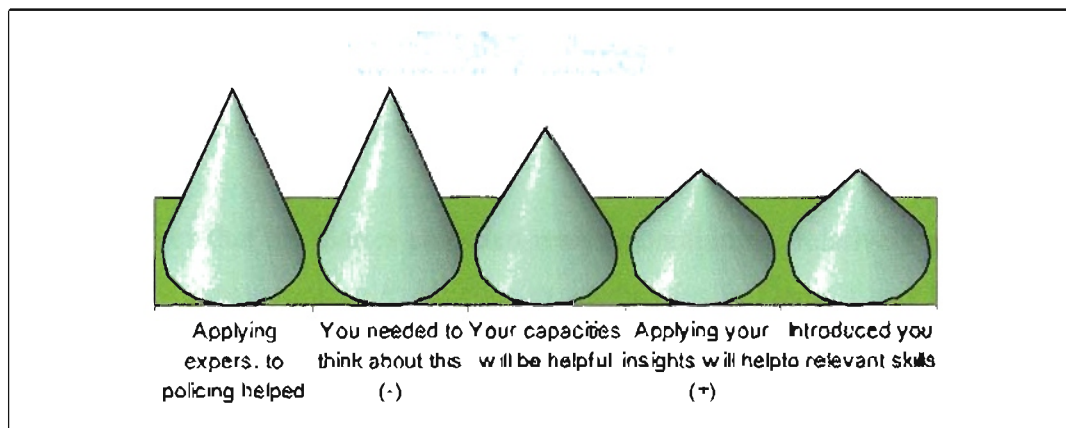


Diaryscape 26: Impact of students' prior learning

In most cases (12 of the 16 remarks), my comments were that students' prior skills, values or opinions appeared to have enhanced their learning, rather than blocked it (n=4).

The last area which was the focus of my comments concerned the applicability of the students' learning in the placement to police work, as shown in Diaryscape 27, overleaf.

As was the case with comments on students' prior learning, I made relatively few comments about the applicability of students' learning to police work (n=15). For the most part, these comments indicated that the students either possessed or had acquired knowledge and skills that would help them in their work, with comments on only 4 students' work indicating they needed to consider the connections between their placement experiences and what they might encounter as police officers.



Diaryscape 27: Applicability to police work

As an overview of the issues I was highlighting in making my final comments on students' work, it is clear that I was giving priority to whether or not they had engaged in any reflection, and to the ways in which they had been able to negotiate their way through the placement. Less attention was paid to either their academic writing skills or to the links the placement had with the students' project of policing. Reviewing these comment sheets suggests that the empirical materials that I drew on in this research were not dissimilar to those of the wider student body, no doubt because the comment sheets selected aspects of students' work that were also of interest to this study. Individual differences are subsumed in the process.

7.10 Summary

The analysis of the diaries shows the highly individualised nature of the learning experiences in community placements, and how the key factor involves the *interaction* between students and contexts and the possibilities inherent in both the student's orientation to the placement and in the context itself. Both have affordances. Put Annabel in Denis's placement, and there may have been some relationships developed, at least with the staff. Put Denis in Hector's placement and the pull of the context would have demanded greater involvement.

The patchiness of the answers to my research questions has nonetheless opened the door to re-examining many current assumptions about what it means to be a learner in a

to the fore, as has the artificiality of presumed boundaries between work or study and the private sphere, and the importance of recognising the influence of past and future in framing the negotiation of trajectories as either insider or outsider.

Views of selves that the diaries provided were as continuing, relatively stable positions unaffected by the workplace experience or studies (as in Denis's and Kelvin's cases, where family and friends predominated, or Brittany's, where sport was central), as highly plastic (as for Hector, who dealt exclusively with his placement), and as swirled like shreds of paper in a maelstrom of the unfamiliar against a stable family background (as was the case for Annabel). That is, only Hector's diary, which was the most competent academically, that is, most tailored to the demands of the assessment situation, focused exclusively on the work situation in a manner one might expect from the literature on situated learning. For the others, a wider range of factors were drawn in.

Related to this was the extent to which informants' projects (their desired futures) mattered in adversity, but went almost without a mention when informants were in interesting situations with adequate guidance. This may mean that, in guided situations, there is more tendency for informants to be 'moulded' by the environment.

The final chapter of this thesis reviews the research and what I have learned about the theoretical frameworks I used. From this, I consider three broad areas which I assert need to be taken into account when looking at learning at work, these being the potential contribution of ecological understandings of what is going on, the importance of processes of *bricolage* in learning to become a person of a particular sort, and the need to incorporate the permeability of social worlds in late modern society in conceptualising learning at work. I conclude with a reflection on my own learning.

Chapter Eight

Assertions and Reflections

The Fool, the Juggernaut and the Joker

People don't change at all, and they change enormously; it is completely confounding that both can be true at once (Canetti 1994: 163)

8.1 From Fool to Joker



Giddens (1991) wrote that 'all of us must ride the juggernaut of modernity', and that this ride of reflexivity, in which what we do in the world is fed back to us, does not increase our levels of certainty, but, instead, demonstrates that what we know is always open to revision (Giddens 1991: 39, 146). It is in this light that I present my concluding account of how my own understandings have changed as a consequence of undertaking this research (my reflections), and the implications this may have for my own or other educators' research and practice (my assertions). The latter are no more than interim

conclusions that currently appear to be fair guides for action, always open for revision, as well as interesting starting points for further research. Although the Fool of chapter 4 has become the Joker¹, only one more step is needed for the Fool to reappear.

This study has taken me on a vicarious journey through a landscape of students' experiences, trying to work out how they might have changed through their experiences, and the factors that contributed to this. At first glance, there is little remarkable in the informants' diaries, other than the freshness of some of the writing, as well as the

¹ With the passage of time, the Fool of the tarot deck has become the Joker in the pack of cards. Gaarder (1996) builds his philosophical novel, *The solitaire mystery*, around the role of the Joker. Traditionally the

feeling of closeness to another's experience that the diary medium can allow. What is also noticeable is the variety amongst placements, informants, experiences and learning trajectories. Amongst the whole group of informants, practices included dispensing chits to cover bills, teaching, moving furniture, participating in AA meetings, as well as providing caring companionship for battered children, street workers and terminally ill elderly patients. In some cases, the informants had high cultural capital (sporting prowess, even fame, was a great help in working with disadvantaged youth), in others, the organisation's management could not work out quite what their student should do, or used them (inappropriately) as workers. Informants wrote very differently about their experiences, and seized whatever opportunities presented to them in order to demonstrate their engagement with their studies – and because of the differences between contexts and amongst students, did very different things. They, too, were riding the juggernaut.

I had assumed, based on my own immersion in certain interactionist views and in the situated learning literature, that the students' projects of becoming police officers would inevitably be modified by their experiences in the placement, but, in so doing, I had not recognised two things. The first concerned the possible impact of difficulties (Annabel) or of boredom (Denis), both of which turned students towards their project as sustenance, and towards rejection of at least some aspects of their immediate environment. The second issue was that my own experiences did not cohere with my lead assumption: what had brought me into this research was a fascination with why it might be that people simply did not respond to the full range of options in their immediate environment. Thus it was that I found that novelty was only the *potential* start for learning; that relatively unstructured environments increase risk-management approaches, with the need for survival not so much a problem but a source of creativity; and that the resources upon which students drew, and their self re-positioning, reflected a wider range of environments than the workplace alone. Above all, I think, this

creator of anarchy, in Gaarder's story, out of anarchic and intercontingent elements, the Joker, chance, creates order and meaning.

research has highlighted that there are *multiple* affordances, constituted by those in the learner *and* those in the practice environment.

In this final chapter of the thesis, then, I recapitulate the research, make some assertions about the implications of the findings both for the matters at hand and ancillary to the main issues, and reflect on the journey I have taken, all of which work towards my closing statements about what has been attempted and what I have learned.

8.2 Recapitulation and Review

This thesis has focused on the impact of being in new or novel circumstances upon selves and their positioning. Based on diaries written by twenty three policing students, over the course of a four week placement in a service organisation, with a particular focus on the experiences of five of them, I have canvassed the ways in which staff views, actions and practices in the agencies in which they were placed framed students' learning experiences, and if, and how, students changed over the four week period. More particularly, I was seeking, on the basis of an assumption that students' project of policing *would* be changed through their participation, to find out what their projects were, the levels of unfamiliarity the work environment posed, their responses to this and the resources upon which they drew, as well as whether policing remained a focus for them, before identifying whether or not students had changed their self-positioning.

As described in chapter 7, my leading assumption that projects would be modified was not borne out, but there were potentially useful answers to the other questions I was posing. These outcomes need to be set against the frameworks against which my research was undertaken. The table overleaf lists the areas that I was exploring, the extent to which the literature outlined in chapter 3 addressed these issues, and the aspects of that literature on which my views have been extended, confirmed or challenged.

Themes in the research	Presence in the literature adults learning	My previous understand
An holistic perspective learning	To some extent	Confirmed
The role of projects intentions in learning	To a very small extent	Extended
The situatedness of learning	To a considerable extent	Confirmed <i>and</i> Extended
The importance of feelings to learning	To some extent	Confirmed
An ecological perspective on selves	To a very small extent	Extended
The permeability of private, work and global domains	To a very small extent	Extended

Table 15: Comparison of my current understanding against the literature base

Some of my findings do confirm the expectations I had derived from the literature, for example, the findings concerning the holistic nature of learning, and on the presence of strong feelings as part of learning. However, the focus in this final chapter will not be on any confirmations of assumptions that this study might have generated, but will be on any additions to my own, and perhaps others', knowledge arising from:

- disconfirmations of expectations derived from the literature;
- areas about which there were some speculations in the literature, but no empirical testing; and
- new areas which have not been raised previously in the literature.

Discussed below, the three areas in which my own knowledge has been extended, or in which current assumptions about learning in and through work have been challenged, are the value of holistic perspectives on selves and learning to understanding people's learning in the workplace; the importance of the notion of *bricolage* to understanding how projects are played out *in situ*; and the equal importance of recognising the permeability of social worlds in the whole process. Central to these three issues is the recognition of the importance of attending to students' learning processes in work placements, and not confining oneself to workplace-based and teacher-based understandings. The practical consequences of attending to students' experiences in placements are far-reaching although these are discussed only very briefly in this

chapter, as particular issues arise. It is these three areas (a holistic approach to selves/learning, *bricolage*, and social permeability) that are identified through this exploratory case study as, at least initially, being sites for further research.

8.2.1 *The value of an holistic perspective on selves and learning in conceptualising learning at work*

My conceptual framework in undertaking this research has been sociological, arising out of my studies in the sociology of knowledge in the late 1970s/early 1980s. My early studies had generated an interest in the role of problematic experiences in challenging unquestioned assumptions about the social world, as well as the view that selves were socially constructed. My then certainties about the value of these understandings were initially challenged by reading Foucault (who rejected this tradition), and then were pushed into the background by post-modern perspectives on identity. These various ideas were extended and integrated when I eventually lighted upon Burkitt's ecological and embodied perspective on selves. Although Burkitt's work has not had a prominent and overt presence in this thesis (I have no more than summarised some key ideas in chapter 1), it has formed the framework within which the research has been conducted.

There were two close relatives to these sociological perspectives be found in the literature on adult education. The first was in the literature on learning from experience, with the seminal works of Dewey (arising out of the American pragmatist tradition) as their wellspring. This was particularly evident in the five assumptions about learning from experience, as delineated by Boud *et al.* in the introductions to their edited volumes on adults learning. The other relative was the situated learning approach, which, according to Billett (2000), aims to encompass the 'whole person', sees participation as involving the ongoing construction of identities, and recognises the need to account for broader social forces in examining learning at work (Billett 2000: 33, 53-55)², and, therefore, for the design, delivery and assessment of work placements.

² Lave & Wenger (1991:61) invited debate about the validity of using different cultural and historical examples of apprenticeship systems in studying learning in communities of practice, and my view is that their decision meant that essential characteristics of the late modern era, and that have a role to play in

One of the premises upon which I had selected an ecological approach was the recognition it gave to experiences over time, to *habitus*/the personal experience base/taken-for-granted reality, and therefore, as Dewey phrased it, to the continuity of selves. I had found the confusion in the literature between the ontology of selves as socially constructed and the everyday lived experience of being a body/self quite bizarre (cf. Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Garrick 1999). Using subjective, diachronic data that concerned matters of social and geographical space allowed me to demonstrate the need to recognise continuity (pasts and futures) in theorising selves, as well as subjective hierarchies of social space, as delineated by Berger & Kellner (1979) and Berger, Berger & Kellner (1973).

This research has highlighted that work itself needs to be situated in the context of people's lives in the late modern era. Students draw on a far wider range of factors (social and temporal) in negotiating their projects than the situated learning literature would suggest. This study allows for an extension of our understanding of the situatedness of learning, clarifying the need for a continued focus on learner experiences to avoid falling into an over-socialised view. Thus, a significant conclusion that can be drawn from this study is the need to further explore the implications of an ecological perspective on selves for our understanding of learning, and, more practically, how best to design and conduct work placements with the multi-dimensionality of selves and of corporeal experience in mind.

The ecological perspective is not alone in reinforcing the importance of relational views of selves and of learning, or in suggesting that *reciprocal action* must be taken into account. Trajectories are built through interactions that should not be seen as a linear to and fro, but organically, in a process in which all of those interacting 'undergo spontaneous self-organisation' (Farrell 1998: 9). Miles and Huberman found that a school improvement process was one of 'reciprocal transformation', with teachers

workplace learning, were therefore unrecognised. What they saw as broader social forces were located within communities of practice (for example, the distribution of power), not within individuals' lives in Western societies.

changing their practices, and the practices changing the teachers (Miles and Huberman 1994: 8). Chappell (1998) made similar findings in his study of TAFE teachers. In this study, informants were not merely temporarily inserted into a machine, most had some impact on others in their environment. Nonetheless, the use of an ecological perspective refreshes awareness of the learner's individual roles in learning without rejecting the equal relevance of context, demanding that *interaction* between individual and context and multiple *affordances* (those of the individual and the context) be recognised. This is a far more complex picture of learning at and through work than, for example, the literature on placements suggests.

This means that neither the individual (as in the psychologically-based adult learning literature) nor the immediate context (as in the situated learning literature) has primacy, and that each acts on the other, or fails to act on the other, dependent on the players and the practices involved and how these are viewed by people both inside and outside of the immediate practice context. I am reminded of two concepts in noting this. The first is Howard Becker's (1994) previously mentioned paper on coincidence (how much of what we find to be significant in life is based on this), as well as Giddens' (1991) mention of the role of luck in dealing with the risks of contemporary life, and the second on chaos theory, how important chance conjunctions are to the ongoing development of new systems. According to Farrell (1998: 9), complex systems (such as the social world) function on the border of chaos and order, neither working under simple laws, nor chaotic, but predictably unpredictable. The richness and unpredictability that result from chance elements (Brittany's sporting prowess in a quasi-familial environment where the children were good at sport, or Kelvin's observations of aged care affecting his understanding of his ailing father) have a significant impact on outcomes for all of the people in that social environment. This finding throws into question how best we might assess students' learning in work placements, when the transactions that occur are not purely the responsibility of the student, nor the organisation, but are partly structured by chance conjunctions of events and experiences.

The sorts of learning that have been identifiable through the closer examination of the diaries include the changing of categories (for example, making a distinction – however appropriate – between the deserving and the undeserving client and how one might relate accordingly), increased knowledge of particular individuals and of how to interact with them and therefore arriving at some generalisations (such as Annabel with Boyd and Ben, or students who were dealing with children or bathing elderly men), self-repositioning (overcoming fear and recognising one's own sadness and compassion for others), identification of one's own trajectory (Cameron knew he had moved from a position of nervousness to one of concern), and recognising the political context (for example, Kelvin on aged care). Influences on life outside of the placement included new categories for understanding experiences (Denis's girlfriend and friends discussing class and values), greater awareness of caring (Kelvin), and the shifts that must have been occurring (but that were not mentioned in the diary) as the Aboriginal girls became players of Brittany's team sport. Although this diversity points to the inadequacy of purely cognitive models of learning driving our understanding of learning in placements, the small number of diaries examined mean that this study merely suggests avenues that are worthy of further investigation.

Besides highlighting the impact of learning on selves, this research has drawn in a far wider range of factors than is commonly considered when looking at learning or at selves, and these factors need to be seen as *interacting with each other within the individual* as well as with socio-natural aspects of multiple contexts. As was the case in Bloomer & Hodkinson's (2000: 9) longitudinal study of teenagers' learning, change occurred in complex ways that rested on perpetual shifts of contexts, values, beliefs and meanings. Values, feelings, perceptions and actions all feed off and into each other as people negotiate their way through unfamiliar situations and in relationship with unfamiliar people. In most work on adults' learning, this complex interactivity has been (deliberately or inadvertently) cancelled out by several factors: a desire to produce scientifically valid generalisations (Goodnow 1986); a desire to explore group responses, as in the early occupational socialisation literature (Becker *et al.* 1992; Melia 1987); a focus on workplace practices to the exclusion of subjective perceptions of

those practices (Billett 2001a; Wenger 1998; Scribner 1997; Lave & Wenger 1991); or a focus on just one facet of the potential range of human responses, as in studies considering the ways in which feelings were handled in difficult work situations, or on how students understood certain learning tasks (Marton & Booth 1997).

All in all, then, taking a holistic and interactive stance on selves opens the door to a more far-reaching and complex view of learning in work placements. Neither the work environment nor the student can be isolated from each other, nor can the role of chance be discounted. Placement processes need to be designed with interactivity and unpredictability clearly in mind.

8.2.2 *Bricolage and learning for action*

Projects and intentions are an under-researched area in adult education, with the focus having been either upon reflection, or on the ways in which people are influenced by, or draw upon the immediate socio-practical context in what and how they learn. *Bricolage* is largely only recognised as a way of dealing with problems in research (Denzin & Lincoln 1998, 2000), but is also present, albeit lacking the required project-focused orientation, through the concept of improvisation in learning at work in Lave and Wenger (1991: 93), and in Goffman's (1976, 1972) dramaturgical view of selves. In this research I considered the role of the future across three dimensions – the long-term, through the notion of the project and the medium term through the notion of the goal. Intentions (which are short-term strategies that can only be inferred from actions) were inferred from the ways in which the students dealt with the subject requirements.

I had not considered the role of the future in learning prior to engaging in this thesis, even though Boud *et al.*'s (1996; 1993; 1985) model of learning from experience includes intentions as a component. Schutz and Luckmann's (1974) ideas, situated learning and novice/expert studies (Billett 2001a, 2001b, 1999; Wenger 1998; Scribner 1997 [1986]; Chi, Glaser & Farr 1988), as well as the literature on socialisation (for example, the seminal study by Becker *et al.* 1992) provided indicators that the

pragmatic imperative would be narrowly circumscribed to immediate circumstances, and that long-term projects would be subsumed, at least for the short term.

My study shows that a quasi-scientific framework (Schutz & Luckmann 1974), a focus on tasks (Scribner 1997; Chi, Glaser & Farr 1988; etc.), as well as extrapolating from studies of students in shared situations (Becker *et al.* 1992; Melia 1987), can distort our understanding of how projects might be affected by the demands of work environments. Even amongst this very small number of students, the differences were considerable, and what happened in community placements did not inevitably divert students from their project, or create a locally circumscribed project.

At this point, it is worth revisiting Giddens' (1991) descriptions of the consequences of modernity, particularly his themes of trust and risk (defined as the unanticipated results of human activity) as people attempt to negotiate an unpredictable and potentially dangerous future against a background of a complex and ill-understood world. As he puts it, '[...] living in the modern world is more like being in a careering juggernaut [...] than being in a carefully controlled and well-driven motor car' (Giddens 1991: 53). As we head towards an unpredictable future, because of the fragmenting of communal relationships and kinship ties, relationships with people in our lives who are fundamentally strangers must be 'worked at', and 'won' through warmth and openness in mutual processes of self-disclosure (Giddens 1991: 121)³. What eventuates will be affected by a person's skills and experience, the extent to which mistakes can be hidden, and chance (Giddens 1991: 35, 86).

Given the unpredictability of the consequences of our own and others' actions, it is the future orientation of projects and intentions that allows for the foregrounding of *bricolage* as the mechanism through which people learn selves, as they more or less effectively cobble together responses in familiar and unfamiliar situations that they believe will lead them forwards (a future-orientation discussed by writers as diverse as Flaherty & Fine 2001: 147; Scribner 1997: 326; Jenkins 1996: 22; Eggins & Slade 1996: 8; Bourdieu 1977: 8-9; Goffman 1976: 13, 24; and Dewey 1975: 37, 67).

³ This would appear to have been Brittany's goal and process.

Bricolage may well be the process underpinning the transition from novice to expert that Scribner (1997 [1986]) focuses on in more circumscribed work tasks – from rigid algorithms to increased creativity.

The process of *bricolage* in addressing problems has the effect of (and maybe even the implicit aim of) refining the focus of activity, and, paradoxically, of both increasing and reducing the number of alternative courses of action to those that are likely to have the desired results. This is an assertion that returns me to *The Boys in White* (Becker *et al.* 1992 [1961]), where students started their medical studies with a variety of understandings about what was required to become a doctor, and finally adopted a strategy more suited to the immediate demands of the situation. It also reflects the processes of research when using the case study approach, when immersion in the case allows for progressive focusing of the research questions rather than following a logical line of inquiry (Stake 1995: 8-9, 12). In contrast, the observation also returns us to Scribner's (1997) studies in the milk-crate factory, in which experienced packers possessed a wide range of alternative ways of calculating carton contents.

These assertions concerning *bricolage* appear, on the face of it, to be at odds with my assertions about the importance of recognising aspects of situatedness that are outside of the workplace. Not so. What students drew on to address immediate situations was not necessarily part of the immediate social environment (for example, Brittany turned to the local police for confirmation of her understandings, and Kelvin to the placement to augment his understanding of his parents' problems). However, as Billett (2000b) suggests, it is possible that the marginal 'employment' conditions of these students have highlighted issues that might not otherwise have emerged. On the other hand, Berry and Irvine (1986: 271) indicate by the title of their chapter on practical knowledge in Sternberg & Wagner 1986, this process is nothing exceptional, and that, in terms of *bricolage*, 'savages do it daily'.

The concept of *bricolage*, then, is one which leads me to think that there should be a focus, in terms of our support to students in placements, and, where relevant, in our

assessment of their work (see section 8.3.3.4), on creative problem-solving as much as on reflection. This should, again where relevant, constitute a twin focus, not either one or the other, so that students could balance them differently according to the environments in which they find themselves. At the very least, students need to be *prepared* for riding the juggernaut.

8.2.3 *The permeability of private, work and global domains*

Most descriptions of learning at work have work hermetically sealed from other aspects of a person's life. Oddly enough, this is also the way in which selves are currently viewed, as so fragmented, illusory and tied to immediate social contexts that any notion of a continuous and unitary identity is out of the question. Although I am not quibbling with sociality and relationships as the seedbed for selves, nor the differences in selves that are brought out by and fostered in changing environments, this research supports the notion that there is a hierarchy of relationships that influence the degree to which new selves are born, based on the level of personal investment in different relationships across the individual's life, spatially and temporally.

It is a mistake to view the situatedness of learning and of selves in terms of the workplace alone. Paid employment does not always act as a form of 'psychic glue' (Littler 1985: 2), and friendships in contemporary society are framed by domestic contexts rather than static, life-long communities (Adams & Allan 1998: 10-11). The workplace can generate problems that are addressed outside of work, in discussion with more significant others, and/or it can be the site in which problems from other life spheres find a solution. New work skills spill over into people's personal lives (Boud & Garrick 1999: 1). Berger & Luckmann (1966: 171-174) describe how, in the routine maintenance of social reality, intimates are more central than casual contacts, and that, without ongoing contact and conversations, one's reality is destroyed. The longer and more intense the relationship, the greater the commitment to the identity (Berger 1976: 122). While all contacts contribute to the formation and maintenance of selves, it is with partners and within the family and close friendships that a person's sense of self is most fully sustained (Berger & Kellner 1979; Berger, Berger & Kellner 1973). For students

with a transitory sojourn in a placement, the pattern of dialogue that creates and sustains realities (Eggins & Slade 1996; Berger & Kellner 1979; Berger & Luckmann 1985), would be with intimates about the placement, rather than, say, with those in the placement about their intimates.

Even in secondary socialisation processes that divorce people from their pasts (as has historically been the case in police training), those who are biographically significant to learners remain a danger to the new world view (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 177-178). The reinterpretation of one's former social world by the new one is required (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 178), and this is highly unlikely in brief encounters such as the community placement⁴, or if you have nothing in common with a particular set of others (Schutz & Luckmann 1974: 58). This is even recognised within the policing literature: 'occupation is challenged only by family and the peer group as the major determinant of behaviour and attitudes' (Moore 1969, cited in Kenney & McNamara 2000: 2) (although they, along with many others, fail to take into account the wider context of work in late modern societies). This throws into question any certainties that work placements will foster professionalism, rather, they are more likely to provide students with a greater variety of examples of behaviours and processes on which to draw, thus increasing their problem-solving repertoires and increasing their feelings of competence.

Moving between social environments does not mean that other environments are abandoned, or even relegated to the background. They may be used as benchmarks (Kelvin's earlier experiences of aging, or Hector's accomplished sister), as resources (Bettina's sport), as reassurance (the confirmation Annabel got from police that her understanding of her situation was correct), or as respite (Denis's time with his friends and girlfriend). The data from the five selected students shows that looking at learning in work environments cannot be divorced from other factors in a learner's life. This includes the greater diversity of employment patterns that exists in contemporary Western society, the resultant skills that people bring with them into new employment

⁴ Although, as mentioned in section 8.3.3.1, I have seen this happen.

situations and the ongoing focus on working towards a future (Watson *et al.* 2003: 132-150). Other worlds are inevitably drawn in and drawn upon, across the permeable boundaries of social space and social time.

At the same time, the unusual role of the community placement in these students' path towards police work may have had a considerable influence on my results – fringe dwelling was inbuilt for these students. Perhaps because theirs was but a brief sojourn, the majority of students placed the experiences *on the periphery of their own life-worlds*. I am reminded of one of the questions that had occupied me at the start of this research process. Why had others been so affected by *les évènements de mai*, when I was also in Paris at the time, and had not? Perhaps it was, after all, partly because I was coming to the end of my intercalary year in France, and my long-term life and interests lay across the English Channel?

The extent to which students looked to other life-worlds may also have been influenced by the practice context. Looking at the specifics of the various work situations, and the influence this had on the learners, client contact that was therapeutic and client-focused in orientation had far greater impact on these students, and in the desired direction, than did transitory forms of service provision that were relatively impersonal and transaction-focused. As is the case for children, impoverished learning environments appear to pauperise the learning opportunities. What students' accounts of their experiences in State Government agencies in this study show is that these agencies furnish a number of perspectives on client problems that inherently provide food for thought – different ways of handling feelings⁵, different sets of information on the clients (Hector), different views of treatment options⁶. Agencies which are reliant on large numbers of volunteers simply did not offer the students the diversity of perspectives that were to be found in those organisations which employed large numbers of qualified staff.

⁵ Leonard, in a hospital, considered a doctor's advice about remaining detached.

⁶ This was the case for Cameron, who was placed in a methadone treatment clinic.

What was also apparent was that the further away the students were from client contact, the less interested was the student (Denis was one example⁷). In placements such as theirs, the resources to which they turned related to the need to get through the subject, and the greatest part of their attention was devoted to the completion of the required activities. In terms of their situation as students whose work would be assessed⁷, they were in a difficult position, as they were required to reflect on their experiences of and with clients, but had too few contacts to do so. Again, this points to the need for flexibility in assessment criteria for learning in such placements.

It is once the students become police officers, however, that the experiences in the community placement will be put to the test. The literature suggests that, at least traditionally, this will be a stiff test, in that being a police officer is seen as *the* defining identity (Skolnik & Fyfe 1997). Additionally, the implications of this research are that, as these students become police officers, whether and how they come to adopt a 'professional' identity will be highly dependent upon interactions in context: they may reject or accept the models those in the workplace provide for them, by looking towards their image of what they should be like, or towards their families and friends. The process, as in the community placement, will be an interactive one, the outcome of which will be predictably unpredictable.

8.3 Implications of the study

8.3.1 Theoretical implications

The major implications of this study are the need to turn out attention to the role of the future in learning, to recognise the broader situatedness of experience (that is, the patterns of social relationships in contemporary society), as well as to recognise the contribution that boring or unpleasant work can make to learners' responses, and therefore learning, in placements. This is partly because this study failed to confirm my lead assumption, one common to current theorisations of learning at work, that

⁷ Frances, in a community centre, was another example.

immediate circumstances would drive learning. The study showed that a broader range of temporal and social circumstances needed to be taken into account.

Considering the role of the future in learning, it is possible that the strong impact of a potential future that was revealed in this study (work-related or not) may only occur in work placements. On the other hand, the presence of the question of intentions in the literature on learning from experience (Boud *et al.* 1996; 1993; 1985; Kolb 1984; Dewey 1938) would suggest that the conception of a future is central to experience in the Western world. As such, it is worthy of further attention.

Considering the broader situatedness of experience, this study has tended to confirm the findings of Bloomer & Hodkinson (2000) that learning at work draws in and affects life beyond work. It draws attention, therefore, to the need to incorporate a focus not just on the immediate circumstances of work, but also what Boud and Walker (1998:196) defined as context – the broader social circumstances within which an individual's life is played out, and which tacitly frame experience.

Thirdly, this study has illustrated the ways in which learning is affected by the affordances of the work environment. Unpleasant and unrewarding work turns learners away from their immediate circumstances, towards a range of taken-for-granted approaches to handling difficulties. Whilst these approaches involve creativity, in an assessment context they can work against the best interests of the student. The theoretical implication of this is that far more attention needs to be paid to *interactivity* in understanding how people learn in the workplace.

Above and beyond these implications that arise directly from this study, and one which cannot be fully exploited here, is the potential value of the ecological approach to selves, as articulated by Burkitt (1999), being translated across to constitute an ecological approach to learning. This is particularly the case given that he draws on very similar intellectual traditions to those in the situated learning literature (such as Vygotsky, Leontyev and Bourdieu), as well as those interested in experiential learning

(the American pragmatist philosophers through, in the case of educators, Dewey), in action (through Merleau-Ponty), and in the embodiment of selves, as well as recognising the importance of situating selves in the late modern context, with its complex interplay of public and private worlds, as in Giddens (1991). These pillars underpinning his delineation of the ecological perspective take us out of the often romantic (Wolfson & Willinsky 1998), small-scale social domain of the situated perspective into the late modern context, and allow us to more fully exploit the multiple dimensions of learning in the experiential learning literature.

The implications of the ecological approach for adult education would centre on the re-assessment of what can happen to students in their placements. This research has tended towards confirming the importance of the strategies for workplace learning (as well as the complex issues associated with working with others, under fragile conditions of employment, and when the 'invitational' aspects – affordances – are minimal) that Billett (2001: 20-31) and Boud and Solomon (2001: 7) suggest, while at the same time indicating their limitations. Greater controls ironically may increase the likelihood that placements will achieve their stated aims, and at the same time reduce the likelihood of learning being related to other aspects of students' lives. The potential contribution of the ecological approach to the design of work placements is more to do with how to foster problem-solving in unfamiliar contexts in ways which effectively draw on all the available resources across the several life contexts any student can access.

There is also an implication related to the theoretical tradition arising out of the Chicago School, and the ways in which some of the ideas from that School have woven their way through this thesis, whilst being disregarded in much contemporary literature on adults' learning. The ideas of Mead and Cooley were significant in Dewey's thinking (both joined the anti-essentialist and anti-Cartesian Dewey at the new University of Chicago, and Mead contributed to the development of Dewey's experimental school) (Alexander 1987: xi; Coser 1977: 333-334), and symbolic interactionism, the work of Becker, social constructivism and Burkitt's ecological view all owe much to these two

pragmatist philosophers. This is what has been called the 'light' side of constructivism, with Freud's inheritors occupying the 'dark' side (Burkitt 1999: 67).

It should be noted that the use of the term 'social constructivism' has proliferated to such an extent that it has been described as 'a vogue, a tic, a pest' (Furbank 1999). While it, like symbolic interactionism, has been criticised for seeking generalisable knowledge divorced from specific contexts (Gergen 1998: 1; Bourdieu 1977: 21, 72), to dismiss it as a 'moribund relic of high modernism' (Gergen 1998: 1) may throw out the baby with the bathwater. The various works of Schutz, Berger and Luckmann and others suggest processes of social meaning-making and typification that may be of value in explaining why it is that placements might have such diverse outcomes, and this is, in part, through their recognition of the unique characteristics of selves in the modern world. While my theoretical focus has been on the 'light' side of constructivism, the students' work points also to the possibilities and constraints of the 'dark' side, as students struggle to deal with unpleasant situations, sometimes in denial, sometimes by projecting. It is not that the 'dark side' has had nothing to offer in understanding what was happening to students, quite the contrary, it is, rather, that this is not my tradition.

There is one other theoretical implication, concerning gender differences. A focus on independence, autonomy, and abstract critical thought as the hallmarks of maturity (in men) led, in the early 1980s, to a counter-emphasis amongst feminist thinkers upon interdependence, intimacy, nurturance and connection (in women) (Belenky *et al.* 1986: 4-8; Gilligan 1982). While feminist accounts have forced a focus on finer-grained, richer accounts of the concept of agency, taking account of social and historical contexts, feelings, embodiment, desire, creativity, rationality, memory, imagination, dispositions and attitudes (Mackenzie & Stoljar 1000: 21), this research suggests that there is no simple binary distinction to be drawn between the ways in which the men and women in this study encounter and deal with their experiences. Some of this may be attributable to the students' learning context, where the dichotomies between autonomy and nurturance, reason and emotion, public and private are irrelevant to the realities of care giving (Abel & Nelson 1990: 5), but this cannot be said of a student such as

Kelvin, who was clearly highly oriented to family relationships and responsibilities. The ecological perspective, then, is a push towards the recognition of differences amongst those individualised by the complexities of late modern society, rather than potentially essentialist distinctions between men and women, or other binaries.

8.3.2 *Methodological implications*

First and foremost, these informants' diaries proved to be a rich source of data on selves, both through the 'what' and the 'how' of the writing. The types of, and diversity amongst, the situations in which students found themselves, and the nature of their learning situation, meant that it was possible to cover a very wide canvas. Their use has demonstrated that, despite the trend towards relational approaches to examining selves, diaries can capture difference when there is no researcher involvement with the learner, even, in this case, despite the assessment context. The personal nature of the writing, a potential disadvantage for the learner in the assessment context, is an advantage for the researcher.

The spontaneity of the students' diaries, and the 'feeling with' students that can be experienced through reading them, indicate the trustworthiness of the students' work, despite the assessment context (Jones 2000; Madge 1978). Just as importantly, as Canetti (1976: 163) identified for his own writing, diaries may paradoxically reveal voices that could be silenced by more intrusive approaches such as are evident in the contemporary emphasis on interviews:

We write because we cannot speak out loud to ourselves. Speaking to others leads to the most unpredictable estrangements. They gradually lose their own separate existence because of all the countless words with which we attack and overpower them. A kind of slow murder, it is among the most terrible things in human life. It is like someone's pressing down to close off our air passages but taking years until we stop breathing entirely. We stay more innocent when we write.

It may also be that diarists who are not self-consciously aware that their diaries are about learning (as were the students in this study), and who are therefore attempting to reflect on something other than learning, could prove a more fruitful source for research into learning from everyday work and other experiences than learning-focused diaries,

or at least be *as* useful. They certainly yield plentiful examples of the diversity of influences upon learning that Bloomer and Hodkinson (2000) identified in their longitudinal study of continuity and change in young people's dispositions to learning. Like the Bloomer and Hodkinson study, although in a more intensive and truncated form, the diaries yield a picture of change over time and show how students' learning is inextricably linked to their out of work experiences. As Berg (1998: 177) suggests for unobtrusive research methods as a whole, it may be that diaries provide access to aspects of social settings that are simply unreachable by any other means.

In terms of data analysis, the major problems I faced related to the breadth of the issues implicit in an ecological approach to learning, and the diversity of the data on which I was drawing. These two issues meant that analytical approaches that initially looked suitable were not (that is, phenomenology and grounded theory both required more circumscribed data sets). The two approaches that I found particularly useful were Denzin's interpretive interactionism, because it provided different ways of analysing the same data set from a theoretical perspective that was related to, but not quite matched to, my theoretical framework, and Miles & Huberman (1989). N-Vivo proved to be a useful tool for becoming familiar with the data, and for sorting the complexity into categories, and hence developing the diaryscapes. The sorting in N-Vivo also permitted the development of 'maps' in Microsoft Excel that summarised the types of entries. The literature that I had hoped would be especially useful, but which eventually proved to be inappropriate for the analysis of these diaries, was that of Barab *et al.* (2000).

The implications of this study, in terms of data analysis, are that, as for the students, *bricolage* reigns. Tacking between data, different forms of analysing it, and the premises upon which the study was based, allowing ideas to settle after initial drafts, or to emerge after sleep, have been the approaches that have built my analysis. I do not imagine any subsequent diary study I might undertake involving different processes, although I would suspect it would take me less time to work through them.

8.3.3 *Practical implications*

8.3.3.1 Going beyond reflection

A range of practical implications result from this research, many of them alluded to in earlier sections of this chapter. Firstly, there is the question of whether seeing the way in which students might learn from their experiences in community placements as applying previously learnt theories, or as critical reflection alone (particularly if this is weakly conceptualised), does students, and the agencies and clients, a disservice. A definition of reflection that encompasses embodiment was provided by Dewey, where reflection follows ‘times of more overt action and [is] used to organise what has been gained in periods of activity in which the hands and other parts of the body besides the brain are used’ (Dewey 1975: 63). Dewey (1933) said we could be taught to ‘think-well’ (reflect), but Boud & Walker (1998: 192) point out that the spread of reflective practices in some professions has led to partially understood concepts being taken into inappropriate contexts (and this may have been one of them).

As the markers in this subject once said to me, they could see that there was learning, but it was not reflection (Heller-Wagner, pers.comm.; Jackson, pers.comm.; Jennett, pers.comm.). This viewpoint, by the way, shows them to have been focusing on what Brookfield (1995) calls paradigmatic and prescriptive assumptions, rather than causal assumptions, as well as critical reflection, tackling power imbalances rather than the rapid and instinctive decisions about timing and processes (Brookfield 1995: 8) that occur in the midst of action and that have immediate consequences for selves. The diaries show students to have been working on prescriptive and causal aspects of their understandings, the former through the exercises they were required to undertake, and the latter the acritical rapid responses to immediate problems more in tune with Boud and Walker’s (1996) consideration of how experience leads to learning. Only rarely, as one would anticipate, was I ever confronted with paradigmatic reflection⁸.

⁸ One instance was when a pale-skinned Aboriginal student, who had never been a victim of discrimination, was at the beach with his Aboriginal charges, and observed that white families left the water when the

Should processes of reflection upon experience be required when the experiences themselves are mundane, repetitive or irrelevant, students are left without any tools to use to make sense of, or alter, an unfamiliar situation. Practically, Billett (1999) and Tennant (1999) offer some suggestions as to how to better prepare people for learning in the workplace. Asking for active involvement (which was the case for these informants) was a first step in the right direction, but recognising that it is the nature of the placement tasks and personnel, as well as the problem-solving strategies and resources on which students draw as they encounter difficulties, that contribute to very different learning outcomes, may well be the key. Garrick sees the question of how to theorise workplace learning in ways that tolerate and recognise the productive potential of diversity and ambiguity, while still allowing skill development and the creation of new knowledge as being the main challenge (Garrick 1999: 225). Considering briefing processes focused on the encounter with the unfamiliar, providing flexible assessment criteria which could be tailored to different learning situations alongside the learning contract, or specifying a structured set of active enquiry processes might enhance students' opportunities to demonstrate their learning across the wider range of fields to which this study has pointed.

Then, too, Dewey's three principles for learning from experiences were open-mindedness (not identifying with ideas), wholeheartedness (being genuinely enthusiastic) and responsibility (considering the consequences of projected actions) (Dewey 1974 [1933]: 224-226). Using this type of definition may well have allowed the students to see that their commitment was a valued component of their learning, and markers to identify what was happening to students, as well as providing the underpinnings for the design of briefings and assessment items.

This research shows that community placements, in which uncertainty about what is to happen is a constant feature, inevitably leave learners to their own devices, and that this

Aboriginal children entered it. The student intervened by entering the water with the children, and the white children returned. These were things he wrote he would not have identified prior to his reading.

will inevitably lead to the use of ‘survival strategies’ – a short-term focus on addressing immediate problems in the journey towards a long-term goal. Rather than lamenting the fact, and thinking that we can somehow prevent it, the focus could be on the ‘inoculation’ of students – their preparation not just for the cognitive aspects of participating in an alien environment, but also the emotional ones. This is what Teekman (2000) and Loughran (1996) called ‘anticipatory reflection’, the need to think through what the experience might be like, to recollect earlier experiences of similar sorts, how one dealt with them, whether there were alternatives that one could have considered, what one learnt in the long term, and what the implications are *for action*. A focus on anticipatory reflection, improvisation and inoculation may permit students to act on any sense of dismay at the way in which the placement is working.

One of the more successful readings provided to the policing students in this study was a chapter on observation skills, in which high level, subtle observation skills were described, and which informants were often tempted to practice, and often reflected upon. This would suggest that a focus on the practice of certain complex skills can be the starting point for learning, whatever the capacity of the student. This would indicate that study materials provided in support of learning in community placements need to be concerned with how students might maximise their learning, whatever the context; focus on actions as well as reflection; and structure reflection (without necessarily even using the term) when students are from backgrounds in which no other family member has attended university. These changes of emphasis might, in addition, have a positive impact on the matters discussed in the following two sections.

8.3.3.2 Re-evaluating the importance of the future in designing placements

Construing learning through and about practice as solely a matter of reflection on past experiences may limit students’ learning as much as did seeing practice as merely the application of theory. While people implicitly work from their past experiences in handling the experiences of the present, the work of the present is more concerned with prediction and problem-solving than it is retrospection.

One approach to professional education that has taken this focus into account is that of problem-based learning (Boud & Feletti 1997; Barrows 1985; Boud 1985), in which students are taught to think their way through the inevitable thorny problems of practice. The hypothetico-deductive process which is promulgated in problem-based learning provides a starting point for considering how best to prepare students for the predictable unpredictability of practice, particularly because it takes students beyond the immediate responses of *bricolage* into research to check assumptions. As such, it may also provide a lifeline in times of uncertainty.

However, the problem for the newcomer is not so much how to handle other people's problems, although this is clearly a significant factor, or the static problems most typically addressed in the problem-solving literature, but how to handle oneself, given that one needs to survive (at the very least), and preferably prosper in the new environment. While a great deal more research is required into how people deal with unfamiliar circumstances, this research, at the very least, indicates that preparation for entry into field placements should include discussions of the many types of work situations that might be encountered (which could be arrived at through reflective exercises, based on past work and group experiences), and the possible strategies for meeting the assessment requirements, an issue to which I now turn.

8.3.3.3 Assessment of learning in placements

The many issues involved in assessing students' work in field placements are merely touched on here, as they constitute an area for future research. This research has indicated the complexity of the learning situation that students face when their studies require them to spend a period of time in an agency, and their diarised experiences are assessed. It is how best to assess students in workplace contexts that is at issue here (Boud 1999; Boud & Walker 1998; Fish 1989: 17). Models of reflection that focus on critical thinking offer students little chance to articulate their learning in the hurly burly of interactions in field placements.

Assessment thus constitutes a particularly thorny problem. The value of this research has, in part, been generated by the frankness of the students in recording their experiences and the differences in their interpretations of what was required, characteristics which more comprehensive guidelines as to what was required might have largely erased. However, given that what is learnt can be a consequence of the possibilities and constraints of the environment and the availability of suitable alternative paths, assessing students' work independent of any consideration of the contextual factors would be an injustice. As an example, Denis tried to deal constructively with a situation that offered him little, by setting himself research projects, talking with family and friends about the ideas he was encountering, and concentrating on the activities. My suspicion is that he failed the subject, not the least because of the inadequacy of his diary entries, but also because of his adherence to beliefs about gender relationships that the learning materials aimed to challenge. However, there was nothing in Denis's immediate environment to help him deal with the challenge in the way that the lecturer would have wanted. Informants placed, like Denis, in agencies that had transitory contact with clients and/or staff, tended to present 'thinner' work than did those who had intensive contact with clients and staff. Using community placements requires far more attention to what is being assessed, how, and why, if students are not to be disadvantaged by the happenstance of the organisation in which they are placed.

This research shows that community placements, in which uncertainty about what is to happen is a constant feature, inevitably leave learners to their own devices, and that this, in turn, leads to the use of 'survival strategies' – a short-term focus on addressing immediate problems in the journey towards a long-term goal. As reflection is rare, it would seem that better preparing students for what they might encounter, and assessing the ways in which they address the problems they face, that is, their use of problem-solving strategies with which they have been supplied, could be of benefit. This is an area that does appear in the literature on adults learning (McCarthy 1996; Eyster, Giles &

Schmeide 1996; Boud, Keogh & Walker 1985), but, unlike critical reflection, it is not one that has generated many guidelines on how to work with it.

There are often performance-based requirements, too (including in this case). Having supervisors in the placement assess one's performance, particularly should there be a clash of values (as seemed to be the case with Denis), can be particularly problematic. I have already suggested that a mix-and-match approach is needed for students to meet the academic requirements, one that has regard to the variability of placement environments and of students. One way of doing this is to identify several areas of activity that will be assessed, and provide for students to weight these areas differently according to the demands of their placement. The various modules in Nightingale *et al.* (1996) suggest some potential foci: solving problems and developing plans; managing and developing oneself; accessing and managing information; demonstrating knowledge and understanding; designing, creating and performing; and communicating.

8.3.3.4 Recognising ethical issues

This project has raised some ethical considerations. There are potentially serious consequences in the provision of inappropriate placements, which, in this case, might have been hidden by the attempt to address the problems in police education with the utmost rapidity and with large numbers of students. There are two concerns: what the organisations should be doing in relation to the students, and what protections are needed for students and clients who may find themselves in intense relationships that are unlikely to be sustained beyond the duration of the placement. As Boud & Walker (1998: 194) pointed out, clinical placements can generate levels of distress and throw up ethical dilemmas that cannot be resolved by taking notes.

The shift towards State Government placements (Bowles *et al.* 2000) may indicate that the solution to difficult placements, once those difficulties had been identified at University level, was to cull the organisation. It may also mean, on the other hand, that those agencies more likely to withdraw from the program were those which had found

participation difficult. Meantime, students like Annabel were asked to undertake tasks that the permanent staff refused to do, tradesmen were asked to repair equipment (one electrician repaired five electrical items), and others were left to languish in corners when the supervisors were not quite sure what to do with them. Whilst suggested strategies to prevent such abuses are beyond the scope of this research, and unneeded given the demise of the placement, these are matters to which other organisers of such placements need to give attention.

Then too, being in the placement was intended to provide students with opportunities to understand what life could be like for those in difficult circumstances. In so doing, the need was to build relationships with clients. This created one of the ethical dilemmas inherent in community placements: close contact and interactivity create relationships with clients, and these relationships would inevitably be drastically reduced, if not severed. Hector experienced this loss acutely on two occasions, rationalising the children's departure, but nonetheless wondered about the acceptability of giving children such truncated good times. Annabel worried about loosening the ties that had developed in relation to the more likeable clients. Brittany elected to respond to the children's desire to maintain the relationship. In other words, the solutions to these fundamentally ethical concerns were placed largely in the hands of the students. Again, these are issues to which other educators might need to pay attention.

8.3.4 Implications for further research

Mine has been an exploratory research journey, aiming to sketch out a rough map of the terrain of how selves might be learned, opening this land up for further inquiry. Although the axing of the subject in which the community placement was located has closed off the avenue for further research based on these placements (which I regret not only because I believed the subject made a valuable contribution to policing, but also because of the type of data it allowed me to draw on in this study), the study does have implications for further research.

In terms of the research process, this study has reinforced the value of attending to learners' unstructured accounts of their experiences as they are occurring. Diaries written by people who have little understanding of the theoretical premises of reflection seem to offer much scope for researching learning in everyday contexts⁹. The use of this type of material should allow for further examination of the issues that have emerged as interesting in this research, such as the ways in which people respond to relatively unstructured learning environments, what resources are drawn on, and how, to address the problems encountered (that is, the question of *bricolage*); how to incorporate not just intentionality in the design of work placements, but also interactivity and the risks it poses; and incorporating holistic notions of learning in studying how people learn.

The diaries collected for this study have by no means been completely mined. The remaining eighteen diaries could shed further light on phenomena already identified, or raise new questions. They also constitute a site for exploring other aspects of learning. One of the issues in which I was interested, but had to bracket, in doing this research was stimulated by the markers' comments that they could see that the students were learning, but that this was not reflection. Loughran (1996: 4-5), in his study of students' journals, found that most students exhibited open-mindedness, whole heartedness and responsibility. I think this warrants further exploration, as open-mindedness could well be a key stepping stone towards *critical* reflection:

Since coming here my attitude hasn't completely changed. It's mellowed, though, and now I know that there are a lot more other issues with these girls than I thought. For a start, they are human beings who have the right to do what they want. I still don't think it is always fair that they can have as many children as they want while the rest of us pay for them (taxes) and that they can freely do what they want everyday while the rest of us work. However, I realise that a lot of them haven't had the opportunities like the rest of us have, and these girls think their lifestyles ARE normal. (Beryl, R1)

A student such as Beryl newly sees that others' understandings of the world are related to different life experiences, although they retain a view that their view is 'normal'. What is needed for this to go one step further? Did any of these students modify their own assumptions in more significant ways?

⁹ The University of Sussex collection of diaries (Sheridan 2000; Coare & Thomson 1996), for example, is a resource that allows for the examination of learning across other occupations and situations.

The other significant avenue this study has opened up is the further examination of the implications of the ecological perspective on selves for learning, to perhaps translate into an ecological perspective on learning. Working from sociological and ecological premises has allowed for the identification of forms of learning through action that may otherwise have been beyond my grasp, forms that intimately concern identities and relationships rather than objects of learning (learning to be rather than learning how to or what). The sociological understandings that have underpinned these findings have been on the periphery of adult education, and further research using these premises could assist in negotiating the challenges posed to the field by post-modernism.

In all then, this research has answered my original questions, but opened a Pandora's box of others, no doubt attributable to the many dimensions there are to learning. It should, as exploratory research, stimulate debate as to the value of using an ecological approach in considering learning and how best to foster learning, particularly in work placements.

8.4 Strengths and limitations of the study

The primary strength of this research was its reliance on data that was, in Madge's (1978) terms, highly trustworthy, and that tapped into the ways in which people deal with unfamiliar experiences in a most helpful way (far more so than published diaries, or diaries written by learners who are more aware of what is required). It was possible to identify the emergent nature of knowledge, as, over time, students clarified for themselves, and for the reader, the ways in which they were coming to understand the situations that they faced, and their own position in this. The diary data allowed for the identification of several dimensions of learning selves that might well have been excluded through interviews or observations, particularly the wider social worlds on which students drew to make sense of their experiences, and against which their placement experiences made sense.

The other source of strength was the match between my focus on self-positioning and the data source upon which I drew. In looking at the shifts in subjective appreciations of the world, I drew on data considered to be the archetype of subjectivity and agency (Lieblich & Tuvial-Maschiach 1998: 7; Coare & Thomson 1996: vii), despite it being filtered (either by the student in writing their diary or by me in presenting it) (Denzin & Lincoln 1998: 21).

There were, however, some limitations that became apparent during the progress of the research. Certainly, a question has to be whether, in the light of the axing of the placement, the research was a total waste of time. Not in my view, because the placements are still used elsewhere, because universities in Australia are increasingly incorporating workplace learning in their courses¹⁰, as well as moving towards funding arrangements that might increase the desirability of service learning and philanthropic work for advantaged students, and because, with the ebb and flow of changes in policing in NSW, community placements might yet be reinstated. Moreover, daily records of experiences are still used in the policing placement in New South Wales Police recruit training. The research is thus of relevance to policing and to other placements – every workplace, every police station is different, and the interactivity that has been highlighted in this research needs to be recognised if we are not to disadvantage or to harm the learners.

Another limitation is that one of the premises of the research (interactivity) ironically means that some of the data have to be interpreted very cautiously, and no firm conclusions can be drawn. The differences in trajectories and learning outcomes can not be seen as reflecting individual strengths and weaknesses, or consistently identifiable patterns. For example, Hector may have been allowed considerable responsibility because he was a man in his thirties, and was judged to be capable. Annabel may have had such a difficult time with Ben because, as she identified, he saw her as available, and an older male

¹⁰ For example, the University of Wollongong recently advertised the position of 'Workplace Learning Coordinator' (*Illawarra Mercury*, Saturday October 11, 2003, p.24).

would simply not have faced the problems she did. Had either of them been located in the other's placement, the outcomes may have been very different.

The impossibility of clearly demarcating the contribution of the individual and of those in the context to the learning means that the interpretation of this type of material must be particularly tentative and modest in its claims. However, importantly, the tentative nature of the conclusions is in tune with Schutz & Luckmann's (1974) view of the nature of knowledge, Denzin & Lincoln's observation that text can only ever provide a filtered window on experience (Denzin & Lincoln 1998: 21), and Giddens' view that we can never be sure that any knowledge we have will not be revised (Giddens 1991: 39).

These limitations, whilst they are acknowledged, do not detract from the significance of the findings, rather, they merely provide platforms for future research (addressed in Section 8.4.2).

8.5 Reflecting on the ride

Virginia Woolf (cited in Monteith 1986), when writing of diaries, remarked that it was only after a lapse of time that the patterns of experience could be identified. As I come to the final stages of writing this thesis, it is only now that I see that, in some ways, I have travelled a similar path to that of the students whose work I have been examining. I began this thesis with projects and goals of my own, ones that partly mirrored the students' projects of becoming a police officer and their goals of passing the subject. In my case, my project started as twofold, to find out how people learnt from their mistakes *and* to gain credibility within the educational environment in which I worked, and the goal was the development and completion of this thesis.

The substance of my two projects and of the goal has changed over time, and in several ways. Personally, I discovered that the territory I initially wanted to explore was a mire obscured by depressing dark shadows, and I did not want to spend several years paddling around people's sense of failure. Situationally, the issue of credibility at work

receded into the background as I myself took a place in the background at work. Coincidentally, there were several occurrences. In trying to identify the wellspring of my interest in mistakes, I surprised myself by going back to a period in my life that I had ceased to see as having any importance. Having diaries of the period allowed me to revisit the way I had dealt with the problems, and to realise that I had just engaged in a futile pursuit of *why* things had happened the way they had. At the same time, searching the diaries made me realise that here was a potential method for considering learning in everyday life. As I waded through the marshes of confusion about where to travel next, the burgeoning interest amongst adult educators in selves was drawn to my attention, and linked in with three earlier passions of mine, the social construction of reality, France and Foucault. I read some published diaries and found them potentially useful – but it was the chance remarks of colleagues about students’ diaries that allowed me to combine my personal interests in diaries and self-construction with my professional interests in police education.

Frustrated in the early years of this study by a lack of time, often stuck in deep channels of my own digging, and just concentrating on getting a little writing done each day, these pedestrian years have given way to twin joys, discovery – and *bricolage*. These are old joys, and they are based in creative activities. One of the drawing games I learnt from my mother was ‘taking a line for a walk’. We would scribble a shape with our eyes shut, then turn the paper around until we found out what we could make of it, then complete the drawing. Later, I appliquéd and embroidered a well loved, tatty skirt, with scraps of fabric, beads, buttons and shells, making scenes on back and front. In so doing, I discovered how the starting point and the media I used meant that the finished product was different to how I had imagined it. I did not expect my research journey to exhibit similar patterns.

Paradoxically, my original research project on learning from mistakes started, not with the assumption that people’s projects would change because of situational factors, but with the reverse assumption that people sometimes *could not* learn from their situations. My life and assumptions had rolled untouched through, for example, being in Paris in

1968, when others had significantly changed, or when I tried to address a family problem in which my own actions were a significant factor. I could also see examples amongst my colleagues. Just as importantly, when asked for the wellspring of my interest in learning from mistakes, I cried. Brookfield (1995: 32) points out that finding emotionally charged parts of one's learning biography helps in the understanding of later choices, especially if you do not rely solely on the autobiography, but analyse it. While not using any of the methods he suggests in terms of my own diaries, the process of examining the students' diaries has shown that what is self-evident to some is opaque to others, that context does not inevitably reign supreme, particularly when personal interests, concerns, values and assumptions run counter to those of the other people in the context.

Like the students, what I have been doing has been structured by my idiosyncratic responses to certain types of phenomena, the situations in which I have found myself, the people I have in my immediate environment to whom I have chosen to turn for advice and support, the resources at my disposal, the affordances of my work and home environment, and so on. I would work on a particular aspect of the thesis, then, when I could no longer 'see' what I was producing, would turn to another job, tacking to and fro between islands of progress. It was not until I had found out what I had learned from studying the students' diaries that I could recognise that the process in which I had been engaged possessed similar characteristics, at least in terms of the ways in which I drew on available resources in trying to find a path through the problems I faced. All the Joker's cards began to fall into place.

Undertaking this research has allowed me to trace some of the intellectual threads that weave their way through the various perspectives on selves and learning that I have canvassed, and that come from different disciplines, including sociology, psychology, education and anthropology. Much contemporary literature on adult learning, although not using these specific terms, refers to the need to take actor, *habitus* and context into account, and considers that learning is linked to changes in selves and self-positioning (Billett 2001; Wenger 1998; Usher 1993), and that there are tensions between the

understanding of individuals as autonomous and as socially constructed (Garrick 1999), even though acting and being acted upon were identified long ago as core facets of experience, and therefore learning (Dewey 1929). All these various factors are discussed without any coherent ‘badging’ of the perspective that theorists are taking. Burkitt (1999, 1991) uniquely incorporates notions of embodiment, thought, feelings, actions, social and natural contexts, pasts and futures into his ‘ecological’ understanding of selves. His work provided me with a descriptor of the myriad facets of human experience that could be taken into account, one which importantly included sociological understandings of time and of selves. This ecological framework for selves encompasses a huge range of factors that are impossible to grasp empirically. Yet, in this instance, casting a wide net allowed for the capture of aspects of learning that would not have been possible with a fishing rod – this research truly was exploratory, and landed some unanticipated fish.

8.6 Summary

This case-study has shown that the interface between student and placement is an extremely complex phenomenon, and it sets a foundation for further research not just into the proper design and development of this type of learning experience, nor just the possibilities of diaries as data sources for other aspects of subjectivities, but also the whole question of the role of the future in learning from experience. Above all it highlights the need to counterbalance a focus on designing workplaces for learning with a focus on what happens for individuals as they learn in workplaces, and that learning draws on past, present and future, as the learner traverses concurrent social worlds.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Summary list of 20 required activities in *JST121: Police and society*

1. Rank order ten objects (car keys, wallet, police badge, bible, deodorant, basketball, personal snapshots, bottle of beer, pay slip and a tablet of ecstasy) in terms of their value to you, identify what they mean to you, and draw upon the specified readings to discuss how these values might affect your ability to be unbiased and impartial.
2. Using insights from specified readings, observe and write a narrative description of a discrete incident of direct service delivery.
3. Using categorisations of class, illustrate your own class prior to entering the program, and what you think will be the appropriate category for a Probationary Constable.
4. Discuss the class position of the client group with workers in the placement, and explain how they are categorised.
5. Ask 10 people outside of your immediate social group to rank 20 occupations in regard to their social status. Tabulate these in rank order.
6. Describe the educational and occupational background of your parents, yourself and your siblings, and discuss how these factors have affected your life chances.
7. case study on the dynamics of social inequality.
8. Interview a female worker about an incident of gender-based harassment.
9. Identify your own cultural background (17 questions to guide this identification were provided).
10. Consider whether there is something about the police occupation which makes people racist, or is police racism a reflection of racism in broader society?
11. Interview a person of non-English speaking background about an incident of individual racism.
12. Interview an Aboriginal person about an incident of individual discrimination.
13. Discuss the question as to whether police are necessary.
14. Observe and report upon rule compliance and discretion in a bureaucratic setting.
15. Discuss the connections between the issues covered in the readings, the placement, and policing.
16. Conduct a network analysis and create a link chart.
17. Rate a newspaper article about your placement for its reliability.
18. Consider whether video surveillance is an invasion of privacy.
19. Case study on privacy.
20. Summative case study.

APPENDIX 2: Contact with students

Dear Student of Class [...]

I am writing to invite your participation in some research I am conducting into how people develop expertise. I am currently enrolled in a PhD with the University of Technology, Sydney.

During Trimester 2, your assessment in *JST121: Police and Society* involved the completion of a 'social investigator's notebook'. This notebook in some ways forms a map of your learning experience. I have found that most research which looks at the development of expertise compares the ideas of novices and experts, but does not look at how novices become experts. I suspect, having reviewed some of my own diaries, that your notebooks will point to how this happens. It could also point to why people suggest that the 'real' learning occurs in the field. My research should result in improvements in field phases of the Diploma (although the results will probably be too late to benefit you!).

I would be most grateful if you would dig through your study materials and find your JST121 notebook, and drop it off at one of two places. [A casual research assistant] will be in the lower foyer below the dining room on Monday 1st and Tuesday 2nd December to collect these. You can also take them, at your convenience, to the box in the library foyer, with the replacement cover sheet attached. [The research assistant] will photocopy the work before the end of Trimester 3, and, if you've put your name and/or student number on each page, clip it off the copy. She'll then return the original to you using the self-addressed label. Your participation in the research will therefore be anonymous.

I hope that you can locate the notebook, and that you find your way to participating in this research project.

Regards

Catherine Layton
[date]

REPLACEMENT COVER SHEET

Please tick the appropriate boxes.

1. Have you kept a diary before undertaking this subject?
Never
For a short time
Spasmodically
Frequently
Constantly

2. How easy did you find it to keep this notebook?
Hated keeping it
Found it difficult
Found it quire easy
Loved it/found it really easy

3. The notebook contains all notes, thoughts, reflections, observations, interviews, descriptions and activities during your community organisation field experience. Who else did you talk about these things with at the time?
The people at the organisation
Staff from the Practicum Unit
The lecturer(s) in JST121
Your partner
Your fellow students
Your parent(s)
A professional helper
Your children
Other (please specify) _____
No-one else

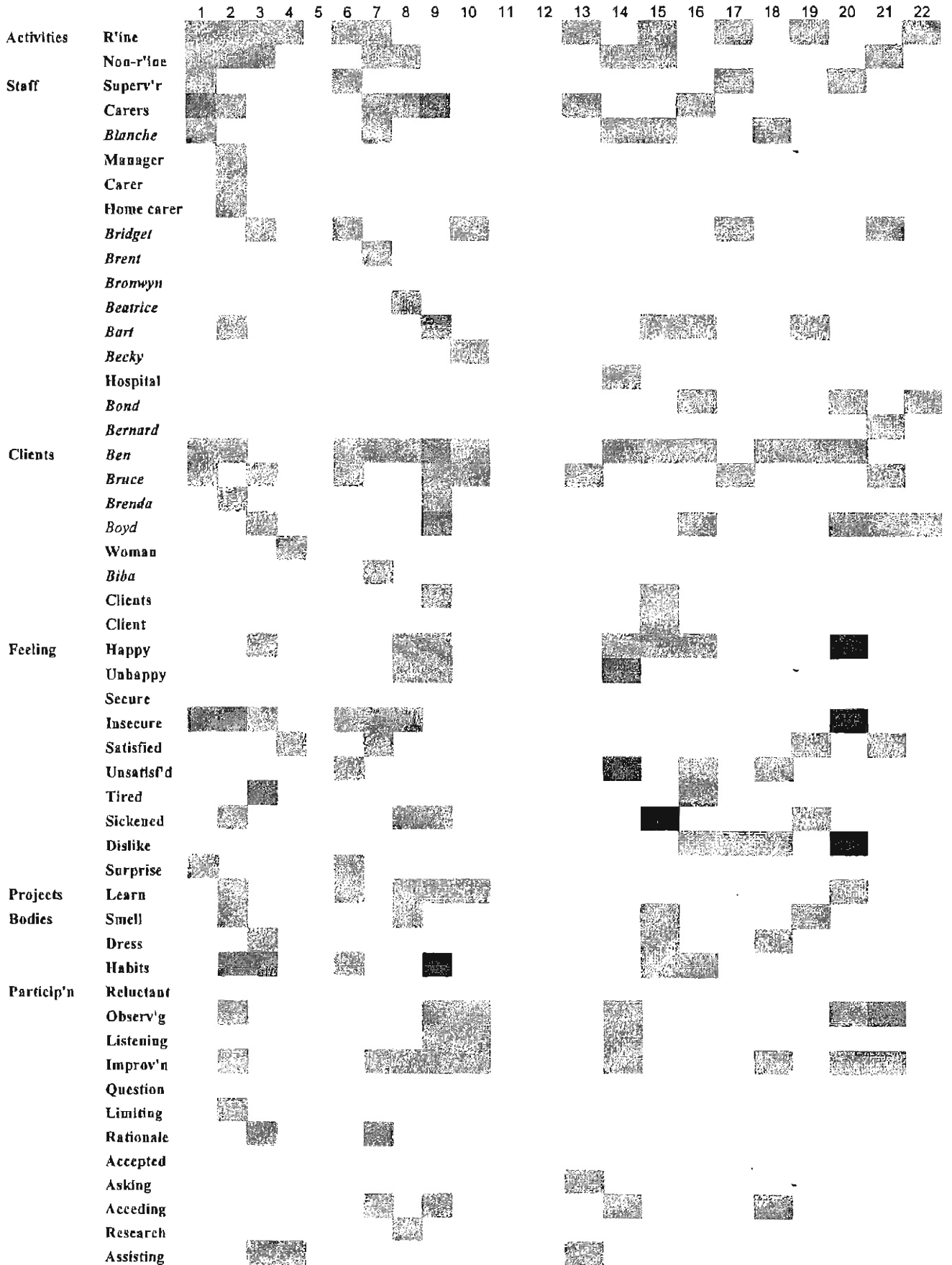
4. Have you worked with or lived closely with the client group before your field experience?
Never
Two or three occasions
Over several weeks or several months or several years
Over many years

5. How frank do you think you were when you wrote the notebook?
Wrote more than I intended to about myself and my reactions
Wrote everything I thought was needed to excel in this subject
Wrote everything I thought was relevant to this subject
Left out a few things because they may have affected my grade
Left out a lot in case it affected my grade
Left out a lot because _____
Made a few things up to make the exercises 'work'

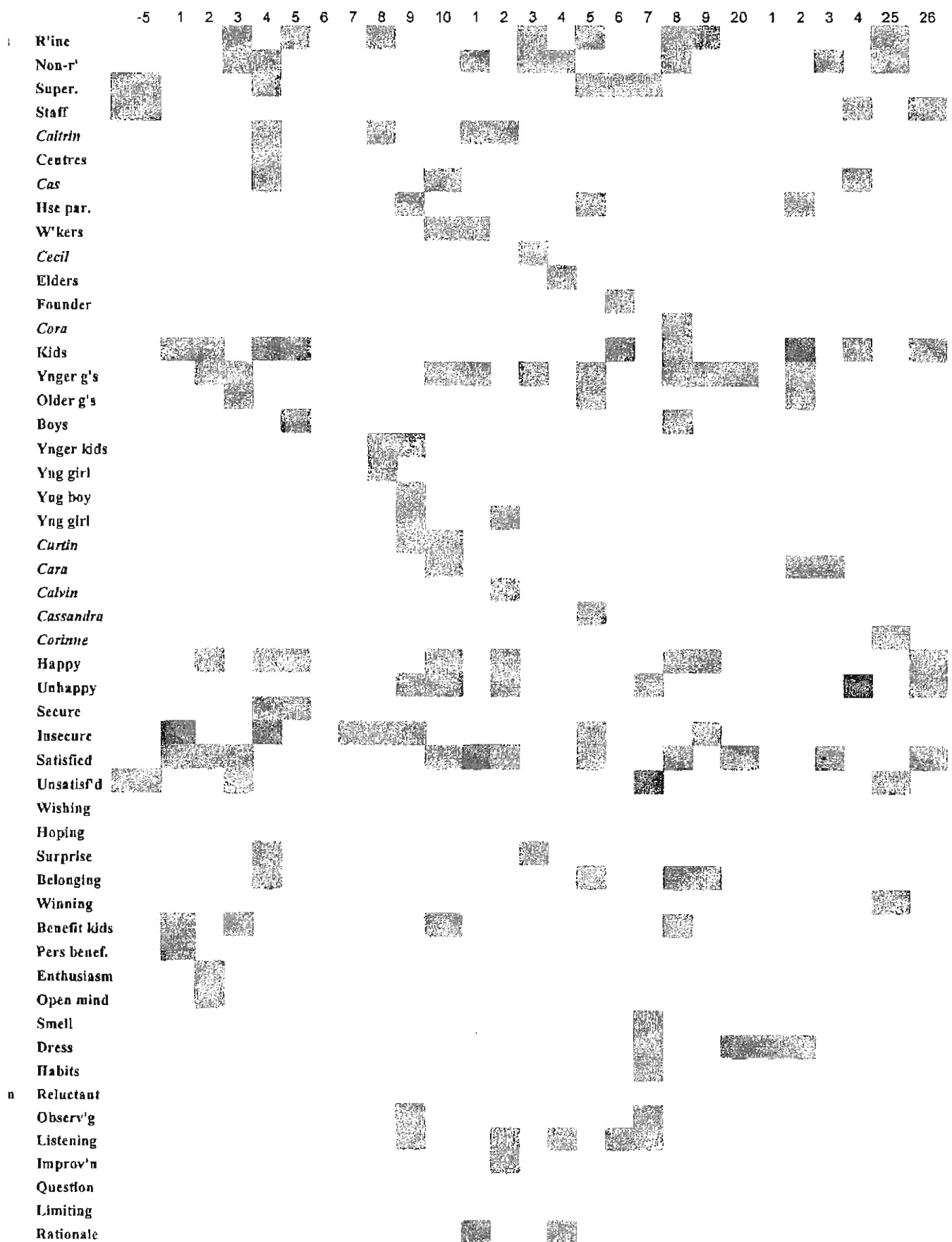
6. Female Male 7. Age ___ years

APPENDIX 3: 'Maps' – Microsoft Excel spreadsheets summarising diary entries for the 5 selected informants

Annabel

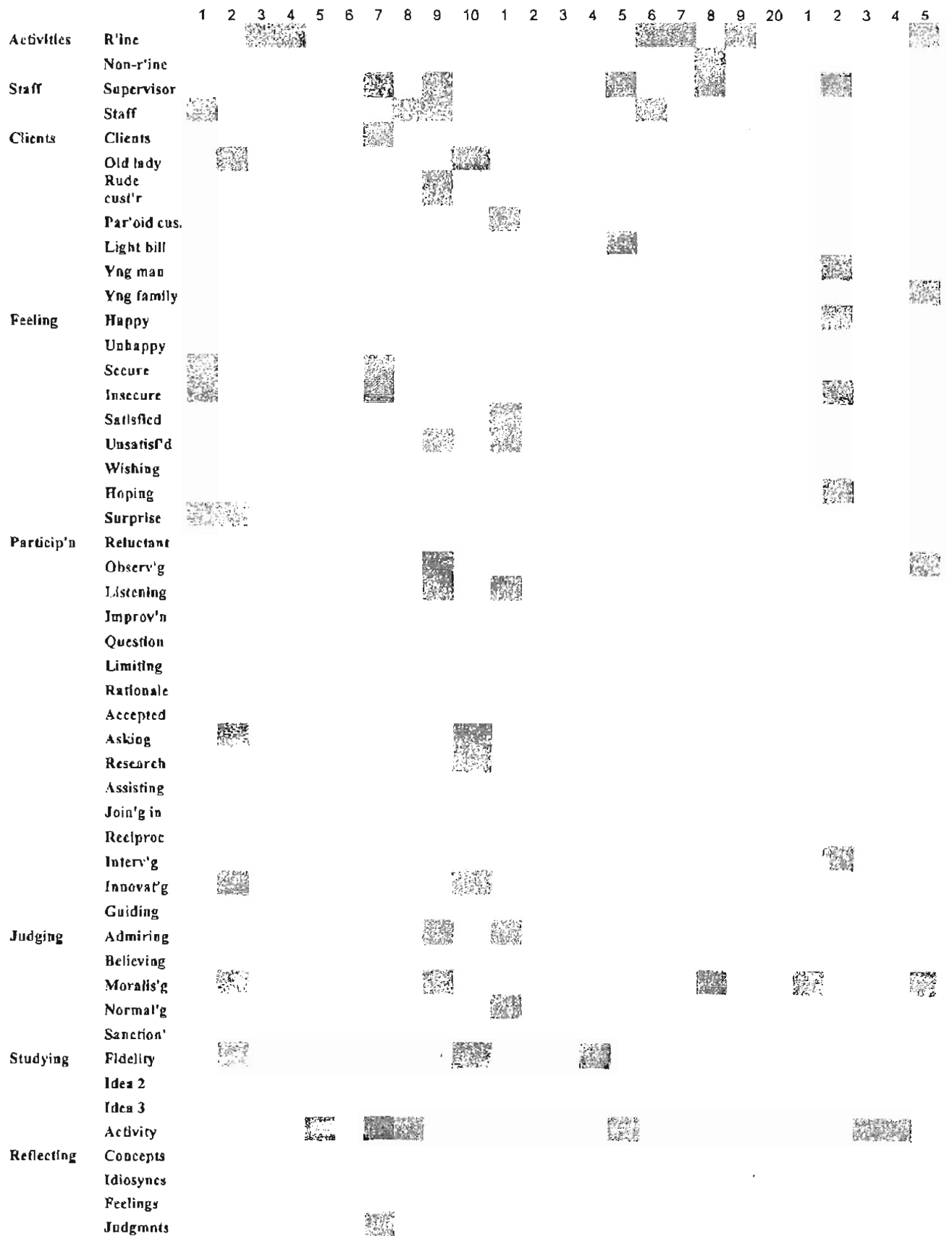


	Join'g in								
	Reciproc								
	Interv'g								
	Innovat'g								
	Guiding								
Judging	Admiring								
	Believing								
	Moralis'g								
	Normal'g								
Reflecting	Sanction'								
	Concepts								
	Idiosyncs								
	Feelings								
	Judgments								
	Practices								
	World vw								
Relating	People								
	Teasing								
	Gossip								
	Opinion								
	Plans								
	Pasts								
	Chat								
	Caring								
C'y life	Commun								
	Family								
	Friends								
	Lover								
	Students								
	Police								
	Media								
	Past								
	Future								
	Domestic								



Accepted	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Asking									
Research				■		■			
Assisting				■		■			
Join'g in									
Reciproc							■		
Interv'g					■		■		
Innovat'g		■			■		■		
Guiding							■		
Admiring	■		■				■		■
Believing									
Moralis'g									
Normal'g									
Sanction'									
Idea 1		■			■			■	
Idea 2							■		
Idea 3									
Activity									
g Concepts	■	■					■		
Idiosyncs	■	■					■		■
Feelings	■							■	
Judgmnts		■				■			■
Practices									
World vw									
People	■	■	■				■	■	■
Distinctn									
Derision							■		
Cond'n									
Imagining		■		■					■
Teasing		■					■	■	
Gossip									
Opinion									
Plans									
Pasts									
Chat		■			■		■	■	■
Caring				■	■		■	■	■
Commun									
Family	■		■				■		
Friends			■						■
Lover									
Students									
Police	■		■						
Media									
Past			■				■		
Future	■		■		■		■		■
Aborigines	■		■					■	
Sport		■					■		■
Staff drinks					■				
Domestic					■				

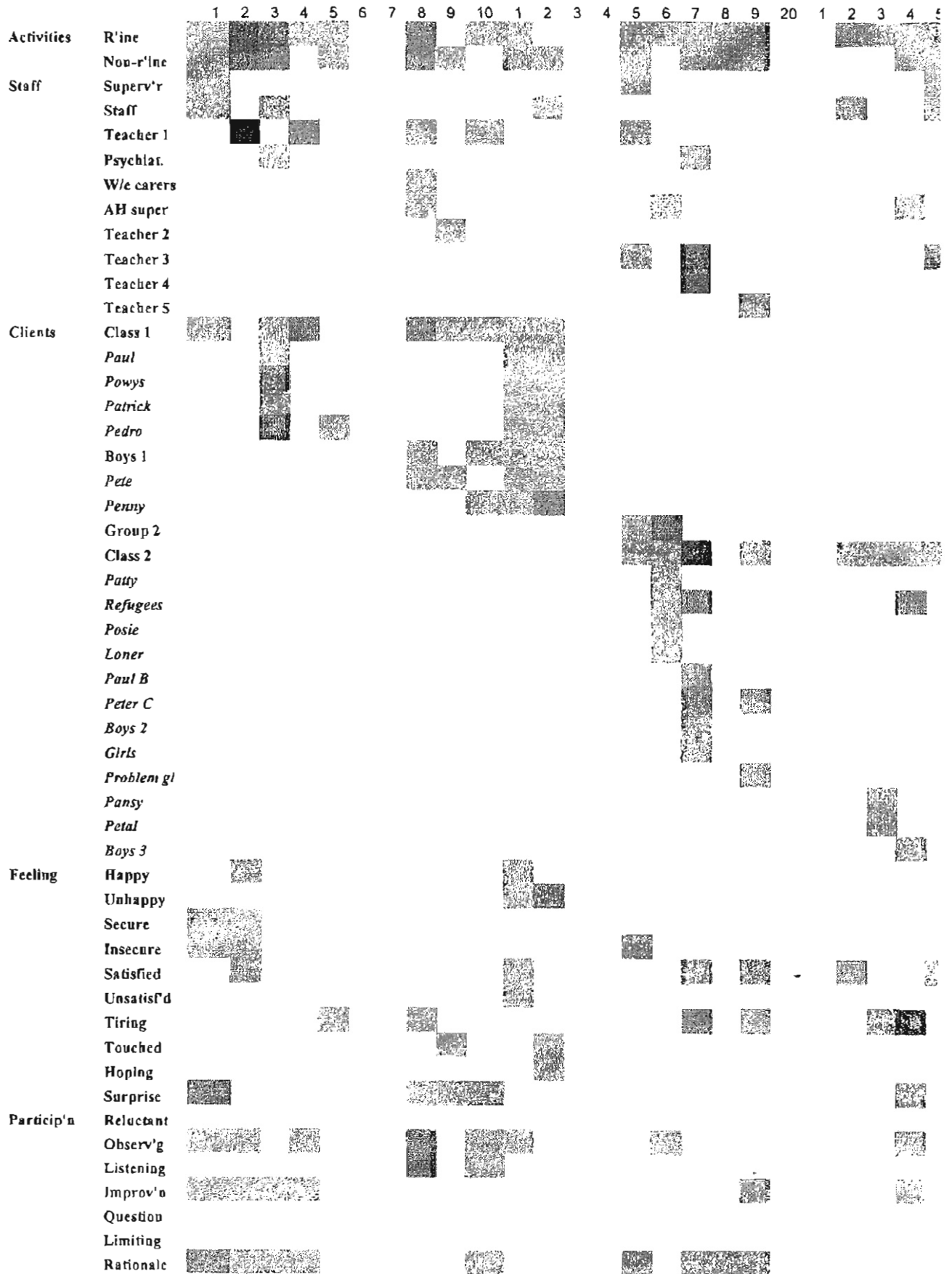
Denis¹

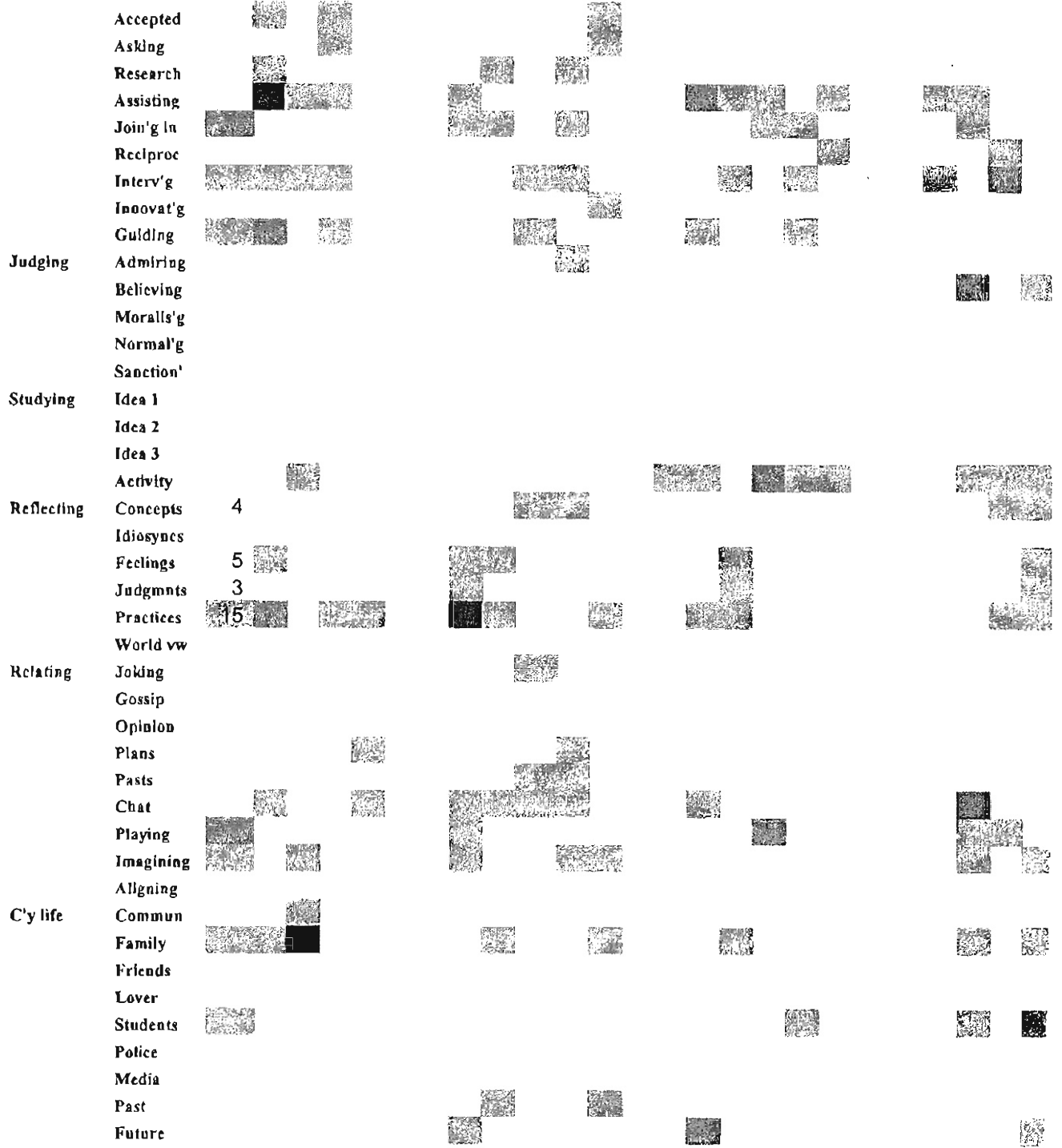


¹ Days 26-33 are not included here, for reasons of space.

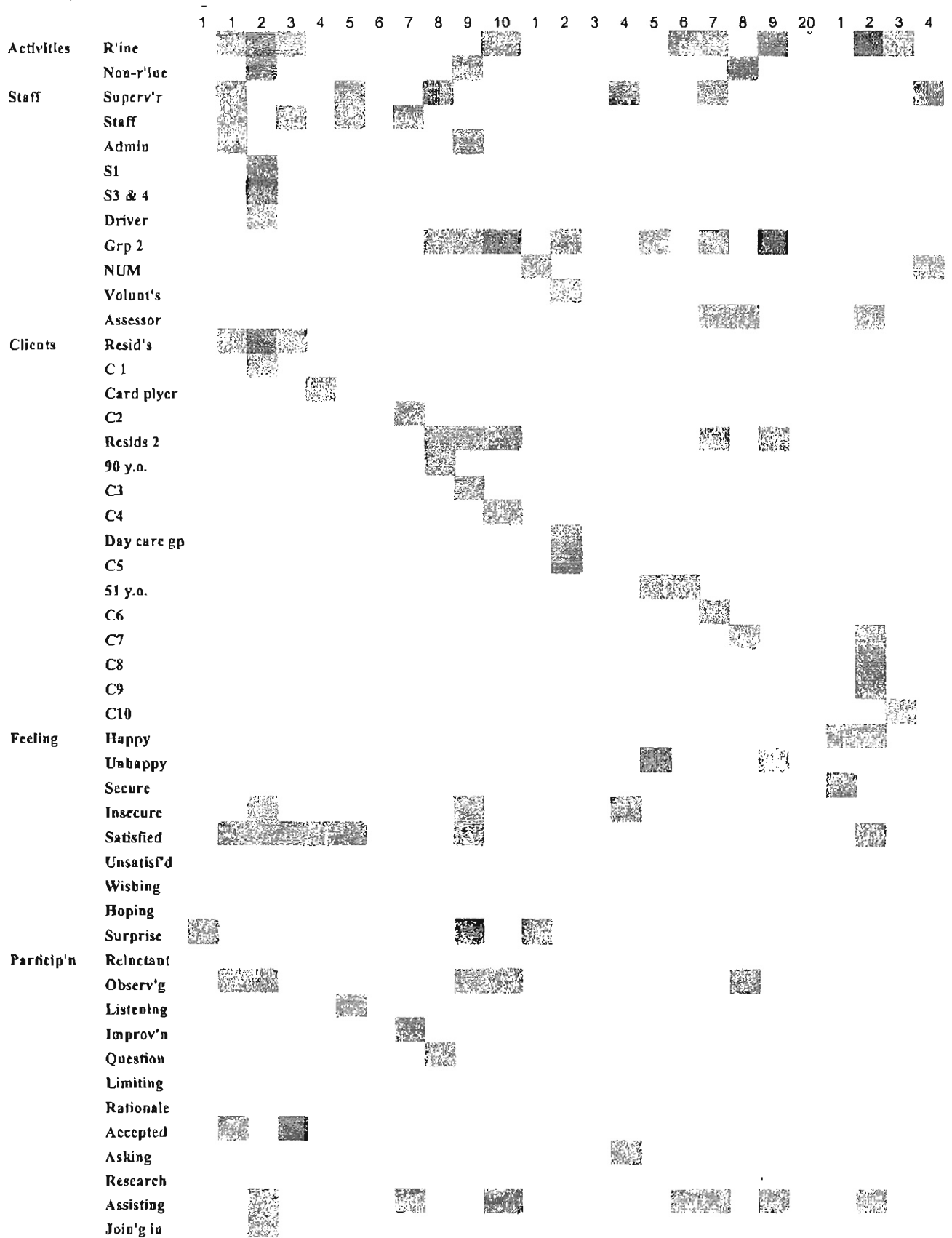
Power	Practices							
	World vw							
	Distinctn							
	Derision							
	Cond'n							
	Moderatn							
	Pretens'n							
	Deval'n							
	Pract'y							
	Respect							
Projects	Rejection							
	Fidelity							
	Teasing							
	Gossip							
Relating	Opinion							
	Plans							
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	Chat							
	Commun							
	Family							
	Friends							
	Lover							
	Students							
	Police							
	Media							
	Past							
Future								

Hector





Kelvin²



² Days 27-37 excluded for reasons of space.

Judging	Reciprocal								
	Interrogating								
	Innovating								
	Guiding								
	Admiring								
	Believing								
	Moralizing								
Studying	Normalizing								
	Sanctioning								
	Idea 1								
	Idea 2								
Reflecting	Idea 3								
	Activity								
	Concepts								
	Idiosyncrasies								
	Feelings								
Relating	Judgments								
	Practices								
	World view								
	Teasing								
	Gossip								
	Opinion								
	Plans								
C'y life	Pasts								
	Chat								
	Community								
	Family								
	Friends								
	Lover								
	Students								
	Police								
	Media								
	Past								
Future									

APPENDIX 5: Summary profiles of informants in this study

This appendix provides a brief introduction to the students who contributed to this research. The students are presented in order of their ages, with the youngest students first, and the eldest last. The descriptions of the students focus on the broader social characteristics of class, family background, and education, as provided by them in two of the required activities on their class and their cultural backgrounds. These are supplemented by extracts from their diaries about their first day's experiences.

Under twenty year olds

There were four informants who were under twenty years of age, and they were all of the same age. It should be noted that, to gain entry to the policing course at this relatively young age, applicants needed to have good TER scores (above 70), or to have supplemented poorer results (between 50 and 70) with a tertiary preparation program or a TAFE Certificate (Level 3).

Airlie spent her childhood in a coastal town in a family she saw to be working class and where there was 'little emphasis on religion'. She saw the major influence on her life as being her secondary schooling in a selective school, which had broadened her social horizons, and her family. She had undertaken some university study (which neither of her parents had done), and had also worked part-time in sales. She had frequently kept a diary, found writing it quite easy, and, although she left some things out, wrote what she thought was relevant, and to excel. *Airlie's* placement, in the first half of the trimester, was in a community organisation, where she found the young manager 'really nice' and 'very relatable'. Because most of the workers were volunteers, 'there [were] only a few people who [were] able to tell us what to do'. Her previous experience of the client group (the socio-economically disadvantaged) was confined to the Police Academy. At the end of her first day, she feels that she, and the fellow policing student, 'are going to learn a lot'. 'I have', she wrote, 'found it eye-opening already, but also fun and interesting'. During the course of the placement, she talked about her experiences with people in the organisation, her fellow student, and a professional helper.

Annabel also came from a coastal town, and was raised in a family in which the European background of her maternal grandmother had been a considerable influence. Although neither of her parents had educations beyond high school, *Annabel* had siblings who were attending university. She was placed, in the first half of the trimester, in an agency providing social support for disabled people living in the community. She had had experience of disabled people for many years. She had kept a diary for a short time, and found writing it quite easy, although she left quite a lot out. She wrote that the supervisor 'seems great', and she thought that she would 'learn a lot from her'. Unlike *Airlie*, she was apprehensive about the future – she felt that, when she left, one of the clients would 'show more anger again', but that she also believed that she would 'learn how to reduce the

risk of this'. She spoke about her experiences in the placement with her parents and with fellow students.

Anice was a 'lower class westie', who had found that where she lived 'always affect[ed] how people respond to me socially and when finding work'. 'One good thing', she wrote about her background, 'about being in this situation is that you can only go up in the world, and I'm going to do my best to get out of the lower class and give my future family better opportunities in life'. She had done some clerical work prior to entering the policing course, and had two siblings still at school. Religion had 'played a major role' in her life, with both parents 'devoted Christians', believing that 'God's truths are imperative to the way we live our lives'. When asked for her views of housing commission residents, she wrote, 'I AM ONE OF THEM!!' She had spasmodically kept a diary, and found writing one for the subject quite easy. Her first day with the religious organisation, in the first half of the session, was marred by confusion as to where she would be located. She concluded, when sent home for the day after two hours, 'I was looking forward to this, but I'm not sure how good this will be. The only good thing at the moment is that I'm working (or will be working) with other Christians, so it will be a more pleasant experience'. She spoke about the placement with people in the organisation and with her partner.

Audrey was brought up on the rural outskirts of Sydney. Her parents were both migrants, one from the UK and the other from a non-English speaking country. Both parents had left school young and had had unskilled jobs. Audrey herself had obtained her HSC and had done factory and sales work. She had spasmodically kept a diary in the past, and found writing one quite easy. The 'hassles' of her childhood made her 'more determined' to have 'a better life'. Her placement, which occurred after the police station placement, was with a community organisation that provided advocacy services for disabled people. She initially thought that the community placement 'would be a waste of time, as it had no relevance to policing', but, 'at the end of the day, I realised that it wouldn't be as bad as I had imagined'.

All of the informants under twenty years of age were women. Two were brought up in coastal towns, and the other two in suburbs of Sydney. Anice hailed from an area which was disadvantaged and had negative stereotypes associated with it. Two (*Anice* and *Audrey*) both saw the difficulties in their childhoods as propelling them towards better lives. Three of them were undertaking the community placement before the police station placement. Three were placed in community organisations, and one in a religious organisation. All of them looked forward in some way to what they might learn in the days to come.

Informants in their early twenties

There are seven students in this age group, four women and three men. Four of them were the same age. The students are presented here in ascending age order.

Brittany's parents were second generation Australians of Anglo-European backgrounds, and were both university educated and in professional jobs. She was born in the country, but had moved to the outskirts of Sydney during her childhood. She saw her early years in the country, and her parents' occupations and religious values, as having the greatest influence over her. After leaving school with her HSC, Brittany had worked in the hospitality industry. She had kept a diary spasmodically, and found writing it for this subject difficult, both writing more than she intended to and leaving some things out. Brittany was placed with a community group, in the first half of the trimester, that housed Aboriginal students whilst they undertook their schooling. She had never had any contact with Aborigines before the placement. She was very clear about her purposes: 'I have no doubt in my mind that I am going to gain a great deal from these people, both personally and professionally. However, most of all, I would really love to be able to honestly feel that these kids have benefited in some way, or gained something from me also'. She spoke about her experiences with people in the organisation, her fellow students, and her parents.

Beryl had lived in several country towns. Her father was university educated and his job took the family around the country, so she had 'seen many different lifestyles'. Both her parents were Australian (one with African ancestry), and both were devout Christians. She still turned to the Bible 'for answers when I need them'. She had obtained a place at university and had worked as a sales assistant during her studies. A spasmodic diary-writer, she had found writing this one difficult. Her placement, in the first half of the session, was with a refuge for victims of domestic violence. The coordinator made her 'feel quite at home', and she thought she would like it. 'The work seems quite full of different areas which interest me. If I go into the area of DVO [Domestic Violence Officer] this position or placement will be quite helpful'.

Chloe was raised in the Western suburbs of Sydney. This was on a limited budget, as her father had died when she was quite young. She had kept a diary for a short time, and had found writing this one to be difficult. She vehemently disagreed with Weatherburn and Lind's (1998) view of low-income households as leading to child mistreatment and crime. She was 'never neglected or maltreated [...] All of my friends come from middle class families and I am sure that if I marry, I will marry into a middle class family.' She was placed, in the first half of the session, in a hospital for patients with physical and mental disabilities. She found the first day 'very informative', felt that she would enjoy it, and hoped that she would 'get a lot out of the community placement and be able to take this experience and knowledge out into the field'.

Courtney was brought up in the suburbs, in a 'very Aussie' way, by 'level-headed', 'middle-class' parents. While neither parent had been to university, she had a sibling who had done so. She had never kept a diary, and found writing one for this subject quite easy. The family was religious. She undertook the community placement before the police station placement, in

a religious organisation. Her first day, like Anice's with another religious charity, was characterised by disorganisation. She made no remarks about what she hoped to gain from the placement, rather she confined her remarks to reflection upon her expectations and the day as a whole: 'I am not from [around here] and so had no idea of the area [...], which I think was good because I didn't have a chance to judge the area too much. It was definitely an eye opener!'

Chayne was brought up in a suburb 'with a very strong Anglo-saxon presence', and to which he attributed the 'higher standards' that he has set for himself – he wanted to live as comfortably as his parents, who were 'middle working class'. His father had a university education and did hold 'quite a well-paying respectful manager's job'. His heritage was mixed European, no formal religion was followed in his family, and he did not 'believe in Jesus/God or the Bible'. He was a tradesman prior to joining the course. As to diary writing, he had never done this, but found it quite easy in this instance. He was placed in a religious organisation, during the first half of the trimester, and concluded at the end of his first day that 'I very much will be able to use this experience in future policing duties [...] I know I will be the better for it when I complete my 160 hours'.

Cameron was brought up in the suburbs of a coastal city, in a 'typical white Australian' family. His parents were 'lower middle-class', and Cameron was the only one in the family with any post-school qualifications (in his case, a trade). The unfamiliar task of diary writing he found to be quite easy. He was placed in a State Government methadone clinic. At the end of his first day, he commented that 'It was different to my expectations at what it would have been. I am looking forward to tomorrow but not the 5.30 a.m. wake-up'.

Denis was another of the students whose father had died when the student was quite young. He was Australian, of largely Anglo-European descent. His mother had obtained a TAFE certificate, his father a trade, and, in the Western suburbs, where he was brought up, 'a trade was a must'. He had never kept a diary, and found it difficult to do. Denis was happy with his situation: 'In the future I do not want to change my social class but I do want to advance my educational level, and to do well in life'. The 'morals in the Bible' were second nature to him, but religion had given way to 'the odd ale with my mates and the old killer girls'. At the end of his first day of his placement in a religious organisation, in the first half of the session, he concluded that 'I can see that in the coming weeks I will find that there are many more services that [the organisation] offers'.

In sum, there were seven informants in their early twenties, most of whom had had suburban upbringings (in the West of Sydney or on its outskirts), and two of whom had university educated parents. Five of the students had trade qualifications (historically a significant recruitment pool for police), and Beryl had originally been studying in another university course. There is a less enthusiastic tone about their descriptions of the first day than is

evident in the work of the youngest group of students, with only some of them writing about what they hoped to get out of the placement.

Informants in their late twenties

There were four informants in their late twenties, two women (Frances and Grace) and two men (Gareth and Edgar).

Edgar was the only person in his family to have stayed at school beyond Year 10. He was born in the Middle East, and his father, a wealthy business man, had died when he was very young. The family was religious (two of his mother's siblings were in the church). The children's early years were spent in a large house in a village, where the family sold the local crop, and, out of season, bread. When they migrated to Australia, three generations of the families had to share a two bedroom house. Edgar had been a driver and in sales. He had never kept a diary, but found the task to be quite easy. In the same hospital as Chloe for the physically and mentally disabled (the first half of the session), he also found the supervisor to be 'a great person'. When he returned home after his first day, he 'began to think about what if I was one of those clients?' He continued, 'I don't think I would be able to handle it, or see any of my relatives in that position'.

Frances was Australian, of Anglo-European and, many generations back, European origin. Religion had 'no bearing on [her] life at all'. She grew up in the outer Western suburbs, and, like her parents, had left school in Year 10. She had studied at TAFE, and then worked in a clerical job for 9 years. She had kept a diary for a short time, and ticked the box that she 'hated writing it' for this subject. She provided very little information in the exercise on class, finding the questions on family background 'slightly intrusive', she wrote, 'I am at a loss to completely understand what relevance my parents and sibling education and occupation has to do with joining the police service or the community field placement'. After her first day in the mental health service (State Government), in the second half of the trimester, she considered that 'I do now think that some of this experience will be interesting [and] will and could be applied when doing my job as a police officer'.

Gareth describes his family as 'typically aussie ocker working class'. He grew up in the suburbs of Sydney, and both parents had left school in Year 10. He had never kept a diary, but found it quite easy. Both he and his sibling had a trade, although Gareth had not stayed in his, but worked in a clerical job in a State Government department, 'at almost the lowest level in the organisation, [...] just above the cleaner'. The sorts of people he came into contact with in this clerical job changed his views and aspirations. He undertook his placement in the first half of the trimester, and was placed in a hostel for homeless men run by a religious organisation. What he writes about on his first day is more about the new world he has encountered than his intentions; the only personal comment is that helping the elderly volunteers 'made me feel very good'.

Grace's parents were born in the UK, and she in Australia. Her parents had both had professional jobs, and were 'relatively well off', and so, she wrote she 'could make my own decisions on what I wanted to do'. Like many of the other students, she had found the unfamiliar task of diary writing quite easy. In her teens she had chosen to attend a fundamentalist Christian church in the suburb in which she lived, as she was interested in helping young people 'get off the streets'. She had taken a TAFE course and had worked in a human service industry, which meant that she had 'interacted and cared for all different social class status groups'. 'To me', she wrote, 'all these people were equal'. She was placed, in the first half of the session, in a hostel for street workers run by a community agency. Her account of the first day includes a clipping about the service, and is a lengthy account of what happens there. That one client threatened another with a knife rendered her 'even more unsure of how to talk to the women'.

Three of the informants in their late twenties were raised in suburban environments in Australia, and one in a rural village overseas. One (*Grace*) had a relatively affluent background. *Edgar* had done manual work and sales, *Frances* and *Gareth* had had clerical jobs, and *Grace* had been in the human services sector. In writing about their first day, none of this older group focused on the days ahead of them, rather, they reflect on how the day contravened their expectations, and describe the vents and occurrences that contributed to their impressions.

Informants in their early thirties

Three of the informants were in their early thirties, two men and one woman. *Hector*, the youngest of the three, had followed in the footsteps of others in his family, and entered the military. He had spent his childhood near the air base, and commented that the environment was an institutionalised one, somewhat tempered through attendance at the village school. Having kept a diary for a short time in the past, he found the task quite easy. He was the only one in the family to have emigrated, after spending over a dozen years in his trade in the air force. He was placed, in the first half of the session, in a State Government-run school for children in crisis. His first day's diary entry is an extremely detailed account of the events as they unfolded – the icebreakers, the rules and the rationale for the approach to encouraging adherence to them, and so on. Of his own state of mind, he mentioned that the teacher 'put [him] well at ease before we met our class', and that he 'had managed to get [himself] worried without reason'.

Isabel also came from an air force family, which she described as a 'middle class' one where all of the children were 'propelled towards earning an income' rather than getting a higher education. She had never kept a diary, and 'hated' writing this one. Much of her childhood had been spent overseas, and, although the family background was Australian and European, at the very least the family's food tastes had been influenced by their life in a South East Asian country. She had gone into the financial sector and had reached a managerial position, and had a police officer in the family. *Isabel*'s first entry concerned attending a meeting with the

supervisor of the community agency, in which her work for the next two weeks was organised, and so it merely covered her planned activities – none of which involved any client contact. She was to develop a booklet on domestic violence and a briefing for a Community Safety Committee. Some visits to local agencies were heralded for the last two weeks of her placement.

Jay lived in the UK until he was 21, in a city suburb that he described as ‘very parochial’. He had a police officer in the family, and all of his siblings had either attended university or had para-professional jobs. He had been a spasmodic keeper of diaries, and had found writing this one quite easy. He provides rich descriptions of many elements of his background – that the family possessed ‘a collection of nick-nacks brought back from their travels by grand uncles who had been in the merchant navy – fans from Hong Kong, Butterflies from South America, Emu feathers from Australia’, that he had pretended to go to church from the age of 13 when ‘off playing pool’, and that family celebrations were very musical as ‘everyone had to have a “party piece”’. He also commented that his accent meant that ‘people I have met with have been unable to pigeonhole me as a “Westie, silvertail, snob, bushie” etc and this has helped me to mix well with people from all backgrounds’. He had lived in Australia for more than ten years, and had a trade. His placement, in the first half of the session, in a community agency (check) was observed in a fairly detached way. He wrote ‘The organisation appears to be well resourced and to have a very positive morale’, and ‘Having worked autonomously for most of my working life, I find these committees and group discussions unusual, and a little drawn out with people very conscious of their position and status’.

These three informants, like the preceding four, do not have any material in their first diary entries that looks towards the future as an unknown. *Jay* makes specific comparisons with his past employment history, *Isabel* concentrates on organising her work, and *Hector* provides very detailed descriptions of everything he encountered and its rationale. Two of these informants are migrants from the UK, and all have substantial work experience. Two have family connections with policing.

Informants between 35 and 44 years of age

There are three informants in this older age group, two men and one woman. *Kelvin* was the youngest of them. *Kelvin* came from a ‘stable happy family’ of Australian, Anglo-European origin, and grew up in the suburbs of Sydney. His parents had little formal education. He had never kept a diary, and found this one quite easy. Like *Isabel* and *Jay*, he had a police officer in the family, and he himself had a trade. There is a humorous touch in his account of his first day’s experience in the State government hospital for the aged, which he undertook after the police station placement. He wrote that there were ‘many special people hidden away in a place such as [this]. The residents are special as well’. There is considerable detachment in the way in which he describes the clients. When told that the residents ‘tend to become aggressively agitated’, he remarked, ‘this will be noted when viewed’.

Leonard was another of the informants whose family was in the military services. They were 'typical Aussie battlers', who were 'middle class (just)', and who lived in a suburb that was close to the coast. The cultural heritage was largely Anglo-European, with a minor European influence, and the most influential aspects of his upbringing were tales of rationing and 'going without' during and after World War 2. Leonard himself had risen through the ranks in the military to a senior position. He had kept a diary for a short time, and found it to be quite easy to write one for this subject. His experiences had shown him that 'everyone, no matter who they are or where they come from has a story to tell. Sometimes its worth listening to and other times it isn't but that's no excuse for disrespect'. He had a sibling in a health profession, and was pleased with his placement, in the second half of the session, in a State government hospital, where his primary focus was on the child patients. He commented, at the end of his first day, 'A great day', that 'Several parents I spoke to today were very worried and run down and just glad to sit down for five minutes and talk to another adult'. He also mentioned the supervisor as being 'very helpful, just great, a timetable, introducing me to people etc etc'. He reminded himself to 'give her a special thankyou' at the end of his stay.

Molly was the oldest student to resubmit her work for this study. She was brought up in a third world country, the child of a 'prosperous business man' who had died when she was quite young. her early years were spent in a 'family house', with the lively strains of local music filtering across from a nearby bar. She described herself as family loving, and 'much influenced in [her] life chances by dad's early death'. Her mother had left school early and had to struggle to support the children, and yet, despite these hardships, all the other children in the family had obtained tertiary qualifications. She had frequently kept diaries, and found this one quite easy. Molly had worked in administrative, secretarial and clerical jobs. In the first half of the placement, she found herself in a religious organisation where she feared she would 'spend 160 hours sorting clothes'. She provided a succinct and matter-of-fact account of her day, in a hostel for homeless old men. She prepared breakfast, bathed the men, monitored blood pressures, pulse rates, temperatures and weight, and, in the afternoon, accompanied five residents to a local park where they played handball.

These three older students give the impression of being able to take whatever their placement offered them in their stride, and of carefully evaluating the performance of others. They all had somewhere between 15 and 20 years experience in the workforce, although none had had any prior contact with the client group in question.

Informants of unknown ages

There were two students who did not complete the replacement cover sheets, but whose gender could be gleaned from their work. One was placed in a shelter for homeless men, alongside another informant, who refers to him as a man in his work (*Perry*). The other (*Prudence*) undertook the placement in

a women's centre, and, at one point, writes 'As a female [...]'. Profiles of these two students are provided below.

Perry

Perry was raised in a heterogenous area close to the centre of Sydney, by a mother who came from Southern Europe and an Anglo-European father. He saw his parents, members of the 'working middle class' as having been the most influential factor in his life: 'I have had chances in life to succeed and I am working towards that as a goal'. He had qualified with a trade, but had worked in various part-time unskilled jobs. His placement in the shelter run by a religious organisation took place in the first half of the session. He was shocked. 'Maybe I can learn from this experience. It is although, very difficult for me because I have never faced or dealt with a situation like this. [...] It is so hard to get motivated here the people here are almost helpless. It makes me feel terrible maybe even hopeless at times. [...] I am trying to draw a positive out of it. I guess I just have to take it day by day'.

Prudence had parents who were Australians of Anglo-European origin. They both had left school young, and, 'although they always said they wanted me to "do better" I was never taught the skills to do this. [...] Religion in my family was and is everything. At 15 years old I decided I could no longer stand it, much to the dismay of my folks'. The family home was on the outskirts of a coastal city, quite near to the beach, in a heterogenous area. Although *Prudence* had left school early, she had obtained a place at a university after some studies through TAFE. She had had various unskilled jobs. Her placement was in a women's centre run by a community group, in the first half of the session. She wrote very little about her first day, other than that 'My first day was overwhelming. It seems like Domestic Violence is an Industry'.

Judging by the elements of their biographies, and the entries of other informants in the study, these two students would appear to have been in their early to mid-twenties. While *Perry*'s placement immediately showed itself to be a problematic one, there is little indication in *Prudence*'s work, at this stage, of the issue that she had concerning domestic violence being 'an industry'.