'Writing up' neighbourhood centres and 'writing in' the professional doctor

Donna Lea Rooney

A thesis submitted to the University of Technology, Sydney, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

Faculty of Education
2008

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.

Production Note:
Signature removed prior to publication.

Signature of Student

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I must thank Carl Rhodes and Hermine Scheeres (my supervisors) without whose expert guidance and 'supervision' this work would not have been possible. In particular thanks for allowing me the freedom to pursue various lines of flight, yet still pulling me in when I was in danger of loosing the plot altogether.

Next, I must also thank Alison Lee who, through resources made available in the UTS Faculty of Education, facilitated a series of writing groups for doctoral students. Alongside supervision, these writing groups provided immeasurable support and I am grateful to have had the opportunity.

Similarly, I am grateful to Narelle Smith from the UTS Maths Study Skills Unit, Geof Hawke from the Faculty Research Centre and Jim Athanasou from the Faculty of Education for their patient guidance through the quantitative portion of this work (chapter seven).

I also am grateful to other UTS colleagues. For example, David Boud, my (UTS) workplace supervisor, for his academic generosity and for helping me to understand (and navigate) various academic and publishing process. To colleagues (past and present) of the former Organisational, Vocational and Adult Learning (OVAL) Research (Bernice, Steven, Jayne, Mez, Sarah, Kerry, Mary, Oriana, Nicky and Clive), thank you for putting up with my (sometimes loud) 'enthusiasm'.

To the people of Local Community Services Association (Roy, Corinne, Jane, Faye and Odessa), thank you for sharing your vast knowledges and for teaching me more than I ever thought possible. Thank you too, to the women and men of New South Wales' neighbourhood centres who not only inspire me through their dedication, but also generously supported this study.

To Sallie Saunders (my Honors thesis supervisor), thank you for believing that 'I could'. And to Ann and Jane from the University of Western Sydney for introducing me to many ideas in undergraduate degree that have both confused and seduced me – and Jane's suggestion that I might like to read Donna Haraway.

To my 'mates' in the "Faculty Lunch Club', thank you for you interesting (and oft amusing) lunchtime discussions. And to my other 'mates' in the smoking network in the downstairs café (I'm not sure of all your names), thanks for your almost daily question of *'finished yet?'* which had the effect of spurring me on.

To my family (in particular my sons, James, Mathew and Christopher), who have made their own particular sacrifices in order that I pursue this degree, thanks for your love and support. Thanks to my 'big sister' (Sandie), who tolerated my incessant 'rabbiting on' and defended my choice to pursue higher education when I needed it most. Thanks as well, to Ebony (my fabulously talented niece), for drawing the sketches used throughout this thesis.

To my friends (too numerous to name) who helped me adjust to the idea of becoming 'Dr Donna' by practicing calling me this for the last few years *and* who provided much welcomed diversions to writing. And finally to Gail – thank you.

Contents

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

Abstract

This thesis presents a dual problematic in a dialogic relationship. The first problem is a concern for the invisibility and lack of acknowledgement of the provision of learning in New South Wales' neighbourhood centres. Taking this as a starting point, this thesis presents a reflexive study that traverses and contributes to several educational debates. A main contribution is to provide a reflexive account of the way that the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres is significant both in its presence in its empirical site of practice, and its absence in the discourses of education. The thesis interrupts this absence by both arguing for its injustice and demonstrating different ways that this provision can be accounted for.

A second problem is both conceptual and methodological, and is conceived through notions of identity. The concern here is with the interplay of identities that come together in the production of a professional doctoral thesis, as well as the way identity is at stake when considering the provision of learning in neighbourhood centres. The related forms of identity addressed here include shaping aspects of organisational identities as well as how the author's identities as researcher, practitioner and candidate for a professional doctorate shapes, and is shaped by, this work.

In response to the dual problematic the thesis presents itself explicitly as a reflexive piece of work that is politically motivated and personally mobilised. Specifically, the thesis provides three different versions and analyses of the provision of learning in neighbourhood centres that draw from three different sources of data. The first is a review of practitioner-oriented literature. The second is the quantitative analysis of a survey of NSW centres. The third is an analysis of interviews with people involved in centres. Reflexively each of these (sub)versions is premised on the desires of the candidate-practitioner-researcher. First the desire to become an authorised knower, second a moral desire to right the world, and third a desire to take pleasure in the production of knowledge. Analytically, each of these data sources and desires are positioned against each other so as to be able to acknowledge as well as work within and against the problematic categories they rely on.

The result is a thesis that refuses, establishes, and destabilises the categories of its own analysis simultaneously. Drawing on Haraway's analogy of research as a game of cat's cradle, and Lyotard's theorisation of the pagan, the thesis develops a new and different conceptual and textual framework and uses this to pursue its investigation. This approach is justified in response to the legitimacy and authority of research and its practice, as well as to calls for developing new textual practices for professional doctorates in Australia.

PREPARING (section one)

Where can I begin when there are so many beginnings, and I have had such hopes for this thesis. I have also had almost two decades working with organisations of people for whom 'profit' was more about distribution than it was about accumulation. And we had hoped together. A different beginning and 'they' were already – already there with unfamiliar names and even more foreign ideas – and I yearned to begin talking with them. So many beginnings – so many threads.

Some disentangle their threads – discarding excesses in effort to weave, or to spin sleek and straight. Not me, I twist the course, fragile, and slippery threads. Some fuse while others break away, and what remains refuses a beginning because any beginnings (or endings for that matter) are more a sleight of hand. Although together, the threads refuse my attempts to order it. Yet together (but not quite together) they, the threads, knot. I find myself then holding what looks like a tatty loop of string – and I am ready to begin again.

Chapter 1 Introductions

Introduction to chapter

This is a reflexive thesis concerned with the provision of learning in New South Wales (NSW) neighbourhood centres. It is a thesis with a dual problematic. This chapter will not only introduce this dual problematic, but also describe how the thesis is conceptually positioned, as well as introduce how it will proceed. First, this chapter introduces the thesis as one concerned with limited understandings and lack of acknowledgement of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. I propose that this situation is unjust, and in response present an argument for the production of new understandings of the provision of learning in these particular organisations. Following this, the thesis is (re)introduced as one implicated in several related forms of identity work that, I argue, include shaping aspects of organisational identities as well as my own identities as researcher, practitioner and candidate for a professional doctorate. Together these different, but related, arguments form the dual problematic for a reflexive thesis concerned with the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres.

With the dual problematic introduced, the chapter then turns to introduce readers to how this thesis is conceptualised. I introduce Haraway's analogy of research as a game of *cat's cradle* (1994a): an analogy that forms the conceptual, textual and methodological framework for this study. *Cat's cradle*, I will argue, is not only a productive way to conceptualise the research task, but it is also a productive way to organise the research text itself. I further show how *cat's cradle* provides the overall logic of the methods adopted throughout this research. Having introduced the problematic and then the way forward, this chapter concludes with broad introductions to the chapters that follow.

The provision of learning in neighbourhood centres

In one sense, this is a thesis about neighbourhood centres, and in particular about the provision of learning in neighbourhood centres in the Australian state of NSW. Neighbourhood centres are typically small, community owned and managed non-profit organisations that, as their name suggests, are located in both metropolitan and rural neighbourhoods.

The learning I am concerned with is defined in the broadest sense and most closely resembles that which is generally described as adult community education. Like adult community education, the learning I am concerned with is local, based on the needs of the participants, non-compulsory and often considered informal. Similarly, like adult community education, the learning that I am concerned with may lead to paid work, such as that within the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, but this is not its defining feature. This learning may lead to a wide range of outcomes including, but not limited to, social and vocational ones. Put simply, I am concerned with learning that has potential to contribute to various aspects of individual lives as well as that which contributes to the social world, and this type of learning is most comparable to that of adult community education.

It is important to stress that in NSW, and Australia more generally, 'social work' and 'adult community education' are understood as two different activities that operate from different sites (Flowers 2005). In NSW, social work comes under the broad domain of a myriad of not-for-profit, faith-based and increasingly for-profit, organisations, or as an adjunct to the core business of state institutions (eg hospitals). On the other hand, adult community education is largely understood as the responsibility of the state supported Adult Community Education (ACE) sector: these organisations are 'sanctioned' sites of learning. By sanctioned I mean that they are commonly recognised and accepted as being legitimate sites of education (along with schools, universities and Technical and Further Education). It is neighbourhood centres as *un*sanctioned sites of learning that are of central interest to this study.

ACE is a slippery concept in an Australian context. It can mean one of several things. It is used as a course type (eg an adult community education *course*), a provider type (eg the ACE sector) or as a program of courses (McIntyre 2001). In this thesis I use the term 'ACE' to refer to the ACE *sector*: that is, a number of organisations that are publicly sanctioned as official providers of adult community education activity. I do so because this is largely how ACE is understood in NSW. However, when referring more broadly to adult community education activity, I use the terms 'ACE-like' or (lower case) 'adult community education'.

Nonetheless, before turning to ACE literature and to neighbourhood centres in particular, it is appropriate to say something about what this thesis *is not*. While this thesis is about the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres it is not evaluative. I am not concerned so much with judging the merit of the learning itself, as in mounting a case that it happens. In doing so I take as given that adult learning is generally a good thing. On the one hand this thesis can be understood as an argument for recognition – but at the same time there is not a simple (and naïve) associated call for redistribution of resources (if only it were so simple). It is up to the neighbourhood centres themselves to weigh up this argument and decide if (and if so, then *how*) it might be addressed. Furthermore, this thesis is not one that seeks to interpret meanings for participants. Indeed, for the most part, I do not involve myself with participants' views. Rather, I am concerned the views of co-ordinators, volunteers and others involved in organising ACE-like activities (although in many cases, these people will also come to be understood as participants in centre learning). While this research points toward a need for further inquiry, the imperative is not to draw attention to further 'gaps in knowledge', yet at the same time gaps play an important role in this work. Rather, my aim is to 'talk up' neighbourhood centres – or as others suggest, 'language' (Davies 2000:287), 'discursify' (Petersen 2004:21) or 'word' (Richardson 1994:923) the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres into existence (gaps and all). This is because centres first need to be drawn into the discourses of education, as legitimate sites of adult community education, before educational researchers, policy and decision makers (seriously) consider them as potential research sites.

Neighbourhood centres' position as sites of learning is unclear in ACE literature. Moreover, a general discussion of adult community education and neighbourhood centres is made difficult through Australia's federation style of government, which results in different understandings across state borders. While *national* ACE literature provides some understandings about learning provided in community-based organisations, the particular experiences of NSW centres are not clearly outlined. Any contribution to the national learning landscape that NSW centres may make is not fully acknowledged or understood. National ACE literature on the one hand presents positive pictures of learning in neighbourhood centres; on the other the examples used are almost exclusively drawn from outside NSW. For example, a national research project of Australian ACE in the early 1990s produced a seminal report entitled '*Come in Cinderella*' which provided glowing references to centres, but drew largely from the states of Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia (Senate Standing Committee 1991:61-63). Similarly, other national research looks toward Victoria to inform generic accounts of centres' role in adult community education – even when the researchers themselves are NSW based (Knights 1995; McIntyre and Kimberley 1996; Tennant and Morris 2001). The problem with this is that specificities of NSW centres are not acknowledged or accounted for. Not only does this raise questions about why non-NSW examples are taken as 'the norm', but it also raises questions about what is at stake when this occurs. While the invisibility of the particular experiences of NSW neighbourhood centres in national ACE research in itself may not be cause for concern (after all there is some sense of inclusion by default), it is also interesting to note that two decades after the 'Cinderella' report, centres from those states specifically named are being publicly funded to provide adult community education, which is not the case in NSW. In light of this situation, it is necessary to limit focus to neighbourhood centres in the state of NSW rather than take an Australia-wide focus.

While NSW neighbourhood centres may be included (be it by default) in national ACE research, inclusion of these centres in NSW ACE research is far from visible. The majority of NSW ACE research is produced by the NSW Board of Adult Community Education (BACE), and this largely positions the

state's sixty or so sanctioned providers as the sole providers (Choy and Haukka 2006:25-26). References to other possible sites of adult community education are non-existent. In these pictures ACE (the activity) is defined by what ACE (the sector) does. This situation draws attention to the stakes and in this case the stakes for sanctioned ACE in producing pictures of adult community education with themselves as central players. Given that these ACE organisations are resourced by the state to provide adult community education, it is clearly in their interest not to draw attention to other sites that may be providing similar (or ACE-like) activity. To do so would surely trouble understandings that assure their ongoing support. In other words, ACE is well positioned to put itself forward for, and make use of, any limited support made available through the state to further develop adult community education, and in doing so maintaining its central position as 'the sector'. Meanwhile, organisations with less visible provision of adult community education are hindered from any further development that accessing public funding would make possible.

However, not being publicly funded to formally provide adult community education does not preclude adult community education from being provided. What it does mean is that any ACE-like or learning activity that may be occurring is organised differently from that which is state supported as legitimate educational activity. If it is not state supported, then how is it organised? Who participates in it? What is its focus? I have suggested that 'the whistles and bells of sanctioned ACE may be drowning out the daily buzz' of learning in NSW centres (Rooney 2004a:153). This has also been recognised by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) who have called for research that sheds light on the organisational aspects of delivery of non-publicly supported adult community education (2003). Similarly, calls have also been made for research that makes visible the value and scope of small community organisations such as neighbourhood centres (Suhood, Marks, Waterford and SONG 2006).

The provision of adult community education in neighbourhood centres is not included in reporting mechanisms that count, measure and describe the contribution that particular organisations make to the learning landscape.

This is because as organisations not funded by the state to provide ACE, centres are not required to collect student and provision statistics. Through this omission, the non-position of centres as recognisable providers of adult community education is maintained. And while there are national estimates of around one hundred and fifty thousand students participating in learning that is not provided through formal adult education organisations (NCVER 2001:34), a question is raised about how much of this estimate might be attributed to the work of NSW neighbourhood centres.

Lack of visibility, understanding and inclusion in educational research of learning provided in NSW neighbourhood centres does not also mean the work of these centres is not found in research from other disciplines. NSW neighbourhood centres are the objects of research texts from within disciplinary areas other than texts that are explicitly educational (Coleman 1995; Flowers 2005; Otto and Onyx 2006). Moreover, neighbourhood centres' work is often featured in the writings of practitioners in the human services (Connor 1993; Suhood, Marks, Waterford and SONG 2006), as well as being visible in organisational and sectorial reports (Ducie 1994; Bullen and Onyx 1999; LCSA 2002; LCSA 2004a). However, in general these texts speak to different audiences (ie, community development and social workers) and any focus on adult community education is more to do with how learning is used as one of several tools for community development (McArdle 1999). Neighbourhood centres typically identify as being in the business of community development rather than adult community education (Rooney 2004a; Flowers 2005) and this is reflected in any accounts of learning in centres that they produce. In a sense centres are contributing to their position of non-players in education through identifying in this way. While again, this may not be seen as great cause for concern, it becomes problematic when considering that NSW centres are missing out on opportunities to further develop this type of activity – which becomes even more important when it is understood that these organisations work with some of the states most marginalised and disadvantaged people (Suhood, Marks, Waterford and SONG 2006). Therefore what is further at stake are opportunities to add new and different understandings that explore the provision of adult community education to groups of people under-

represented in more formal educational pictures. While research that explores provision for these people is said to be a priority for the state (MCEETYA 2002; ANTA 2003), it is unlikely that neighbourhood centres will become potential research sites if they are not first recognised as sites of learning or as having an educative role.

A first problematic

I have suggested both here and elsewhere (Rooney 2004a) that neighbourhood centres are providing ACE-like activity and, furthermore as such, they ought to be considered legitimate adult community education providers. Indeed, I further suggest that a narrowly conceived ACE sector might be unproductive for dealing with the issues at hand as well as a potential cause for further anguish for centres. Drawing from Lyotard's (1988) concept of the *differend* the complexities of these issues can be conceptualised. Moreover, through conceptualising in terms of Lyotard's notion of the *differend* it is further apparent that the current situation of NSW neighbourhood centres is unjust. In Lyotard's terms, a *differend*:

> ...would be the case of conflict, between (at least) two parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgement applicable to both arguments. One side's legitimacy does not imply the other's lack of legitimacy. However, applying a single rule of judgement to both in order to settle their differend as though it were merely a litigation would wrong (at least) one of them (or both of them if neither side admits this rule) (Lyotard 1988:xi).

Lyotard (1988) uses several examples to illustrate the concept of the *differend* including Auschwitz, Marxism and the fable of Protagoras and his student. In the last, the dispute was that the student, Euathlus, claimed that he had never won a victory despite Protagoras' teachings, and therefore was not required to pay for the teaching. Even though Euathlus had not won a victory to date, Protagoras argued that if the student won this current debate then he had indeed won at least once and was therefore obliged to pay. That is, if Euathlus won in the sense that he supported the claim that he had not won a case, then he had won a case and would be required to pay, and if Protagoras won the current debate, then Euathlus would still also have to pay (Lyotard 1988:6-8).

Lyotard suggests that 'a *differend* [is] the case where the plaintiff is divested of the means to argue and becomes for that reason a victim' (1988:9 italics in original). In terms of neighbourhood centres, this means that for centres to argue that they are legitimate players in the field of education, they need to frame their case in very particular 'educational' terms. However, given that the centres' case rests on social justice and community development, to argue in these terms would annul the argument. In this sense, the relationship between neighbourhood centres and ACE is characterised by a *differend* as the centres become victimised by the dominant education discourse. By implication, there is no position that centres might take up without loss or damage – or as Lyotard suggests, without further suffering (1988). Centres are at once silenced from making any claims, and are caused damage from both the silencing and from having no means to articulate their damage.

I suggest that a *differend* is the case for centres because any ACE-like activities are unacknowledged by 'education'. Potential claims that these centre activities might be 'educational' are silenced. The *differend* occurs because the assertion that 'neighbourhood centres are Adult Community Education (ACE) [providers]' is unsayable and that there is no forum available in which such a claim could be defended and judged. This is a denotative statement that requires a true/false type answer and for such a statement to be proven would require judgement by the Board of Adult Community Education (BACE). This Board is ultimately responsible for 'the allocation of resources from the Board of Adult and Community Education to establish new Adult Community Education organisations' (BACE 1996:6) and has legislated authority to decide in matters of ACE (BACE 1992:np). Judgements must operate from a discourse and this will influence what is held to be true (or otherwise). In other words, judgements are made according to a particular 'regimen of phrases' that defines what can and cannot be 'true' in a particular situation (Lyotard 1989) – and judgements made by BACE are framed within terms of market-based educational, political and economic discourses and in terms of educational outcomes. Yet, for centres to argue in these terms would at best diminish, at worst nullify the very case I am trying to make. This serves to mark the *differend.*

Centres do not have access to the discursive resources required to pursue this claim in a manner that can be easily understood within ACE. Indeed, they are silenced on the grounds of being unqualified to speak. To be qualified to speak ACE discourse one must *be* ACE. In other words, for the claim 'centres are ACE' to be 'true' centres would need to already *be* ACE. But were this the case, the claim 'centres are ACE' would be nonsensical. The result is what Lyotard refers to as a double bind – a dilemma (1988). If the claim (ie, 'centres are ACE') is judged as 'true', then it is *not* true. For centres to make such a claim would mean that they must disavow investments in community development processes, but by such disavowal the claim becomes meaningless. In Lyotard's view, this type of translation would also mean damage. To translate into the phrases of the dominant idiom would change centres because such claims would not be articulated in phrases that are commensurate with centres (Lyotard 1988). So the accused are indifferent to any accusations made by the victims, and any claims of wrong are unrecognizable. Centres can neither speak nor articulate their claim or damages. Not only are they silenced, but also may even experience further suffering because of this silence. Indeed they are further wronged because any loss and suffering 'cannot be reified in the language of the exchange' (Ophir 1997:191). This silencing marks an injustice.

Lyotard's concept of the *differend* calls upon a duty, not for pursuing litigation, but to detect *differends* and 'funding the (impossible) idiom for phrasing them' (Lyotard 1988:142). That is, what is at stake is 'to bear witness to *differends* by funding phrases for them' (Lyotard 1988:13). This invites a sense of the avant-garde because 'funding phrases' can necessitate the creation of new rules (Williams 1998:109). Lane (1999) also asserts a need for the avant-garde in relation to community development, where she puts out the call to 'bring on the artist' (p147). However, while experimenting with new and different strategies might be considered avant-garde (Ross-Smith, Kornberger and Rhodes 2004), so might taking orthodox strategies and donning them with a new and different 'spin'. Leaving this aside for the moment, what is clear is the need for new ways to understand and articulate what neighbourhood centres are doing. This is important in order to draw attention to the need to further develop for the sake of the disadvantaged and

marginalised people (social justice) while still being able to have a stake in the 'game' of education.

Addressing the first problematic

What is needed is research that accounts for, and makes use of, any ACE-like activity in NSW neighbourhood centres: accounts that describe and scope any learning activity in order that first it be recognised as a viable contributor to the field of adult community education, as well as accounts that point towards research concerned with bettering provision of adult community education. What is needed is the production of new and different versions of the provision of learning in neighbourhood centres, and then their 'insertion' into various discursive arenas.

However, it is not my intent here to replace an imperfect version with one that is more 'truthful'. To do so would be to play a 'gladiator game' where 'winning' is only possible through 'the annihilation of the other' (Rojeck 1998:12), or at least 'knocking them off their gladiatorial platforms' (Hunt 2001a:360). Rather, this research addresses the need for different understandings by producing three versions of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. It is important at this point to stress that this is not a triangulated fantasy seeking to get to 'the' truth. To provide one version is not enough (Haraway 1994b:82) – to do so would suggest the simple replacement of an unhelpful version with one that is preferential for the stakes at hand. To provide one account would be an *in*version. However, to provide two versions of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres would invite comparison: a 'one or the other' choice. So in the thesis I have settled for three versions – knowing that this number is arbitrary and that this number of versions might be extended or lessened depending on some worldly criteria like word counts, or on how long one has energy (or is allowed) to continue the research pursuit. By producing multiple versions, (or *sub*-versions if you will), I am acknowledging that there are multiple ways to understand the phenomenon under investigation and (with little resolve to reconcile) I keep the play of difference open.

However, '*there is nothing innocent about making the invisible visible* (Strathern in MacLure 2003:169 *emphasis* in original). The acknowledgement and production of multiple versions are not made for their own sake. Rather, the aim is that these sub-versions of the provision of learning in neighbourhood centres will enter broader discourses with a view to questioning, challenging, extending and pluralising understandings: to trouble existing understandings of the provision of learning in neighbourhood centres (and of NSW ACE). In other words, these sub-versions need to hold currency within the terms of the various discursive communities for which they are destined. These accounts are produced with a desire for trouble, and desire is, after all, a productive force in the production of text (Grosz 1990; Scheeres and Solomon 2000).

A first contribution

This is a timely study given the various audiences who are calling for such research to be undertaken. The State has recently put out a call for research that explores both the activity of adult community education in sites outside the publicly funded ACE and educational sectors, as well as research that identifies the providing organisations (ABS 2003). The state is interested in the organisation of this activity, given that such activity is by definition different from state supported provision. Others have also noted a gap in reported data concerning the broader adult and community education sector (Choy, Haukka and Keyes 2006:13) and some specifically note discrepancies concerning neighbourhood centres (Borthwick, Knight, Bender and Laveder 2001a:2). In addressing these calls, this research has potential to trouble contemporary understandings as well as to trouble less inclusive views that centrally position a limited number of players in NSW ACE, and render invisible the experiences of others. It is, however, considered worthwhile trouble given it is possible that there may be something to learn about the provision of adult community education from alternative understandings.

The neighbourhood centre sector, as part of a collective of small Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), has also put out a similar call. This collective agrees that what is needed is research that highlights the scope

and contribution of NGOs, that explores funding inequalities, and that documents the value of their contributions (Suhood, Marks, Waterford and SONG 2006). While this research does not attempt to address all these calls, it does provide a starting point that may contribute in making neighbourhood centres more visible to further research projects.

Hence, the 'versions' of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres presented in this thesis are produced with the pragmatic purpose of contributing to particular discursive communities. For example, Australian adult community education or adult learning more generally is one such community. Another is that of the neighbourhood centre sector itself which, after seeing centre organisational identities as something different (as having educative role), may choose to mobilise the sub-versions produced here in other ways.

A concern with identity

While I have argued above that this is a thesis about the provision of learning in neighbourhood centres, it can also be understood as one concerned with identity. For example, another way to describe the 'problem' set out above would be to talk about these organisations in terms of organisational identities. Re-positioning neighbourhood centres more centrally within educational stories is an act of re-writing or re-imagining what these organisations (hence their identity) might be. Such a re-positioning also has the effect of troubling ACE organisations' exclusive role as providers of adult community education in NSW (again, organisational identity is at stake). Here then, NSW neighbourhood centres, as well as (sanctioned) ACE providers, are not organisations understood as ones with fixed organisational identities. Rather, as many have suggested, organisational identities are neither essentialist nor immutable to change (Clegg, Kornberger and Rhodes 2005; Iedema, Rhodes and Scheeres 2005; Clegg, Rhodes and Kornberger 2007). In stating a connection between producing multiple accounts of learning provided in NSW neighbourhood centres, and troubling organisational identities in the process, I add that this work is not substantially informed by

organisational literature. To do so would be to add another dimension to a study that is already shaping up to be multiple.

With that said, the explicit concern with identity here is to do with professional doctorates and those who pursue them. In suggesting this, I take as given ideas of postmodern identities that comprise multiple and contradictory selves (du Gay, 1996; Edwards and Usher 2000; Hall and du Gay 1996; Rose 2000; Kidd 2002). This multi-dimensional understanding of identity complicates any desires I might entertain around mono-visionary or untangled tales. Rather, incongruities abound - since 'each of us are several' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:3) – but how might the 'several within' work productively together?

While I do not intend listing all possible social categories to which I belong, in order that they be 'deducted from the reliability of the study' (Peterson 2004:71), I do concern myself with a few that are salient. First, among the 'I's at work in this thesis production is one that, prior to undertaking doctoral studies, spent fifteen years working with community development workers to coordinate adult community education programs in NSW neighbourhood centres. During this time I invested in ideas of social justice that understand structural barriers prevent some people from full societal participation, and that the practices of community development can work to address this. However, I did not entirely understand myself as a community development worker: but rather as an educationalist appropriating community development principles (to the extent that these are two different things). Thus, I would explore the practices of community development for ways this might be also understood as learning, or adult community education. The desiring 'I' of the practitioner reads poverty and injustice in the world, and desires *to do*, to challenge the status quo and change the world - or to engage in, what has been described as, a 'modernist pursuit for a different (yes *better*) future' (Altman 1997:112-113).

Next, embedded in the 'I' of the practitioner participating in the production of this thesis is 'I, the adult educator'. As an adult educator employed in the human services sector, I explored the texts of adult community education looking for ways it might develop communities. Like community development though, my commitment to adult education was not beyond questioning – while I was committed, I was also suspect (Burbules 1998). Nevertheless, I invested in a commonly held belief that education has some value in contributing to society as a whole, as well as in ideas that education can improve individuals' daily existence and life opportunities; again, a desire *to do* fuelled by what might be called an emancipatory agenda.

I held so strongly to the belief that education can improve individual lives that I sought higher education myself and became 'I, the candidate' for a professional doctorate. While improving the lives of others may be an altruistic goal for enrolment, it is coupled with a more individualistic concern: namely, I enrolled in doctoral studies with intentions to improve *my own* daily existence and life opportunities. In a socio-economic climate that requires increasing credentialism, it seemed opportune to make use of what becoming a professional doctor might offer. I had/have a desire to be, or more accurately to become - to become what Hodge calls an 'authorised knower' (1999).

And finally, as a candidate in a doctoral program, I am also a researcher. 'I, the researcher' am expected to make some individual contribution to knowledge (Hodge 1999). Yet as a researcher I was/am seduced into a literary liaison (and I'm hardly refusing). I am both confused and seduced by ideas in postmodern texts. So while I desire *to know* (and to *do* and to *be*), my path to knowing is complicated by desire for the hedonistic pleasure of a seriously playful engagement with postmodern texts.

A second problematic

While I have already suggested desire to be a productive force in the production of texts, I reiterate that not only is this thesis fraught with such desire but it is fraught by a multiplicity of desires. There are many 'I's participating in this production, each with its own desire, and this thesis seeks to work productively with these multiple, mobilising (and at times *de*mobilising), desires. However, the contemporary conditions in which a thesis must be produced, not to mention what constitutes a thesis, cannot be ignored either. This text and I are located in the context of a professional doctorate candidature, and candidature produces a particular type of person – a 'professional doctor' (Lee 1998; Lee 1999; Barnacle 2005) – hence candidature itself is identity work. However, with an investment in ideas about multiple 'I's, attention is drawn to a second and associated problematic for this thesis. This is the problem of how 'I', the author conceived as a hybrid candidate-practitioner-researcher, might produce a thesis that works productively with, not only the contradictory selves that produce it, but also the selves produced within it.

This multiple positioning is a problem considering some powerful and dominant ideals about what constitutes a 'successful' doctoral thesis. If the thesis 'lacks unity', or is 'excessively concerned with its own production' (Hodge 1999:113-114), then the candidate's confirmation is at risk. In short, a successful thesis is one that participates in orthodox writing practices (Bizzell 1992:196). Such orthodox writing practices typically demonstrate that the author 'has done the appropriate research, performed convincing analysis, come up with original conclusions, and put it all together in a *coherent* narrative' (Luey 2004:133). Coherence here refers to 'systematic or logical connections' (Merriam-Webster 2007) between various parts in order to produce a consistency that suggests a harmonious whole. Thus, to produce a 'successful' thesis, inconsistent 'I's, and the 'messiness' and 'wicked problems' of practice (Lester 2004:746) are best smoothed over. Differences (read internal inconsistencies), are generally frowned upon. It seems though that achieving coherence can be a problem for professional doctorate candidates. A UK study found academic markers criticized practice-based doctoral texts for 'lacking coherence' (Winter, Griffiths and Green 2000:33).

Others argue that rather than aiding understanding, cohesiveness can actually work to limit understandings (Faigley 1992:134). Producing cohesiveness means unwieldy ideas (and 'I's) are excluded. Yet, the exclusion of difference for the sake of cohesiveness seems counter productive to the production of a research thesis:

> ...particular conventions of writing [...] enact particular strategies of authority based on monologue, authorial privilege, realist representational forms, and universalizable knowledge. These are strategies of violence that seek closure through the authority of one (identity) and warn us against experimenting with an openness to the contamination of the other (alterity) (Rhodes and Pullen 2008 in press:5).

While I seek becoming an 'authorised knower' (Hodge 1999), I do not seek closure through 'the authority of one'. So I am left wondering how I might work productively with multiple 'I's. This thesis is an identity text for me, its author, considering the identity work involved in writing myself as a 'professional doctor'. Given that 'the drive that invigorates the study' is a significant factor in research (Putnam 1992:106), the situatedness of this study in a professional doctoral program *matters*. Likewise, the multiple 'I's and their various investments also matter. However, considering the various selves carrying out its production, the question is how might I work productively with difference and also have some semblance of coherence – although this need not be a coherence founded on harmonious wholes nor void of 'contamination of the other'. The explicit concern is how 'I' the community educator, the adult educator, the candidate and the researcher, might produce a coherent text. I am mindful that I have multiple investments, but can my 'I's co-exist? ... Can they live together in unresolved contention, or does a cohesive text (much like a cohesive community) preclude difference?

Addressing the second problematic

To address a problematic of how to produce a coherent research text that works productively with contradictory selves, I reflexively explore some tensions in postgraduate candidature:

> To take the message of reflexivity is to question the scripting of practice as social convention in such a way as to produce writing which questions both the conventions and itself in the very act of its production (Usher, Bryant and Johnston 1997:150).

In this work I offer a reflexive account through consideration (and reconsideration) of the question '*why do this study?*'. Central to this reflexive account is the notion of a hybrid candidate-practitioner-researcher and of a thesis, both situated in the context of an Australian professional doctorate program.

As is the nature of many professional doctorates, this research emanates from my professional practice. For me, this practice has been in the tenuous space between the NSW neighbourhood centres sector and adult community education. My practitioner identity is imbued with various investments in multiple and at times contradictory ideas. As a practitioner, I have investment in both the broad ideas of community development as well as ideas about learning and education. While I explore these ideas in more detail further into this work, it is suffice to say here that these investments are indicative of convincing narratives that justify the practices of many community workers and adult educators (again, to the extent that these two groups might be involved in different activities). These ideas are powerful centrepieces in guiding my actions as a practitioner in the neighbourhood centre sector (and now as candidate-researcher). Yet at the same time I understand these as partial and contingent. For me there is a nagging doubt that these stories can actually deliver on their promises, and while I acknowledge many flaws and imperfections, this does not also mean that I refuse them entirely. I cannot refuse these ideas entirely because they, and the practices they advocate, offer some semblance of hope; and like Bauman I believe hope for 'the other' to be preferable to indifference (2000:11). Similarly, there are others who knowingly invest in flawed ideas (Gergen 1999:29), and even though ideas

offer few guarantees, many agree that they still have some (limited) value (Butler in Richardson 1994; Lather 2000; Crook and Garratt 2004).

However, there are tensions created by subscribing to imperfect stories and this creates somewhat of a dilemma for me. On the one hand (as Hassard suggests) I am suspicious of fully subscribing to a grand narrative of progress (1995:128). This is because its linearity and promises are belied by the specificity of what occurs at local sites and the ever-present possibilities of other perspectives. Nevertheless, I am mindful that amidst such different possible stories, there might still be an imperative to allow newer marginalised stories to enter the educational domain. In terms of community development, it is also worth noting that these ideas are increasingly marginalised and are ideas that I, along with others, believe should re-enter discussions (Bauman 1993; Bauman 2000; Bauman 2001a). Hassard (1995) makes the important point that while one might denounce the epistemological primacy of the texts one produces, there is also a need to accept that they 'are taken seriously on entering society' (p128). In other words, material consequences are derived from the texts produced by researchers, and similarly there are consequences for one's identity by investing in such stories. In light of this understanding, I sense a responsibility to imagine what these consequences might (or perhaps more importantly might *not*) be, especially in terms of the relationship between community, learning and neighbourhood centres - as well as for my identity as candidate, practitioner and researcher.

Like many post graduate students (Lander 2000; Evelyn 2004; Hunt 2001a), I struggle with the complexities (and dramas) of thesis production. Moreover, these multiple 'I's present somewhat of a paradox for me. Research espouses 'coherence', I have yearnings to write myself as doctor, I have investments in utopian dreams of different social worlds, and yet I have been seduced by postmodernist ideas. So when the impetus asks, '*why* do this study?', there is more than a single response:

> *"To know the world, and to write the world"*, answers the research.
> *"To become an authorised knower"*, the candidate answers.
> *"Yes to write the world, but also to 'right' the world"*, the practitioner replies.
> *"And, because there is pleasure in playing"*, the researcher adds.

Addressing, and then re-addressing, the question of '*why do this study?*' brings to the fore many differences. These are differences that might on the one hand be 'smoothed over' to produce a 'harmonious whole'. Here though, a reflexive account of a candidate-practitioner-researcher keeps these (and other) differences in play. Be forewarned though, reflexively addressing this problematic results in what might be called a 'messy text' (Marcus in Rhodes and Pullen 2008 in press:5). While there is (necessarily) a certain sense of the whole in this thesis, its coherence is not a 'wholeness' that evokes totality (p5).

A second contribution

Addressing the question of '*why do this study?*' troubles some commonly held ideas about producing a doctoral thesis. In particular, the emerging field of professional doctorates in Australia has had little to say little about the production of a thesis, yet continues to explore a '*way forward*' for these degrees (Clarke 1996; Maxwell and Shanahan 1996; McWilliam, Taylor, Thompson, Green, Maxwell, Wildy and Simmons 2002; Boud and Tennant 2006). While there is little agreement on the overall direction of professional doctorates in Australia (Brennan 1997), there *is* a general consensus that new practices (textual and otherwise) need to be developed (Boud and Tennant 2006:293; Maxwell and Shanahan 1996:113). This work contributes to these discussions by troubling the production of a professional doctoral text that takes a traditional style thesis as the gold standard. It does this by providing a reflexive account of the production of a doctoral thesis that is cognizant of not only the 'what', 'how' and the 'who' of research, but importantly also the 'why'. The result is a thesis that works productively with the complexities inherent in professional doctorate candidature.

While this thesis is necessarily plural and traverses disciplines and 'fields', its reflexivity also serves to demonstrate how working productively with

multiplicity can also offer other advantages. An example of this is how, as a text, it reacts with the world in a multitude of ways. In a context espousing the axiom 'publish or perish', the multiplicity of this text enables it to be published and disseminated among diverse audiences:

> Publishing in refereed journals is, of course, one form in which knowledge can be passed on to others [...] we then need to consider the whole spectrum of activity to which this 'doctoral' role might apply, beyond the traditional institutions of academic journal publishing (Winter, Griffiths and Green 200:35).

This thesis both *argues* for, as well as *performs* how, a professional doctoral text that works productively with multiplicity has potential to react with the world in a multitude of ways (including, but also *beyond*, the academy). This is made possible through problematising a type of linear cohesiveness that might limit candidate-practitioner-researcher capacity, and by addressing the question of '*why do this study?*'.

Indeed it is addressing the question of '*why do this study?*' that becomes the point of departure for the overall conceptual, methodological and textual framework. The framework in this work is borrowed and adapted from Haraway's (1994a) analogy of research as a game of *cat's cradle.* Given the centrality of Haraway's analogy to this thesis, I soon turn to introduce *cat's cradle*, but first divert to explore the relationship between the problematic of neighbourhood centres and that of identity set out above.

Relationship between problematics

At first glance this thesis might simply claim to be about the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. I might simply provide multiple versions and be done with it. But what versions might I produce and for what purposes? If I have already hinted at the possibility of multiple truths, then what criteria might I draw from to decide which three of infinite possibilities I present? Moreover, because I start from an understanding of objectivity being an illusion, it is remiss at best, misleading at worse to gloss over the desires that move this study. Deleuze and Guattari ask if 'the multiplicity that fascinates us [is] already related to a multiplicity dwelling within us?' (1987:240). I answer 'yes'!

In this work, judgement about criteria for the first problematic is made through consideration of the second. I have introduced the tensions associated with the candidate-practitioner-researcher hybrid that produces this thesis. Acknowledging this hybridity makes it impossible to ignore the relationship between my own selves and the types of texts I might produce, as well as the conditions (that is, professional doctoral candidature) I must produce them in. While notions of 'knowledge' trouble me, I am multiply positioned within and by this (and other) texts. I have multiple desires, and these desires are productive forces in the texts I produce. And *how* I am positioned (and position myself) impact on the types of texts I produce. My desire to know, write, be, right and play are each driving forces for what follows. The versions I produce when addressing the first problematic are framed within the notion of a hybrid 'identity'. Moreover, because my understanding of identity is not one where an unproblematic 'I' neatly equals the sum of the parts, neither do the three versions of the provision of learning in neighbourhood centres 'equal' the 'truth'. Differences are kept in play.

Leaving difference in play inevitably means that this work is polyvocal. While maintaining a consistent voice is a typical requirement of an academic text, I am not urged to 'smooth over' inconsistencies. Rather than a monotone 'I', various 'I's jump in and out of the text as various (and often inconsistent) ideas are taken up.

Introducing cat's cradle

To address the dual problematic set out above requires the deployment of an appropriate methodological and textual strategy. Haraway provides a basis for such a strategy in work that she has called 'cat's cradle' (1994a). *Cat's cradle* can first be described as one western name given to a children's game, played with string and fingers to create string figures.

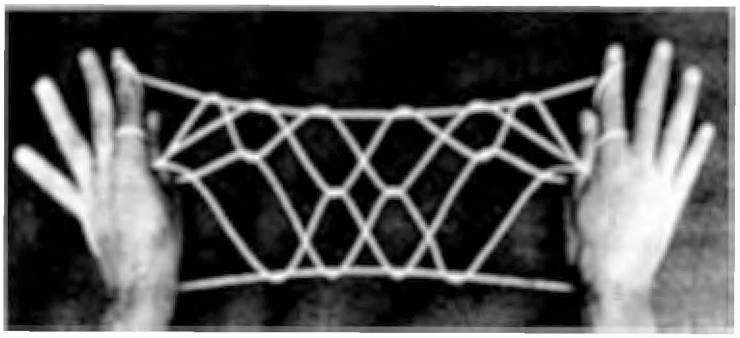


Figure 1: A flock of birds: used with permission from the International String Figure Association (often known as the 'Sydney Harbour Bridge' in an Australian Context)

I recall *cat's cradle* being played in the playgrounds of my own Australian childhood, where girls (and it was considered a girls' game) would arrange a loop of string into string figures, share them with each other and then announce what they were meant to resemble. *Cat's cradle* commonly began with some simple moves that produced a relatively simple pattern of 'cat's whiskers'. Then, with some additional moves (a twist and a knot), worked through a series of other moves to produce more complex patterns, including one that was meant to represent (in Australia at least) the [Sydney] Harbour Bridge.

A playground game aside, Haraway (1994a) proposes the analogy of research as a game of *cat's cradle* and in this research I extend this idea. This is because the *cat's cradle* analogy is first a fruitful one for addressing the dual problematic of producing different pictures of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres as well the associated problem of multiple 'I's. It provides a conceptual framework for this study. It triggers the exploration of aspects of orthodox research that are often unexplored. In addition it contributes to the stylistic business of organising a thesis.

An appeal of a *cat's cradle* analogy is that it draws attention to two important aspects of research: ie, the *patterns* and *moves* of research. Haraway's analogy foregrounds the idea that *cat's cradle* is about the creation of patterns (1994a) and there are two inter-related ideas inherent in this notion. The first is about the patterns themselves, and the other concerns the process (or the moves) that one employs to create them.

Thinking about 'patterns' is useful because it foregrounds the idea of constructed resemblances – the patterns of research are the textual accounts of the world. The patterns of a game of *cat's cradle* also draw attention to the gaps in the string figures, and how these gaps are indeed part of the construction. Patterns are (at best) only *representations* of a world reliant upon the way the loop of string is arranged, the knots that hold it together and give it form, and even the gaps between the threads that give an illusion of like 'this-ness' (cat's whiskers) or like 'that-ness' (bridges). Importantly too, *cat's cradle* draws attention to the hands of the player/s without whose interventions the patterns are non-existent. With this said, it is ultimately the patterns of the research that present particular accounts of the world. Patterns are the 'what' of research and in this research the 'what' is the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres (addressing the first part of the problematic).

But *cat's cradle* is also about making moves. While the patterns present 'the what' of research (in this case, neighbourhood centres), the moves have a slightly different focus. By moves I am referring to the particular processes (methodological and rhetorical) of which researchers partake when carrying out their research – the *hows* and the *whys*. While the moves and patterns are imbricated (Richardson 1994:930), for heuristic ease I put them forward broadly with the caveat that a clear taxonomy is problematic. Therefore any distinctions between *moves* and *patterns* are best understood as temporal and textual.

In a game of *cat's cradle,* the moves are understood as the selection of threads, the arranging, and then the *re*arranging, of strings, and the foregrounding and backgrounding of knots, and making use of the gaps.

Similar moves are also made in a game of research. Research is a social process and researchers select and rearrange ideas. They foreground and/or background aspects that work to hold their patterns together, and they leave bits out (for the sake of congruency) – all with the purpose of creating a plausible account (pattern) of the world. In *cat's cradle* the moves can first be understood as the technical business of 'how' the pattern is created. Moreover, as further extrapolation of the *cat's cradle* analogy will argue, the moves of research also invite – nay, *insist on* - a focus on the 'why' of research too.

Cat's cradle does not privilege 'coherent concretised patterns', but a (playful) game that creates, *and then re-creates,* its patterns. As such, it is an ideal game for researchers keen to produce multiple accounts, (patterns or *sub*-versions if you will) of the world. Consideration of both the patterns *and* the moves of research increase the appeal for utilising the *cat's cradle* analogy for this study because it foregrounds not only the textual products of research but also the ongoing dynamics of the game that produces them. In this way *cat's cradle* is reflexive. Reflexivity here opens up the practice of writing for inspection and interrogates 'the very act of its production' (Usher, Bryant and Johnston 1997:150).

Moreover, considering the reflexivity of the moves and patterns of research insists that researchers eschew neutrality and opt instead for ethical practices that take responsibility for knowledge claims. In taking responsibility I have also jettisoned notions of writing that unproblematically represents the social world (Rhodes and Brown 2004:3). This is because not only are the 'what and how' of research privileged, but importantly the 'why' of research also receives attention. Consideration of these issues complicates the cohesiveness of research, but it also (and necessarily) contributes to a reflexiveness that acknowledges the epistemological assumptions underpinning the approach being taken (Usher 1996), as well as to a research practice that acknowledges the contingency of its text/s.

A third contribution

A third contribution this thesis makes is a conceptual one. Researchers under the broad rubric of post structural and/or postmodern have experimented with

ways to present their texts in a manner consistent with the tensions and complexities that these ideas invariably throw up (Lather 1992; Middleton 1995). Many seasoned researchers have problematised the textuality of research (Usher 1997; Usher, Bryant and Johnston 1997; Usher and Solomon 1998; Hodge 1999; Edwards, Nicoll, Solomon and Usher 2004), and if seasoned researchers are struggling, then this can only be intensified for doctoral students faced with producing theses in complex conditions.

The specific contribution this thesis makes is to offer a conceptual, methodological and textual framework that enables the production of multiple accounts of the world that are mindful of the selves who produce, and are produced by, them. Yet, while reflexive accounts take writing to what many (including myself) believe to be new and exciting places, this can be also dangerous territory for the candidate. The methodological framework developed in this thesis provides possibilities for contemporary candidate-practitioner-researchers who are situated across multiple fields that simultaneously enable and constrain. But importantly, this is an ethical framework that can also satisfy desire for becoming a professional doctor, righting the world and/or taking pleasure in playing the 'research game'

Organisation of thesis

This chapter has established the dual problematic of central concern to this thesis. While both 'problems' appear mutually exclusive they are presented here in a dialogical relationship. I (the candidate-practitioner-researcher) seek to produce multiple accounts of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. Yet my various 'I's have different agendas. One way to address a dual problematic would be to try and write a universal account that spans all the 'I's (which is what an orthodox thesis might attempt to do). However, acknowledging a need for multiple accounts, and not insisting on cohesiveness, can also result in working productively with multiplicity. Furthermore, attending to the complexities offers opportunities to contribute not only to the broad field of adult community education, and to the developing field of professional doctorates in Australia, but also to enter methodological debates.

Having presented the problematic and introduced a broad framework, I now turn to prepare readers for what is to follow. This thesis is presented in three sections.

Preparing (Chapters 1, 2 and 3)
Playing (Chapters 4,5,6,7,8 and 9)
Pausing (Chapter 10)

As the name *'Preparing'* suggests, the first section is where I prepare for the remaining two sections. This first section has begun the preparations by introducing the dual problematic of a thesis concerned with the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres and then reintroducing it as one concerned with identity. I then went on to offer first introductions to the *cat's cradle* analogy.

Following this, in chapter two (*A pagan researcher)*, I further prepare by positioning myself as a 'pagan researcher'. I draw largely from the work of Lyotard (1985) to argue that the ethical dimension of being a pagan researcher promises its most salient of attractions. Moreover, a pagan stance endorses the 'adoption' and 'adaptation' of ideas and strategies from a variety of paradigms, enabling a multiple-paradigmatic approach to data collection.

Preparing Chapter 1 *Introductions* Chapter 2 *A pagan researcher* Chapter 3 *Cat's cradle*
Playing (chapters 4,5,6,7,8 and 9)
Pausing (chapter 10)

The third chapter (*Cat's cradle),* is where I prepare a more detailed methodological and conceptual framework, in turn further preparing the reader for how the research proceeds. The Harawayian analogy of research

as a game of *cat's cradle* (1994a) is presented as a productive way to conceptualise the research task, as well as being a productive way to organise the research text itself. In other words, *cat's cradle* provides the overall logic of the methods adopted (and adapted). I reiterate the notion of moves and patterns as being important here because it is these moves and patterns that become organising principles for the remainder of the thesis.

With preparations complete, I then turn attention to actually playing *cat's cradle*. Hence, *'Playing'*, is the second section and it spans six chapters (chapters four to nine).

Preparing (chapters 1, 2 and 3)
Playing Chapter 4 *Pagan becomings* Chapter 5 *The cats' whiskers* Chapter 6 *Tragic writings* Chapter 7 *A string(ent) pattern* Chapter 8 *Pleasurable playing* Chapter 9 *Bridges*
Pausing (chapter 10)

'Playing' is the largest section and forms the bulk of this work. It is in this second section that I mobilise the notion of moves and patterns that come from the *cat's cradle* analogy. The 'playing' section comprises three 'move chapters' and three 'pattern chapters'.

To address the need for new understandings of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres there are three 'pattern chapters' (chapters five, seven and nine). Each pattern presents a sub-version of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres.

Chapter five (*A preliminary pattern*) presents a first version that positions NSW neighbourhood centres and their practices in a broader socio-political context primarily by drawing on practitioner-orientated literature. This serves to reiterate that there is a dearth of knowledge in regard to what is 'officially' known (and by whom) about the provision of learning in centres.

Chapter seven *(A stringent pattern)* presents a second, and very particular, version of provision of learning in neighbourhood centres. It draws empirical data from a piece of survey research and makes various propositions about

the scope of this work. Not only does this version directly address stated gaps in what is known about the provision of learning, it also bears witness to the *differend* between ACE and neighbourhood centres in NSW.

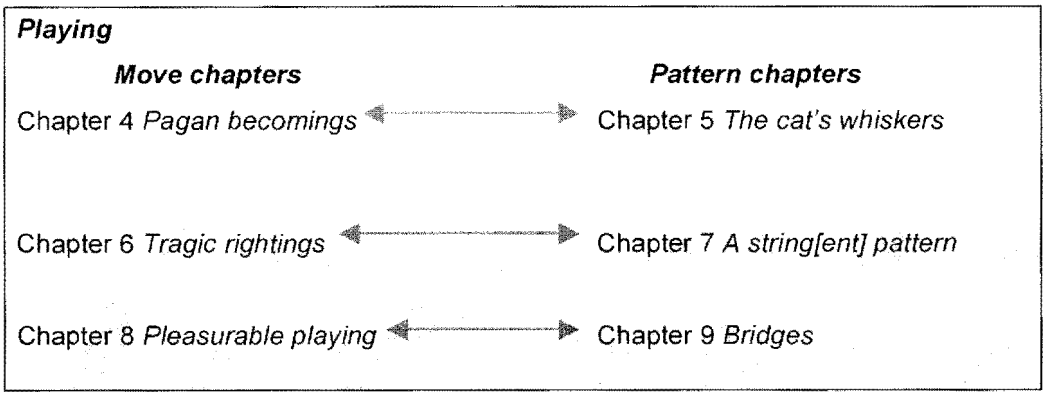
A third version of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres is presented in chapter nine (*Bridges*). This version draws empirical data from interviews with people involved in neighbourhood centres and then frames its discussion in terms of Delors' pillars of learning (1996). It works to link ideas about education and learning, and of educational institutions and of neighbourhood centres, while retaining important differences.

Each of the abovementioned patterns is created as a result of moves and therefore an associated 'move chapter' (chapters four, six and eight) precedes each of these patterns. For example chapter four (*Pagan becomings*) troubles simplistic notions about becoming a professional doctor. It brings to the fore the ironies involved in becoming an 'authorised knower' (Hodge 1999). However, the discussion draws out criteria for a preliminary pattern of the provision of learning in NSW centres. In particular it stresses the importance of locating a research study in literature, which then leads to the preliminary pattern in chapter five.

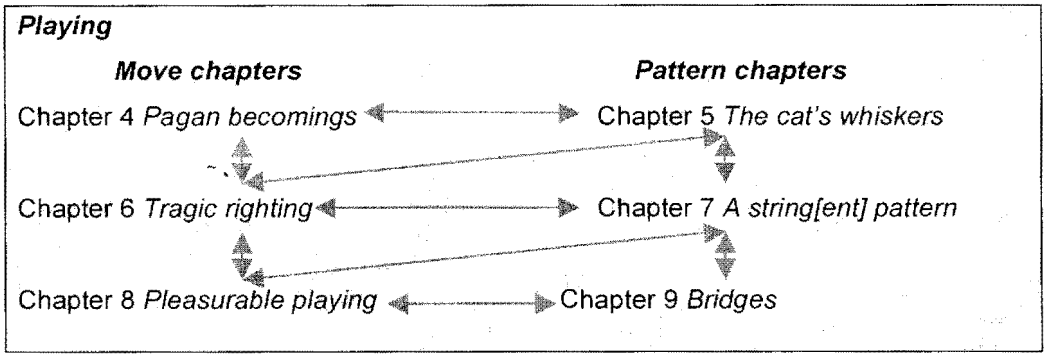
Chapter six (*Tragic rightings*) begins by teasing out the notion of 'righting the world'. It then moves on to stage a case for the production of the stringent pattern of the provision of learning in NSW centres. It argues that positivist-like research methods, understood as a legitimising practice rather than an unproblematic science, can be mobilised to legitimate the practices of these organisations. This discussion guides the thesis to chapter seven's stringent pattern.

The final 'move' chapter is chapter eight (*Pleasurable playing*). This chapter argues for the production of another (and different) pattern of the provision of learning. It discusses various criteria for doing so, and through this discussion moves to the creation of the third version of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres presented here.

Perhaps a more helpful way to understand what is to follow is to imagine three different 'sets' of moves *and* patterns:



While the moves and patterns of each set are presented in separate chapters, they are interrelated. For example it is in the associated 'move' chapter that the methodological issues concerning the collection of data (literature, survey and interviews), as well as reflexive accounts, are discussed. As the following diagram illustrates, these sets of *moves* and *patterns* are also uni-relational:



The moves draw upon issues of production of texts for the identity of candidate-practitioner-researcher in the context of a professional doctorate. Centred on questions of '*why do this study?*', these chapters offer a reflexive discussion that troubles any desires I might have for producing a linear and untangled tale of the provision of learning in neighbourhood centres. In chapter four (*Pagan becomings),* I 'do the study' because I desire becoming a professional doctor. In chapter six (*Tragic rightings),* I 'out' my desire to right the world, and in chapter eight (*Pleasurable playing*) I focus on the

textual pleasure of the engagement. While these moves are not mutually exclusive they make problematic the production of a naturalised coherent text. It is through the reflexive explorations of these move chapters that the criterion for ensuing patterns (and how I might best perform them) is presented.

The provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres is of central concern to the pattern chapters. While three patterns are presented, there is little attempt to reconcile the various sub-versions. While some aspects overlap, there are also significant differences. A noticeable difference is the data source used to create the accounts. Chapter five (*The cat's whiskers)* draws data from various sources of literature, whereas chapter seven (*A string(ent) pattern)* draws data from a survey of NSW neighbourhood centres, and chapter nine (*Bridges)* uses interviews with people involved in neighbourhood centres.

Preparing (chapters 1, 2 and 3)
Playing (chapters 4,5,6,7,8 and 9)
Pausing Chapter 10 *(K)not knowing*

'*Pausing*' is the name given to third and final section. Of all the sections, this is the shortest. It consists of one chapter *((K)not knowing).* While the notion of 'drawing a conclusion' is expected, my attempt to do so is a troubled one; I do try however, to 'tie off' the thesis by drawing attention to its various contributions and the relationship between them. It might be argued that three sets of 'moves' and 'patterns' of learning in neighbourhood centres are each the products of independent inquiry, however the dynamics of a *cat's cradle/research* analogy provides good argument for necessarily presenting them together. Hence this point, and a concluding discussion, will be presented in the final chapter of this thesis.

Conclusion to chapter

This chapter began by presenting the dual problematic that is of central concern to this study. Following this, it introduced conceptual understandings that will frame the study. It highlighted various contributions and then concluded with a broad introduction to the chapters that follow. In the following chapter I introduce the notion of 'pagan' and the pagan positioning I take up in relation to this research.

Chapter 2 A pagan researcher

Introduction to chapter

I began this doctoral thesis (as I began my doctoral program) aware of a need to negotiate the tensions I face as candidate-practitioner-researcher and in acknowledgement of the contradictory selves that provide impetus for the study. I have an ambiguous faith in contradictory doctrines; I have investments in ideas about better futures; I am an advocate for critical perspectives that seek to act upon the world; and I am seduced by the challenge and pleasure that a postmodern liaison might offer (to name but a few). In a sense I have many deities - but none in particular. Moreover, I am positioned in multiple of ways in 'the university' and in 'the field'. Hence, while it is a customary move in one's thesis to include some sort of statement that qualifies the adjectives one adds to 'researcher', in my work I am suggesting that I (the candidate-practitioner-researcher) am *pagan*[1].

The term 'pagan' is taken from Lyotard (1998) and in this chapter I draw attention to four related aspects of a pagan stance to research that resonate for me in my hybrid candidate-practitioner-researcher state. I present them here as 'not quite', 'ethical', 'other Others' and 'multi-paradigm'. First, I begin this chapter by exploring the notion of pagan that first grabbed my attention and this was the notion of it being 'not quite'. Following this initial discussion, I propose that the most salient attractions of taking a pagan stance is that it is an 'ethical' one, and implicated in this is a responsibility to others. While my initial take on a responsibility to others makes a case for pursuing social justice, next I point out a responsibility to 'other Others'. For example I look toward the other of researcher, of coherence and of method. Finally, and related to thinking about the other, I suggest that a pagan approach is a 'multi-paradigmatic' one. In all, I suggest that these four aspects constitute a promising approach to a research project that seeks to work productively with the complexities inherent in one candidate-practitioner-researcher's professional doctoral program.

---

[1] A version of this chapter and the following *cat's cradle* chapter was presented at the 2006 Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA) in a paper entitled '*Cat's cradle*: a promising (pagan) research game' (Rooney 2006).

Pagan research as 'not quite'

The concept of pagan to which I refer is drawn from Lyotard (Lyotard and Thebaud 1985; Lyotard 1988; Lyotard 1989) and was developed around the same time that Lyotard produced his well-known work: ie, *The postmodern condition: a report on knowledge* (1984). With this understanding, I first understand a pagan approach as 'not quite' postmodern. To be sure it has been suggested that we were never (quite) modern anyway (Latour 1993), and it is the notion of 'not quite' that first attracted me. This is because I experience myself as 'not quite': I am 'not quite' a community educator, and 'not quite' a community development practitioner, yet I am also both of these. Similarly, as a candidate for a professional doctorate I am 'not quite' a researcher (an authorised knower), yet as an author I perform as such (well, perhaps not quite). Not to mention desiring an award that is 'not quite' a PhD. Moreover, I have already stated an understanding of neighbourhood centres as 'not quite' ACE, and what they provide as 'not quite' learning or (capitalised) Adult Community Education.

Understanding pagan as 'not quite' postmodern' is helpful for novice researchers eager to resist the legitimate available approaches – even if uncertain why. A pagan approach offers me, as a beginning researcher, an opportunity to explore the potential and limitations of a range of orthodox approaches. For example sections of this thesis appear 'not quite' modern (chapter seven for example), and while 'strategically modern' might be another way to position myself, being pagan has the advantage of also being 'not quite' postmodern (a stance I take in some other chapters). A pagan approach avoids an evangelistic following of any one 'ism' and, in doing so, does not limit opportunities to see potential of others.

I stress that I do not propose 'pagan*ism*', but a pagan *approach* or *position.* To take a pagan *position* to research is 'not quite' the wholesale uptake of a particular belief system – like a faith. Lyotard and others use the term pagan*ism*, but for me this conjures up ideas of a bounded set of beliefs. I am not quite convinced that I approach this study with a bounded set of beliefs. The etymology of 'pagan' is found in the late Latin word *paganus,* and means 'country dweller'. A 'country dweller' is more about location or *position* than

about faith-*fullness* and therefore the pagan is understood in a positional sense rather than faith-based (or not).

Importantly though, this position is neither a fixed nor a singular one. Because a pagan approach invests in multiple ideas (and often simultaneously), it is also multi-positional. For example I have already begun drawing attention to how 'I' am positioned in regard to the university, the field as well as to the text itself - and within each of these I am multiply positioned. For me, this means that 'position' (pagan or otherwise) can be multiple, context dependent and not immutable to change.

While I make distinction between a pagan 'position' and a 'faith', I also acknowledge that contemporary use of the term of pagan is imbued with other meanings. While ideas associated with the contemporary notion of pagan may seem akin to 'faith', some of these ideas also have appeal. Ideas from contemporary neo-pagans add interesting dimensions to the idea of a pagan researcher, and serve to introduce my assertion that a pagan approach to research is an ethical approach. The everyday use of pagan is more typically used to refer to those 'not quite' converted' - 'irreligious' or 'hedonistic'. Neo-pagans describe themselves as a broad collection offering alternatives to the 'dogmatism of religious mainstream' (Raymond 2005:np), and while some might think them ignorant of religious teachings, they claim the converse (Glick 2005:np). Pagans (I?) do not care for a 'priestly' elite, nor care for 'final answers to big questions', yet importantly they (we) *do care* for others (Raymond 2005:np). This care for others, indeed acknowledging a 'responsibility to the Other', leads to the initial suggestion that a pagan approach is an ethical one (Usher 2000:184-185).

Pagan research as an ethical approach

Aside from notions of being 'not quite' postmodern/modern, the aspect of a pagan approach that has most salience is that it is, despite any aspersions it may cast, an ethical stance. However, an ethical stance is more than adhering to a set of rules. At the University of Technology, Sydney, the *Human Research Ethics Committee* (HREC) *Policy for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students* appropriately points out that:

> *It is important for all researchers to recognise the debt they owe to... participants of research, and respect them accordingly. This will include a respect for their right to protection of their privacy...* (Governance Support Unit 2007:np).

Postgraduate 'ethics clearance' is achieved through a rigorous reporting process: *did the participants give their informed consent? are tapes and transcripts stored appropriately?... etc*. While I do not suggest that these are unimportant considerations for research, a pagan 'responsibility for the other' understands ethical considerations to extend beyond these questions. While there are several 'others' to which the pagan is responsible, a first is seen in the pursuit of justice.

Like much of Lyotard's work, pursuing justice is central and necessary (Lyotard 1984; Lyotard and Thebaud 1985; Lyotard 1988). These just pursuits are particularly evident in his work on the pagan (Lyotard and Thebaud, 1985) and the *differend* (Lyotard 1988). For Lyotard, the issue of justice focuses on criteria for judgements. His point is that in the postmodern there are not universal criteria against which one can judge what is considered to be just: rather, there are many criteria. Importantly (and the part that appeals to me) a lack of universal criteria does not preclude efforts to seek justice – what it does mean though is that judgements made in the absence of universal criteria are localised, specific and yet open to negotiation. Moreover, any judgement made presupposes other possible judgements. Criteria are not only contestable but what might reasonably considered just in one situation is not necessarily so in another – just for all people at all times. In short, Lyotard advocates for not only a justice of multiplicity but also a multiplicity of justices (Barron 1992), and this is not the same as a universal justice.

Underpinning the notion of universal justice is a consensual universal humanity. Many believe that such a humanity exists and consequently Lyotard has been scorned for his 'juvenile', 'unoriginal', 'lame' *and* 'dangerous' ideas (Rojeck 1998:4,13,2). These ideas, claims Rojeck, are a result of Lyotard's break with Marxism and, along with Guattari, Deleuze and Foucault he is held responsible for the 'scourge of and the demise of justice underscored by a consensual understanding of humanity structuralism' (Rojeck 1998:11).

While the general idea of a common humanity has its appeal, the idea has troubled others who have different readings of Lyotard than Rojeck. Readings (1992) provides an example where, as pagan, he recognises the incommensurability of the pursuit and advocates not for celebration of difference, but for acknowledgement of differences being inaccessible. For Readings, Lyotard's message is rejection of the common practice of countering an oppressive metanarrative with another, more developed or 'purer' one: a newer better model. Drawing on Lyotard, he suggests 'the question of justice cannot be resolved in terms of models' (Readings 1992:170). Hence, in response to those (like Rojeck) who might argue that pagan research is an ethical vacuum, Readings argues that pagan judgement 'allows the question of justice to be kept alive' (1992:168). To illustrate the point, Readings starts with an example of a *differend* he draws from a film depicting Australian Aboriginal people's legal battle with a mining company (*Where the green ants dream*). Throughout his example Readings continually shows how the Aboriginal identity is 'radically inaccessible and untranslatable' within the Common(wealth) legal understanding of 'humanity': indeed, seeking justice through either the plaintiff or the defendant's law/lore would mean the silencing that of the others'. Despite well-meaning attempts in the film to include Aboriginal identities within this version of 'humanity', what occurs, 'like all modernist meta-narratives, lights the way to terror even as it upholds the torch of human rights' (Readings 1992:186). Readings puts it thus:

> Paganism does not aim to represent the truth of the Aborigines, to show them as truly strong: rather it employs ruses so that their *weakness* may overcome the strength of their oppressors (1992:176 emphasis in original).

Readings point is to first demonstrate how Aboriginal lores are inexpressible within the Western notion of commonwealth law that is underscored by a universal notion of humanity. Second, by doing so, he 'bears witness to a *differend*' - which is what Lyotard urges us to do.

However, unlike Readings (who rejects common humanity), or Rojeck (who has already identified it), Bauman (2001a) neither fully subscribes nor totally rejects. Rather, he desires some notion of a common humanity, but not one framed in the modernist thought. Similarly others, who have been inspired by

Lyotard, talk about an Idea of justice – unattainable - something that cannot be grasped, yet something worth striving for (Barron 1992). So, aligning to some degree with Readings, Bauman and Lyotard in desiring something that I cannot imagine, I too am unwilling to call off the search – which leaves me lamenting 'the impossible possibility of justice' (Biesta 2001:50).

Despite a somewhat uncomfortable realisation that I cannot 'save the world', the pursuit of (a problematic) justice echoes a pursuit for social justice of a practitioner located in the general fields of adult community education and community development. For me (and for many others in these fields of practice) *social* justice still constitutes a goal worth pursuing. Indeed, pursuing social justice in the contemporary socio-economic climate is more urgent than ever - yet ironically hindered by the very conditions that make it so (Bauman 2000; Abrahamson 2004).

However, the concept of social justice itself is not innocent. Like imagined notions of 'humanity' and 'community' (Bryson and Mowbray 1981; Bauman 2001a; Mowbray 2004), 'social justice' is unattainable – but acknowledgement and absolution from the pursuit are not one and the same. Hence, a 'just' pursuit is not an easy one and those who work in fields where 'care for the other' is the *raison d'etre* increasingly find themselves on the defensive (Bauman 2000:9). Bauman stresses the importance of seeking (a problematic) social justice, but goes on to lament the difficulties of the pursuit in the contemporary socio-political climate. Indeed, Bauman himself, may be bearing witness to a *differend* when he states:

> The question 'Am I my brother's [sic] keeper?, which not long ago was thought to be answered once and for all and so was seldom heard, is asked again, more vociferously and belligerently by the day. And people wishing for a 'yes' answer try desperately, yet with no evident success, to make it sound convincing in the cool and businesslike language of interests (Bauman 2000:9).

A pagan approach to research holds promise considering a further similarity shared between neo-pagans and pagan researchers. This is that both are eclectic. The neo-pagan borrows, adopts and adapts a range of beliefs and practices (Glick 2005). Likewise, Lyotard and Thebaud concede a similar notion when they suggest that to be pagan is to recognise that 'one can play several games' (Lyotard and Thebaud 1985:61). This is also to imply an acceptance of heterogeneity - an acceptance which itself constitutes an

ethical moment (Usher 2000:171). In other words, a pagan stance might deploy a variety of strategies, even if considered partial and limited, or even unworthy in other circumstances. For example, while responsibilities for the other have largely been staged in moral and ethical discourses, Bauman suggests that these arguments typically lack resonance within the dominant contemporary discourses of western societies (2000:9). However, the pagan researcher can stage their arguments in dominant discourses – but without utopian purchase. Therefore, as pagan, I can negotiate the complexities of the socio-political and educational landscape of candidate-practitioner-researchers. This can be negotiated not only with epistemological understandings but also with ethical considerations.

Responsibility to other others

While I have argued for a 'responsibility for the other' in regard to pursuing social justice, there are also other 'Others' for whom I, as a pagan researcher, take responsibility for in this work. The Other, however is not a homogenous other, rather the Other is *heterogenous* (Rhodes and Pullen in press 2008). First, I began this work stating my case for an Other of ACE organisations (i.e., neighbourhood centres). Implicated in this argument is an Other of adult education (i.e., learning), and further into this work I will stage an argument for an Other of *'field'* (i.e., landscape). But they are not the only manifestations of 'responsibility for the other'. Along with these abovementioned 'others' is a less tangible one. A pagan stance also necessitates a reflexiveness that draws attention to the other of 'method' (writing). Usher explains:

> Method 'forgets' that research is writing... The 'forgetting' of writing is but an attempt to name the unnameable and say the unsayable, the attempt to account for everything and resolve all problems, to 'master' reality as it really is – and thus to fail in that responsibility to the Other which is ethics (Usher 2000:184-185).

For Usher, ethical moments precede methods (Usher 2000:162). In my pagan effort not to forget, I set about remembering writing. Implicated in this remembering is an acknowledgement of the other of 'knowing' (not knowing) and of 'consistency' (multiplicity). What all this means is that a pagan stance to research is not nearly as occupied with 'methods' as one might anticipate of a doctoral thesis. This lack is not an oversight but (following Usher) more an 'acknowledgement of the limits to methods' and moreover an

'acknowledgement of what comes before them' (2000:162). Here this is a 'not quite' innocent responsibility to several others.

Pagan research as multi-paradigmatic

A pagan approach to a research project, without an anchoring 'ism', may be a cause of anxiety for some. After all, investments in paradigmatic perspectives can help candidate-researchers select (and reject for that matter) their methods. However, the eclecticism of a pagan approach has the benefit of 'borrowing' and 'adapting' from a range of methods that are drawn from multiple paradigmatic perspectives simultaneously. For example here the reflexiveness, ethical spin and epistemological understandings underpinning notions of pagan research can (and will) borrow and adapt positivist and post-positivist methods - but without the illusions. Borrowed and adapted not for their capacity to get me somehow closer to 'the truth', but as Gergen suggests for their 'pragmatic implications' (in Hassard 1995:135).

In this way pagan research endorses multi-paradigm research (Hassard 1995). As the name suggests, multi-paradigm research works across paradigms that may otherwise be seen as incommensurable, and in doing so offers great potential by providing 'several lenses for its analytical camera' (Hassard 1995:88). Pagan research is not aligned with the view that paradigms are mutually exclusive. A pagan stance to research does not reject ideas outright, but rather approaches them with doubt (Burbules 1998). This is because the pagan rejects the possibility of a 'perfect lens', and so with no 'perfect lens' the pagan is aware that they must choose among flawed choices (including the 'isms' that are subject to much critique). Pagans must choose, because *not* choosing constitutes a silencing, itself flagging further injustice (Lyotard 1988). Nevertheless, while in traditional research it is important to 'remain faithful' to paradigmatic perspectives, multi-paradigm (and pagan) research enables researchers to produce contradictory accounts without excessive concern for internal consistencies – indeed by making interesting patterns *because of inconsistencies.* Thus, to be pagan is to anticipate and to work productively *with* multiplicity, and working productively with multiplicity means that differences are kept in play.

Refusal to be a 'faithful follower' of a particular paradigm is itself an ethical choice. To attempt to invert or replace an idea with a more preferable one is to engage in what has been termed the 'gladiator paradigm': that is, 'an approach to argumentation which insists that the truth of one position is only confirmed by the annihilation of all competing positions' (Rojeck 1998:12). Hence, even though I might somewhat agree with many critiques of various paradigms, I do not feel a need to annihilate them altogether (best leave this for the gladiators). Moreover, to annihilate competing positions would constitute further injustice. Rather, with no 'perfect' paradigm my choices are more about how I participate in the paradigmatic games, develop moves and redefine the rules. Or as Barron suggests, how I might 'match wits, or 'ruse' [...] to make experimental moves within the language games that situate us' (1992:39). So while everything (including Lyotard's thesis) might be dangerous, this is not to deny the potential of everything either – whether this presents problems or possibilities is a case of 'it depends' (Barron 1992). It is not so much about 'being right' as it is about opening spaces where practices and identities might be understood differently. To be pagan is to establish and destabilise at the same time.

Conclusion to chapter

This chapter began by introducing the notion of a pagan approach to research. It drew attention to four resonating aspects of a pagan approach. While this chapter served to name 'the player' it has not addressed what the pagan will 'play'. What is needed now is a 'game' that embodies the various responsibilities (and desires) that have been outlined hitherto. The game that I (a pagan researcher) will play is called *cat's cradle* and this is explained in the following chapter.

Chapter 3 Cat's Cradle

Introduction to chapter

In the first chapter, I argued that little is known about learning provided in NSW neighbourhood centres. In response to this argument, I suggested a need for different understandings of the provision of learning in these organisations from that which are currently available. I proposed that this research project would work towards such a goal by providing three different accounts. However, I also suggested that the aim is not for idiosyncratic accounts that are merely positioned alongside any existing ones, but rather to produce accounts that trouble existing understandings. I then drew attention to the paradoxical situation brought about through the acknowledgement of multiple 'I's. These two issues form a dual problematic for this study.

In the second chapter, I positioned myself as a pagan researcher. I argued that the appeal of pagan research is that it is an ethical approach, and one that seeks to work productively with multiplicity. This is important because the data collection methods of this research are themselves multiple. However, while the data collection methods are multiple, justification of methods is not the principle foci in this chapter. Rather, justification for data collection methods can be found in chapters four, six and eight. The principle focus of this chapter is a concern with the overall conceptual and textual framing of the research: a frame that is drawn from Haraway's analogy of research as a game of *cats' cradle* (1994a).

This chapter begins by providing some background description of various *cat's cradle* projects. Following these introductory descriptions, the focus turns to the 'research as *cat's cradle'* analogy. Two interrelated aspects of research are drawn from this analogy. First, the *patterns* of *cat's cradle* and research are explored. Then, discussion turns to the *moves* of *cat's cradle* and research. In all, this discussion raises some considerations for research, and in particular includes considering how the *patterns* and *moves* of research (by mobilising a *cat's cradle* analogy), frame the methods of a study concerned with neighbourhood centres and the provision of learning. This chapter (and this section) conclude by drawing together some ideas to come

from the discussions and by posing some questions that will be explored in following chapters.

Cat's cradle

Cat's cradle is a children's game, played with string and fingers, which creates string patterns. To play *cat's cradle* children require only a loop of string and (at least) a pair of hands. While *cat's cradle* can be played (and practiced) in isolation, children's enjoyment is more from sharing the patterns – or impressing their peers. Yet it is not a game that children 'win' (Haraway 1994a:69) - rather the object is more to create and re-create. As noted earlier, the game generally begins with some elementary moves that produce the relatively simple and preliminary pattern of 'cat's whiskers', and then with some additional moves the string is rearranged and another pattern is created. Even more moves produce even more patterns, potentially including one that is meant to resemble (in Australia, at least) the 'Sydney harbour bridge'. Aspects of the preliminary moves, and the knots that held 'cat's whiskers' together are incorporated into the latter patterns. And already this description hints at the dynamics of *cat's cradle* and these dynamics will be foregrounded by mobilising Haraway's analogy (1994a).

However, the *cat's cradle* string game is not limited to children and playgrounds. Some adults also declare interest in a *cat's cradle* pursuit (International String Figure Association 2004). Moreover, *cat's cradle* is the object of much scholarly interest. Mathematicians, for example, problematise *cat's cradle* and seek to provide logical explanations for the products of its pursuit (Noble 1995). Anthropologists identify and interpret worldwide instances of *cat's cradle* (Cannarozzi 1995). Teachers incorporate *cat's cradle* into their pedagogy (Murphy 2001), and storytellers mobilise *cat's cradle* to illustrate their tales (Cox and Cox 1997). In other words, *cat's cradle* has a multiple attraction that is not limited by discipline, time or geography.

While some scholarly focus positions *cat's cradle* as the central object of research, Haraway's (1994a) uses *cat's cradle* to explore both the *patterns* and *knots* of research. In doing this, Haraway's work provides a basis for a promising analogy in *this* research. Here though, I concentrate on the idea of

the patterns and *moves* of research. However, before turning to my argument, I turn to Haraway's suggestion that *cat's cradle* is:

> ... about patterns and knots; the game takes great skill and can result in some serious surprises. One person can build up a large repertoire of string figures on a single pair of hands; but the cat's cradle figures can be passed back and forth on the hands of several players, who add new moves in the building of complex patterns. Cat's cradle invites a sense of collective work, of one person not being able to make all the patterns alone. One does not "win" at cat's cradle; the goal is more interesting and more open-ended than that... The game is played around the world and can have considerable cultural significance. Cat's cradle is both local and global, distributed and knotted together (1994:69-70).

Haraway makes use of the *cat's cradle* analogy to describe her 'feminist, multicultural, antiracist, technoscience projects' (1994a:59). These projects involve 'knotting together' several key discourses including feminist, multicultural, antiracist discourses, as well as those from cultural studies and science. She does this to trouble 'the established disorder of finished, deadly worlds' (p.65) putting *cat's cradle* forward as a 'less deadly version' for making knowledge claims (p.69). In a style that readers of Haraway have come to expect, her text is beset with metaphor and skilful commentary that, to use another of her ideas, can make the novice reader 'swerve' (p.60). Casuistry aside, Haraway's notion of *cat's cradle* as an analogy for research provides an ironically simple starting point for the methodology of a pagan researcher keen to produce multiple patterns of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres - through untangling some established knots, mimicking some moves, and developing a series of new ones.

The appeal of a *cat's cradle* analogy is that it brings together two important aspects of research. While these aspects are interrelated, for heuristic ease they are broadly put forward as the patterns and the moves of research. In stating this though, a clear taxonomy of patterns and moves is problematic and must therefore be understood as temporal and textual. However, the importance of their consideration is that it provokes researchers to consider issues that can be unimaginable from other research approaches. Consideration of these issues complicates the cohesiveness of research, but also (and necessarily) contributes to a reflexiveness that first acknowledges the epistemological assumptions underpinning the approach being taken (Usher 1996), as well as drawing attention to various (other) ethical issues. Consideration of the patterns and moves of research increases the appeal for

utilising the *cat's cradle* analogy in this study. This is because the patterns and moves foreground the ongoing dynamics of research, and in doing so provides logic for the methods used in this study.

The 'patterns' of cat's cradle

Patterns are *what* research produces. Haraway's analogy suggests that both *cat's cradle* and research are concerned with producing *patterns* (1994a). For example, the string game of *cat's cradle* produces 'cat's whiskers', 'harbour bridges' and other creations including 'cat's cradle' from which the game draws its (western) name. A string pattern is possible because of the arrangement of string, the knots and the gaps. Likewise, a pattern in research is made possible through arranging practices and statements, and investing in ideas and through leaving stuff out. The acts of research centre around the production of texts, and these texts construct plausible accounts of the world and how it works (Usher, Bryant and Johnston 1997:222). These plausible accounts are understood as 'patterns'. A relevant example from adult education is the 'pattern' of the adult community education sector produced in the *Cinderella Report* (Senate Standing Committee 1991). In order to produce this pattern, the authors 'held on to some ideas and let go of others' or, in discursive terms, through the inclusion of some aspects, others were excluded (NSW neighbourhood centres is one example). It is important to remember that no pattern will ever be all-inclusive or all-encompassing, nor could it be.

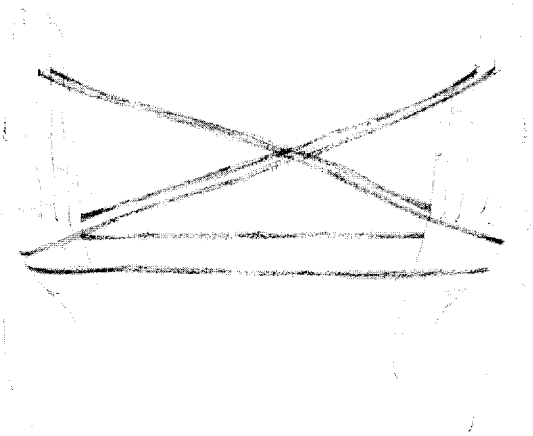


Figure 2: Patterns of *Cat's Cradle*

It is also important to note that patterns produced in research are not reality itself, nor are they a facsimile of reality. However, Hall (1997) suggests that it is through the texts that encompass such patterns that we make sense of the world. The patterns of research are not 'the' truth, but at best can be thought of as *a* truth among various other possible truths. Multiple accounts (patterns) of the world can be (and *are*) produced in research, just as the string game of *cat's cradle* produces more than one pattern (eg, 'whiskers' *and* 'bridges').

Moreover, because there is always the expectation of multiplicity, no pattern is understood as a finite one – there is always another. Usher, Bryant and Johnston, drawing from Lyotard, agree that 'there is no one story to end all others, no grand narrative of all-encompassing explanation, no final theory of everything' (1997:224).

Not only is no final pattern possible, but some suggest that the quest for a monolithic and universal account is also undesirable, and instead call for a proliferation of accounts to undermine attempts to privilege all-encompassing ones (Usher, Bryant Usher, Bryant and Johnston 1997:224). Haraway is also concerned with producing 'interference patterns' in an effort to undermine the 'deadly words' of science, suggesting that her texts present alternate knowledges that undermine universality (1994a:60). Usher, too, writes about recognising 'two sides to every social research text' (1997:41). However, while his point is well-taken it might also be argued that this implies a binary (which I doubt was Usher's intention). Rather, Haraway adds to this argument by suggesting that 'one is two few [and that] two is only one possibility' (1994:82).

Deleuze and Guattari (1987), inspired by Nietzsche, take the idea of multiplicity even further. Employing the analogy of rhizomes to illustrate radical horizontal thought, they describe texts that offshoot in multiple directions or, as they argue, take various 'lines of flight'. Vertical thought, they argue, splits 'truth' from the reality to which it refers (Lechte 1994:103). In response they develop the analogy of rhizomes and trees, to support the case for fostering rhizomatic writing. Unlike rhizomes, arborescent knowledges have foundational root systems and Deleuze and Guattari argue that these tree-like texts have been privileged (1987:24). Rhizomes, on the other hand, spread in multiple direction, cover more ground and make connections between disparate ideas, fields and practices. Moreover, foundational roots of rhizomes are not linear and traceable - they might simply cease pursuing a particular line, restart a previous one or start up a new line (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:9). But while Deleuze and Guattari conceptually differentiate trees and rhizomes, they do not suggest that rhizomes *replace* trees either. Rather, the suggestion is more that arborescent knowledges *can* also have rhizomatic structures – that trees can be connected to rhizomes. In other words, rhizomes are not necessarily

preferable. Not investing in foundational arborescent knowledges does not mean by extension that we do away with them completely. This refusal to invest in a foundational knowledges, yet still work productively with them, is akin to a pagan approach that understands that the 'truths of the world' as multiple... *and* that while anything, and everything, can be considered problematic, there might also be possibilities.

An understanding of truths of the world being multiple contributes to this study a justification for producing more than one pattern of the provision of learning in neighbourhood centres. Moreover, in the string game of *cat's cradle* the patterns are not permanent, but the ongoing mutations of successive patterns contribute to the game's appeal. Similarly the patterns created in research games are not concretised, but can be multiple, fluid and successive – with no version of the world more 'true' than an other. So what will be offered here are three patterns: three (sub)versions of learning provided in neighbourhood centres. Presenting these patterns acknowledge that there is more than one fundamental, all-encompassing way to understand of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres.

While an aim for the majority of research is a unitary and cohesive text, some knowingly present multiple patterns within their research. While Deleuze and Guattari's 'plateaus' holds some appeal of its own, less lexically dense examples drawn elsewhere. Middleton (1995), and Rhodes (2001) for example both include reflexive prose alongside more traditional research patterns. Miller (1993) interrupts a linear study with vignettes of her own situatedness. Petersen (2004) introduces 'Captain Sub-text' whose ongoing narration provides a reflexive alternative that complicates any assumed coherence in her work. Lather's earlier work (1991) provides an example where multiple tales coexist in a singular text. Moreover, in her latter work, Lather further extends the concept of 'rhizomatic practices' (2000:303). Similarly, Edwards, Clarke, Harrison and Reeve (2002) offer 'algorithmic', 'strategic', 'improvised' and 'reflexive' tales (2002). And finally, there is Stronach and MacLure's (1997) example working productively with complexities of research.

In differing ways, the authors above have been attentive to multiplicity and have sought to pay homage to sometimes-contradictory accounts of the world rather than present a reductionalist and myopic perspective. In doing so, they align with Haraway who aims to 'intervene in what can count as a good primal story' (1994a:61). And while these examples of multiple patterns within texts are understood as knotted in various ways, these are different from the way Haraway describes some scientific texts as 'collapsing into each other in knots of extraordinary density' (1994a:63) – an idea akin to 'tree books' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). An approach to research that draws from a *cat's cradle/research* analogy is not simply about presenting multiple pattern/patterns and knotting them together in a singular text. As the examples above begin to demonstrate, it is an approach that not only insists on multiple patterns, but also anticipates and works productively with the tensions created by holding multiple (and often contradictory) accounts together.

While multiple patterns within texts might work to produce 'knots' these need not be viewed as faults to be smoothed out. *Cat's cradle,* says Haraway, 'is about patterns *and* knots' (1994a:69, emphasis added). Yet she also cautions that it is possible to 'end up in a tangled mess' if players of *cat's cradle* do not learn to play well (1994a:69-70). On the one hand, this seems to imply that a tangled mess is an undesirable outcome for research, but it is also worth noting that knots are only an issue for those who invest in linear and untangled tales. Such an investment predominates in the academy: where linear and coherent texts are typically expected from orthodox research (including doctoral theses). However this goal for cohesive theses is problematic. Rather than 'coherency' aiding understanding, it can actually work to limit understandings (Faigley 1992:134). In contrast to attempts to limit inconstancies (read knots), some suggest that researchers can work productively with multiplicities:

> ...we are bombarded and displaced by many conflicting messages, and it is precisely this positioning within a fragmented universe that enables a whole field of possible responses, inventions and new combinations of phrases to open up (Barron 1992:39).

In orthodox texts an aim is to 'iron out inconsistencies' and 'establish coherence' (Potter in Edwards, Clarke, Harrison and Reeve 2002:130): if it is not already clear, let me stress that these *aren't* among my objectives here! Knots might well be productive. Tatting (i.e. lace-making), for example,

produces fine work through the utility of knots, and many a sailor or scout would stand testimony to knots. The patterns of research, as well as the patterns of *cat's cradle,* hold their form through reliance on knots; therefore they are not avoided here. Indeed, when playing *cat's cradle* one typically makes 'cat's whiskers' before attempting 'harbour bridges' because it is only through the utility of elementary knots from preliminary patterns that subsequent patterns are conceivable and then doable. At the same time, it is interesting to ponder why 'whiskers' requires less explanation or expertise than 'bridges', and what this might say about research.

Thinking about the understandings of the world as multiple and contingent in its truths might give an impression that somehow patterns are not worthwhile or are frivolous pastiches that have little to do with 'the real world'. Such a relativist view is not a view I am sympathetic to either. Haraway points out that embedded in the games' serious play is a necessary attention to the 'world making' involved in the research enterprise and rightly suggests that *cat's cradle* is an analogy that draws attention to 'how worlds get made and unmade' (1994:69-70). This coincides with the views of those who argue that research texts 'are implicated in the business of constructing reality' (Usher, Bryant and Johnston 1997:223). Richardson calls this 'wording the world' (1994:923), and Rhodes and Brown agree that 'to write is to create' (2004:8). A *cat's cradle* analogy draws attention to research as a world making enterprise. Texts have effects in the world – they do not reflect but construct reality. That is, they have material consequences. A good example is the effect the Bible has had on creating reality for some. And similarly in education some texts have strong influence over government, policy and fiscal decisions (OEDC 2004a). This idea draws attention to the performativity of patterns of research (Edwards, Clarke, Harrison and Reeve 2002), and so even though *cat's cradle* and research accommodate pluralism, it is in light of the patterns having potential for material consequences – or as others suggests 'being taken very seriously on entering society' (Hassard 1995:128). These ideas support the 'writing up' of neighbourhood centres' provision of learning.

Having understandings of texts that acknowledge multiplicity does not also mean that all accounts are *equivalent.* Many agree that not all interpretations are 'equal' (Habermas in Flowers 2005:19). In the game of *cat's cradle* the

cat's whiskers can be considered a preliminary pattern, while harbour bridges are assured of more playground accolades – among the many patterns that one might make, some are more impressive than others. There is a hierarchy - but this is not a fixed one. If I were to make 'harbour bridges' for my colleagues the reaction would surely differ to the one received should I make them for young nieces. Similarly, the textual patterns of research are received differently in different contexts. The power of scientifically based research is well established (Flax 1990). Yet despite many criticisms 'in practice [positivist and post-positivist research] remains remarkably persuasive and continues to flourish in many aspects of social inquiry' (Crook and Garratt 2004:218). Ironically, rather than 'being declared dead', post-positivist and scientific educational research texts continue to have significant influence on policy making and funding decisions (OECD 2000; Golding, Davies and Volkoff 2001; OECD 2004a; OECD 2004b; OECD 2004c; Yates 2004). This demonstrates the creation (and perpetuation) of a hierarchy where some patterns under certain conditions are more revered than others. However, these understandings of the world are not impervious to change so any discussion of textual hierarchies must also be temporally located. What these ideas contribute to the current study is an awareness of the contemporary utility of some orthodox patterns, as well as imagining the possibilities of mobilising other versions.

Drawing again from Lyotard' (1984), 'knowledge' in a knowledge economy is less subject to questions of 'is it true' as it is with questions about 'how can it be put to use'. Hence, in a sense questions of epistemology are of less importance than 'the uses' and the 'judgements made around the uses' – a point that resonates with ideas of 'mode 2' knowledges (Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotony, Scott and Trow 1994). In other words, it situates the patterns (and importantly the creation and deployment of patterns) not only in the realm of epistemology, but also in the realm of ethics. And it is here that attention now turns to consider the moves of research (made possible through a *cat's cradle* analogy).

The 'moves' of cat's cradle

When thinking about patterns as the *what* of research, then the moves are the *how* and the *why*. While the patterns of research are of much importance, it is also important to remember that they are created as result of a social act. A game *of cat's cradle* is played by social actors and, likewise, 'research' is a social act played by candidates and researchers (to the extent that these are different). The producers of research patterns spend much time deliberating, reading (and re-reading) notes and drafts, editing orphaned paragraphs and in dialogue with a variety of others. Yet most of the deliberations and uncertainties of these acts (the hows) are erased from the final pattern (the what). The processes of writing appear to be a teological development toward a product that privileges design, mastery and the finished object (Faigley 1992). Faigley (1992) suggests these are privileged over chance, exhaustion and process, and to this list I would add 'knowing' and 'not knowing'. Knowing is privileged and rewarded, meanwhile as candidates we strive to conceal our not knowing. The patterns of research typically work to thwart and conceal the inclusion of 'how' beyond the technical matter of collecting data that is neatly corralled in a 'methodology' chapter. The acts of production (the moves) are more-or-less concealed whereas completed texts (and their patterns) are rewarded. Furthermore, attention to the 'whys' of traditional research is often even more inadequate. "*Why do this study?*", the impetus asks: "*To know the world and to write the world*", the research texts answers (in a paragraph or two) - then goes on to write up the world in unproblematic prose – the patterns appear (as if) out of nowhere! Yes, consideration of the moves of research (the hows *and* the whys) promises some fruitful discussion.

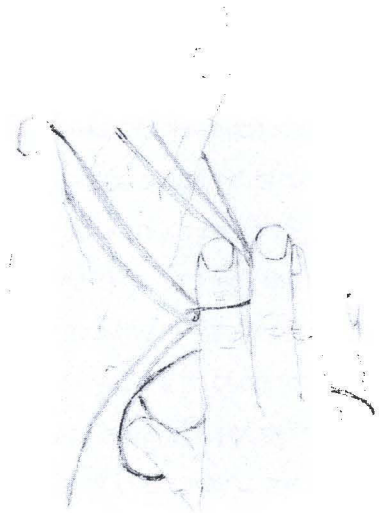


Figure 3: Moves of *Cat's Cradle*

The patterns of *cat's cradle* (and research*) do not* simply appear. *Cat's cradle* is played - it is a process that involves its players making 'moves'. Such moves might entail the judicious selection of threads, holding on to some

strings and letting go of others, or the foregrounding/backgrounding of particular knots – each enacting a move in the game and contributing to the pattern/s it creates. Similarly, research is a process or a series of 'moves' that, as the discussion hitherto explains, entails more than simply representing the world as it really is. Researchers hold on to some threads, they let go of, or bypass others – they foreground/background particular knots. Researchers make moves – it is a dynamic process. Stronach and MacLure discuss this issue and lament the concretisation of patterns, and seek to imagine ways that motion might be written (1997:92). I am suggesting that *cat's cradle* offers promise here.

The moves of research most often include the *mimicking* of others' moves; and the 'repeatability' of scientific research is a good example here. When carrying out the moves to produce their accounts of the world, researchers appropriate (or mimic) the moves that create the patterns of others' games and weave them into their own - just as Haraway's work mimicked a variety of those located in technoscience worlds (1994a:66). And here, for example, several moves of Lyotard's games (1984; 1985; 1988) are imitated, just as a 'version' of Haraway's moves is being imitated now: *version* because no mimesis of Haraway can ever be faithful (Taussig 1993). Repeatability is not possible because any attempt to do so already occurs at a different moment to that from which it is mimicked, hence any production is necessarily and already different.

'World making' is an important move of research (Rhodes and Brown 2004) and one that is made visible through a *cat's cradle* analogy. Haraway puts a caveat on the idea of producing multiple patterns, by the addition of another important point. This is, *cat's cradle* is about '*how* worlds are made and unmade' and further extends this by saying that it is 'in order to participate in the process...' (Haraway1994a:62 my italics). For Haraway, embedded in the game's serious play, is a necessary attention to 'world making' and she raises questions around what is at stake by producing worlds in particular ways (p.70). For Haraway, the moves of critique and of naïve reading are not enough, and neutrality is not an option. *Her* emphasis on world making includes making deliberate choices over producing 'some forms of life and not others' and the reconfiguration of 'what counts as knowledge' (1994:62). In stating this, she is advocating not only being aware of, but also taking

responsibility for, the choices made in the moves of research. This triggers further questioning around the 'whys' of research in addition to the 'hows'. What is the role of the researcher in the 'making up' of 'made up' worlds (Rhodes and Brown 2004: 8)? Why this type of world and not others? There is some agreement that researchers are accountable for the moves they make when creating research patterns (Cherryholmes 1999; Rhodes and Brown 2004). To this end some useful advice is offered by Cherryholmes (1999). While Cherryholmes' argument is primarily about the pragmatic *reading* of texts 'with an eye toward consequences' (1999), the same can be said about the production of texts – that is, accounts of the world created in research (patterns) can be created with 'an eye towards consequences'.

Researchers make choices - 'there are always choices' (Davis 2007) - but choosing requires judgement. Judgements are always being made in the moves of research (Lyotard and Thebaud 1985). Bringing such judgements to the fore further encourages the pagan researcher to take responsibility for the texts they produce – to 'come clean' about the worlds they privilege. Rather than claiming research texts to be an objective representation of the world independent of the 'knower', *cat's cradle* is reflexive in that it is mindful that first research *is* a 'world building' enterprise, and furthermore as such there is need to justify why building one type of 'world' is preferable to another. At the same time the reflexive moves of *cat's cradle* are not an end in themselves, or what Haraway might consider as the 'cosmic interior decorating of post-pomo essays' (1994a:65), rather they are viewed as 'means to defuse the bombs of the established disorder and itself-invisible subjects and categories' (p.63).

An awareness of judgement is one thing, but criterion for making them is another. Lyotard and Thebaud agree that judgements are made, indeed suggesting that they cannot be avoided (1985). But as earlier pointed out, a recurring theme is Lyotard's suggestion that judgements are made in the absence of universal criteria (Lyotard 1984; Lyotard and Thebaud 1985; Lyotard 1988). In Lyotard's view the postmodern has no universal criteria for making judgements, rather there is a proliferation of criteria. Bauman (1993) agrees that there is abundance of criteria, but also argues that this is not justification for shying away from the business of making choices. While on

the one hand making choices under such conditions might be overwhelming, on the other it is also possible to understood this as liberating and enabling:

> To contemplate what remains to be done is to experience an ineradicable tension between pleasure and pain: the pleasure that comes from always being able to conceive of possibilities beyond what already exists, and the pain accompanying the realization that whatever exists now never quite attains the horizon of the conceivable. Ultimately, whether we are energized or paralysed by this sentiment depends on where we choose to place the emphasis (Barron 1992:39).

The consideration of the moves of research that was discussed above draws attention to an interesting aspect of the *cat's cradle* analogy of research. This is the recognition that the moves of research, indeed even the selection of moves over others, is less about relativism and objectivism than it is about ethics. Questions about whether the 'what of the text' (the pattern) is 'valid' or 'true' are overridden by questioning 'how' the patterns hold together, and even then whether it might fulfil its pragmatic purpose - and through extension 'why' this purpose is an important one to begin with. This last question is perhaps the most salient, and works to extend epistemological understandings to ones of ethics as well. As Smith suggests 'the problem of criteria must be conceptualised, not in epistemological terms, but rather in practical and moral terms' (1993:3) Again this resonates with a knowledge economy concerned with the utility of knowledge, but at the same time encourages researchers to make judgement about the possible utilisation.

Preparing to conclude preparations

So what we have now is an understanding of the moves and patterns of research that places importance on the 'why' of research as much as the 'what' and the 'how'. Understanding the move of judgement against multiple criteria makes *cat's cradle* an advantageous game for the pagan researcher. Moreover in light of the dual problematic, *cat's cradle* is an interesting and promising game for the just pursuits of the pagan. The pagan accepts researchers 'play several games' (Lyotard and Thebaud 1985:61), moreover pagan players of *cat's cradle* create their patterns cognisant of their moves.

So I draw to the end of a first section, and what do I (profess to) know? Well, I know that *cat's cradle* is played by social actors... *and* for many different reasons. The impetus of children to engage with *cat's cradle* compared to

that of mathematicians (Noble 1995; Murphy 2001), anthropologists (Cannarozzi 1995; Escudeiro 2003) or pagans will vary. Similarly, research is undertaken for many reasons. However, reasons for undertaking research (and playing *cat's cradle*) are often purged from the completed texts or simply assumed.

'*Why do this study?',* the impetus asks... to know the world a researcher answers – then 'moves' on to 'write up' findings in unproblematic prose. Yet the question of '*why do this study?'* is worth asking time and time again, to help articulate understandings of the moves, and of making choices and judgements, as well as the criteria employed to make them. While the reasons why researchers engage in research might include to know the world they might also include: to change the world, to become an authorised knower, because the university is funded to do it, because it is my job, or even simply because it is pleasurable. More likely, any answer to this question is a hybrid of these that shifts between and within contexts. Not only will the pagan recognise this, but even 'faithful' researchers might be surprised.

If I ask myself 'why do *this* study?' the answer depends greatly on who is asking, why and where. The answers given to inquisitive friends at a BBQ differing from those given to academic supervisors, or to those provided in subsequent chapters of theses. What one wants to produce texts for is a determining factor in what one produces. It is through the important move of continually asking such a question, and pursuing the various 'lines of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) that the question's responses promote, brought about through an understanding of being pagan, that research methods for this study are justified:

> *"Why do this study?"*, the impetus asks.
> "To *know* the world, and to *write* the world", the research claims.
>
> *"Why do this study?",* the impetus asks again.
> "To become an authorised knower", answers the candidate.
>
> *"Why do this study?",* the impetus asks yet again.
> "To *right* the world", the practitioner declares.
>
> *"Why do this study?"*... asks the impetus once more.
> "Because there is pleasure in playing", the pagan adds.

... *"Well then, what worlds do you privilege, and who are your gods?"*

Conclusion to chapter

This chapter began by introducing the analogy of research as a game of *cat's cradle* and a game that is helpful in satisfying the ethical dimensions of pagan research. Furthermore, it suggested that with the associated notions of moves and patterns, *cat's cradle* is a promising way to conceptualise, and textualise a thesis. The chapter concluded by raising several questions and proposing some answers around the impetus of *this* work. This discussion marks the end of the 'preparations section' and now leads into the actual 'playing'.

PLAYING (section two)

This point marks the beginning of the second section of the thesis. The first section prepared the space for the research game I (following Haraway) call *cat's cradle*, and now this second section sets about *playing* the game. This 'Playing' section forms the bulk of the thesis and is presented across six chapters (Chapters four through to nine inclusive). Chapters four, six and eight work with aspects of identity that impact on the production of this text, while chapters five, seven and nine present patterns of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres.

The first of three moves begin in chapter four (*Pagan becomings)* by teasing out the notion of becoming an authorised knower. In doing so I trouble simplistic notions of becoming a professional doctor, indeed troubling an assumption that I might actually become. However, the discussion draws out criteria for a preliminary pattern of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres: in particular the importance of reviewing literature.

In chapter five (*The cat's whiskers*) I present the first of three patterns of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. This locates the overall study in contemporary literature, as well as locating the practices of neighbourhood centres in a broader socio-political context. This discussion serves to initiate readers to not only neighbourhood centres and their various contexts, but also to the wider issues at stake.

Chapter six (*Tragic rightings*) explores the idea of 'righting' the world. It explores the tragic pursuit of attempting to write the world. Through noting the potential of writing and policy for righting, it stages a case for the production of a stringent pattern of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. It argues that 'statistics' understood as a legitimising practice rather than a trouble free science, might be mobilised to legitimate other practices.

Having made an argument for a stringent pattern, chapter seven *(A string(ent) pattern*) presents such a version of the provision of learning in

NSW neighbourhood centres. Drawing empirical data from survey research, it makes various propositions about the scope of this activity.

Chapter eight (*Pleasurable playing*) explores the pleasure derived from textual production and stages a case for the co-production of another pattern of the provision of learning in neighbourhood centres. In particular it looks at the potential of linking various ideas.

And finally, this section concludes in chapter nine (*Bridges*) where I present the third and final version of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. This account draws from interview data, and frames the work of centres in terms of Delors' four pillars of learning (1996). The result of this is a rich description of the provision of learning in centres.

Let the game(s) begin!

Chapter 4 Pagan Becomings

"Why do this study?" the impetus asks.
"To know the world, and to write the world" the research answers.
"To become an authorised knower" the candidate adds.

Introduction to chapter

I have been seduced by the rhetoric of 'Backing Australia's Ability' (Commonwealth of Australia 2004) and desire becoming an authorised knower in the context of 'the knowledge economy' (Barnacle 2005) – a legitimate desire of positioning myself favourably in the market. The award I desire is a professional doctorate, yet such acknowledgement of a desire for becoming seldom draws attention. *"Why do this study?"*, the impetus asks. *"To know the world and to write the world"* the research answers. Meanwhile the desire of becoming mobilizes by stealth. I am suggesting that desire for becoming is a move that contributes much to the production of professional doctors (and their theses).

As the previous chapter argued, *cat's cradle* and research are about patterns *and* moves and with this understanding a chapter on becoming is warranted. This chapter is the first of three 'move' chapters. The preliminary moves made in this chapter provide the 'how' and the 'why' for not only a preliminary pattern of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres (the 'what') that is presented in chapter five, but also a move that contributes to the thesis post-chapter five.

I begin this chapter by troubling the notion of becoming. Drawing initially from Barnacle (2005) I first argue for two different understandings of 'becoming'. The irony is that despite making much ado about the differences between these understandings, they are mutually constitutive: the possibility of

actually becoming a professional doctor (in an instrumental sense) rests on a notion of becoming that suggests I never will actually become. Hence, an ironic becoming - ironic because of incongruity between what is generally expected to happen (becoming an authorised knower), and what actually happens (never actually knowing). I am calling this a pagan becoming.

Despite the ironic notion that a pagan becoming means I will never 'really be' a knower, this chapter then sets out to explore how I might instrumentally become an authorised knower. I do this by discussing professional doctoral programs in an Australian context. This discussion looks toward the criteria that candidates for these awards must satisfy in order to 'become'. I go on to suggest that an instrumental becoming requires a performance of knowing and writing, which themselves are problematic. I further suggest that the primary site for this performance is within 'the thesis'. While the chapter focuses on an instrumental becoming, the notion of a pagan becoming further complicates the notion of successful candidature for professional doctors. However, while these complications are acknowledged, I conclude the chapter by stating my quasi compliance to the criteria of an instrumental becoming.

In keeping with the *cat's cradle* game plan, the moves of this chapter are (re)taken up and (re)played in ensuing chapters of this work (although not always in the same manner). With this in mind, the discussion presented here is not intended to be the final word on becoming a professional doctor (if ever it could). Indeed, discussion here fleetingly focuses on only a few aspects. Nevertheless, in its state of imperfectability, this chapter is included in acknowledgement of the importance of becoming (and knowing and writing) in the production of professional doctors (and of theses)... *a pagan becoming to be sure.*

Becoming and being

Instrumental becomings

The notion of 'becoming' a professional doctor (or an authorised knower) is a slippery one, yet in one sense it appears simple enough when understood as 'instrumental' (Barnacle 2005):

1. I am not a professional doctor
2. I do what is required
3. I am a professional doctor.

This 'becoming' is a transformation from (1) a point of 'not being' to (3) one of 'being'. 'Becoming' (2) marks the transition, or as Barnacle (2005) puts it, 'a movement or orientation from one state of being to another' (p.179). There is an element of truth in this, in that (fingers crossed) I will earn the right to call myself, and to be called, (to *be*) Doctor Donna.

Becoming Doctor in this sense is possible if I convinced gatekeepers that I have indeed, 'done what was required'. Doing 'what is required' assumes understanding 'what is required', which is not as easy as it implies (Hunt 2006). Those who seek clarification might turn to 'how to' type texts. While there are numerous versions of these texts available (eg. Anderson and Poole 1994), most posit a checklist approach where writing is a step that comes after the 'real research' is done. Writing is one of the final 'milestones' that a candidate passes on her way to her final (doctoral) destination.

An instrumental becoming is a naturalised understanding of becoming an authorised knower. It is about reaching a final (doctoral) destination. As such, 'journey' metaphors are popular among candidates and among those interested in research degrees (Lander 2000; Miller and Brimicombe 2004). Although, not matter how complicated the journey, these texts often fall short of problematising 'the destination'. They are premised on an instrumental becoming. That is, a 'becoming' that will become 'be-ing'. In other words, they are premised on ontology of being (ie, being = is) and as such they privilege a presupposed destination (ie, 'Doctor Donna' in this case): this is an *instrumental* becoming (Barnacle 2005). One. Two. Three. Donna is.

Let's make no mistake: I desire this becoming. I want this destination. I want *to be*.

Erotic becomings

In contrast to instrumental becomings is the notion of *erotic* becomings. A second argument about 'becoming' suggests that I will never (quite ever) 'become' (that is, *be* a knower). Barnacle (2005) makes a convincing argument that suggests doctoral destinations are never fully realised. After pointing out the etymology of philosophy as 'love for wisdom', she suggests that this love remains unrequited and necessarily so. She suggest that candidates and philosophers alike only ever reach a 'proximity *to* wisdom':

> The orientation of desire must remain towards wisdom, not merely closeness to wisdom. While closeness to wisdom or truth may be all we can ever hope for, the striving must be towards wisdom none the less... this is not the philosopher as rational subject, internally driven by rational ego to seek enlightenment. Instead, this philosopher is compelled, or seduced, by glimpses (Barnacle 2005:184).

While the 'love for wisdom' necessitates philosopher's perpetual striving, Barnacle points out that this is not a negative (2005:184). She suggests that such a becoming enables candidates to engage in 'serious' doctoral studies while also acknowledging the problematic status of knowing and knowledge itself (Barnacle 2005:187). This is what she calls an erotic becoming. Unlike instrumental becomings that are predicated on possibility of 'becoming -> is' through 'knowing', an *erotic* becoming is partial and contingent on 'glimpses of wisdom' (Barnacle 2005:184) – in other words, never quite 'really' knowing.

To acknowledge an erotic becoming is to accept and to contemplate the limitations of knowing - it is about becoming aware of *not* knowing - or ever 'really' knowing - rather than an instrumental transition from a 'not knower' to one who knows (an authorised knower). Wisdom, in an erotic account of becoming, while conceived as a destination is actually a 'no-place'. But again, an erotic awareness of not knowing should not be conflated with being unproductive or inconsequential. The erotic functions akin to power:

> The very word *erotic* comes from the Greek word *eros*, the personification of love in all its aspects – born of Chaos, and personifying creative power (Lorde 1993:341).

The *erotic*, as Lorde is suggesting above, is a force that compels. It is a force that powers, that motions – that moves. Becoming, is a verb that never becomes 'being' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:239), and an erotic doctoral

becoming produces a knower that never 'really' knows but is seduced by glimpses never the less.

Pagan (ironic) becomings

Categorising becoming as either instrumental or erotic is helpful to some degree. Yet categorisation can also be dangerous. It is not helpful to fix these ideas about becoming in an oppositional sense without also drawing attention to tensions, and how these becomings are imbricated. Categories suggest clean-cut delineations and there are tensions between instrumental and erotic becomings. Erotic becomings may work against the instrumental, but they also work through and alongside them. An erotic becoming enables movement that will never quite ever reach (a problematic) 'wisdom' (hence, a 'becoming' that will never become 'being'). Yet this *erotic* becoming will contribute to what I might profess to know (or *not* know) – even if I (instrumentally) 'become'. Further, while instrumental becomings may work against the erotic, they might also work through and alongside the erotic as well.

The interplay between instrumental and erotic becomings constitute a pagan becoming. This is where the candidate both 'becomes' *and* 'never is' (that is, not quite an authorised knower). A pagan becoming is one where the candidate simultaneously 'knows', and 'not knows'. While it is 'true' that I may indeed become Doctor Donna – the authorised knower (in an instrumental sense), I will not quite 'be' a knower in the sense that I can truly know anything (an erotic sense).

Not knowing was easy enough as an undergraduate, but can an authorised knower *not know*? Perhaps (k)not knowing is the most the candidate might hope for – that is, knowing that she has come to know in very particular ways, and knowing that what she professes to know is contingent on how it holds together, and in relation to how others' (knot) knowing holds together. In other words, perhaps *being* an authorised knower is a way to validate (k)*not* knowing, and not becoming. This pagan becoming is a less pretentious 'knowing' that accepts limitations, contingencies and partiality (and keeps difference in play). To this end, Barnacle suggests:

> The erotic nature of doing philosophy, or of learning, foregrounds the problematical status of knowledge... If Doctoral candidates are to become researchers within a knowledge economy, we need them to do so in such a way that they are engaged, not just with questions concerning the application of knowledge, but also its problematical status (2005:187).

While I have some scope to lament the problematic status of knowledge and unrequited desires for (erotic) becomings, I am mindful that being admitted to the status of 'Doctor' also requires an instrumental becoming. There is an irony in that any instrumental becoming that comes from *this* pagan game of *cat's cradle* will be partially indebted to my performance of an erotic (k)not knowing. However, the irony of both becoming and not becoming is not to be bemoaned. The very usefulness of irony is in 'its capacity to keep ideas in *play* constantly moving, jumping about, making trouble' (McWilliam 2000:174).

With this said then, it is with a bittersweet sense that I (re)focus on troubling some other ideas around becoming a professional doctor. While henceforth I appear to be leaning towards an *instrumental* becoming, as the discussion above shows, an understanding of *erotic* becoming serves to trouble a fixed destination: an understanding serving to warrant an adjective of 'pagan'. A pagan becoming does not preclude a troubling of the very particular game that positions me as candidate. Here then, moved by a desire for an instrumental becoming (without eschewing the erotic), I turn to explore how a pagan researcher might best 'become'.

Professional doctoral programs

Professional doctorates are relatively new in an Australian context. They emerged in Australia in the early 1990s as a response to (and a symptom of) educational reforms (Lee 1999). As knowledge production becomes more distributed, universities have introduced these awards to maintain their role in the official licensing of knowers – perhaps too, in attempt to accommodate increasing diversity in demand for doctoral education (Neumann 2002). The introduction of these awards in Australia coincide with agendas of credentialisation that are increasingly evident in many OECD countries (Marginson 1993; Marginson 1997). Furthermore, these awards serve as a higher (if not the highest) level of qualification for the professional and this is evident when reading a description of the professional doctoral program at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS):

> The Doctor of Education is designed to meet the needs of practitioners by providing extended advanced study for those whose background and experience are appropriate for leadership (eg teachers, trainers, administrators, planners, managers and policy advisers in both school and post-school education, working in government, industrial, commercial or community settings) (UTS 2005a).

Here the suggestion is that professionals with 'appropriate experiences and background' can extend their standing through participating in a university program of 'advanced study'. However, in order to first be accepted into the program, potential candidates must present their experiences as 'appropriate' and as such that they possess leadership 'potential'. This can be tricky for professionals whose 'experience' may not seem 'appropriate' given the overt concern for specifically academic criteria. At UTS, the criteria for entry into the professional doctoral program is premised on those traditionally associated with an academic identity. This is evident in the application process that elicits information around aspects such as whether the applicant holds first class honours, university medals, or publications - even the referees' reports are of the academic variety (UTS 2005a). While there is some space to include information regarding the applicant's other experiences, potential candidates (with 'appropriate experience') must appropriate the discourses of the academy and frame their experience in terms of research capacity - thus beginning the long process of reinscribing themselves both *as* a knower, and *worthy of becoming*, an authorised knower.

Related to the general aims of the professional doctoral programs is the stated purpose of the award, which the academy purports as increasing the research capacity of the particular field/s of professional practice. The professional doctoral program at UTS is said to enhance:

> ...the practitioner's capacity to question, analyse, critique and develop the profession and its practices. It is a research-based degree since its purpose is to assist professionals in the field to become aware of the relationship between research and their professional activities in areas such as policy development and appraisal, innovation and administration (UTS 2005b).

Arguably these awards have a dual appeal. First they appear to appeal to those who aspire to become highly positioned in their professional field of practice. Next they seek to appeal to the field/s of practice themselves that (it is assumed) have an associated desire to increase research capacity. While

seeking higher status employment was among the program's appeal for me, an associated (and assumed) desire to increase research capacity was not an initial concern. While these awards are understood and thus emphasised by the university as being *research* degrees (Lester 2004:761), the subtly of the distinction may be lost on those who desire becoming more highly credentialed.

Candidates may not see themselves as consistent with the way prevailing discourses situate them (Barnacle 2005:181). One empirical project confirms this observation through finding that the foremost motive for enrolling in professional doctoral programs over a traditional doctoral program was the sense of community it offered candidates (Clarke 1996). In this study there was no mention of motivational desire to increase research capacity in a particular field of practice. While this aim may or may not be the case more widely, the awards seem to have appeal because professional doctoral programs have been on the increase in Australia, and it appears that this is particularly so in the broad field of education (Brennan 1997; McWilliam, Taylor, Thompson, Green, Maxwell, Wildy and Simmons 2002; Boud and Tennant 2006). It is more likely that 'changing the field' is a more motivating factor (Malfroy and Yates 2003:128) ... yet, notions of 'the field', as well as 'the candidate' that desires change, may be more problematic than first imagined.

Hybrid candidates and fields, but hybrid theses?

Professional doctoral candidature is marked by hybridity and a first example is found by considering some contradictions in how candidates are represented and recruited. Candidates must have *potential for* as well as *already have* a leadership role: they are both not quite positioned as well as already positioned in their field. In the abovementioned example, candidates are purported to be of leadership material (but not quite); there appears no requirement that they already be. However, the university's handbook suggests the program is aimed at, 'senior practitioners', and this further suggests that candidates are already highly positioned in their field (UTS 2005c). This, in turn, suggests leadership practices are something the candidate might already be engaged in. The literature concerned with the complexities of Australian professional doctoral programs concurs with the enrolment of *already* highly positioned practitioners (Clarke 1996; Maxwell

and Shanahan 1996; Lee 1999). Therefore, a potential candidates' identity is a hybrid construed of a *desire for* high status, as well as *already of* high status.

Even further examples of the contradictory and hybrid identities of professional doctoral candidates can be seen in the commentary of academic researchers interested in the broad area of doctoral research. In this literature professional doctoral programs are understood as hybrid sites that coalesce disparate fields and practices. Many of these discussions present their arguments in one or more of the following dichotomies:

(field of) research	(field of) practice
researcher	practitioner
university	workplace
theoretical	applied research

Professional doctoral candidates are understood as enrolled in hybrid degrees located across these dichotomies. However, while some attempts are made to trouble any homogeneous notions of the left hand column, there are few (if any) similar attempts to trouble the right when considering professional doctoral programs. Rather, professional doctorates are more often understood as bridging a divide between the academy and (field of) practice (Lockhart and Stablein 2002). While some claim context of the professional is central to professional doctorates (Maxwell and Shanahan 1996), notions of 'the field' do not fully acknowledge the complexities of what these 'fields' might actually be - although an exception is noted by Lester who draws attention to the 'messes' and 'wicked problems' of professional fields (2004:764).

Using my own (hybrid) field/s as an example begins to demonstrate how notions of 'the field' are far more complex. I have already pointed out that I straddle (the margins of) the fields of adult community education *and* community development - so a simple notion of a homogeneous field is already troubled. Given the increasing phenomena of what might be described as 'portfolio work', the troubling of a singular 'field of practice' is even further compounded considering a recent relocation within UTS as a casual lecturer, as well as being employed to do some research work in a key university research centre. I am distributed across multiple 'fields' and this

troubles homogenous definitions of what my professional practice, workplace *and* practitioner experience might actually be. Recognising this hybridity suggests the need for candidates to develop equally hybrid practices.

The suggestion of hybridity of 'professional practice' however raises questions about another (perhaps the most obvious) dichotomy evident in literature concerned with higher degrees. This is the dichotomy of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Professional Doctorate: the latter construed as the other of PhD. It seems that while there is little agreement on what the Doctor of Education (EdD) or professional doctorates more generally might be, most discussions take the more familiar PhD as its starting point (Brennan 1997:75). They are 'differently rigorous', as others would say (McWilliam, Taylor, Thompson. Green, Maxwell, Wildy and Simmons 2002:103). There is a sense of 'equal but different' and an example of this 'equality' is that at UTS, from enrolment to examination (with the exception of coursework and thesis length), much the same 'rules' apply regardless of whether the candidate is a PhD or an EdD student (UTS 2005c). Indeed, it seems that the similarities between professional doctorates and PhDs that are more obvious than the differences (Neumann 2005).

One important similarity (a manifestation of constructing professional doctorates in the image of the PhD) is the requirement of candidates to write a thesis. With few exceptions, the production of a thesis is a typical requirement of Australian professional doctoral programs (Clarke 1996; Maxwell and Shanahan 1996; Lee 1999; Yates 2004). Indeed, this requirement is one that prompts the thesis you are reading this very moment. In other words, my becoming a professional doctor is centred on producing this thesis, and this production requires a particular type of performance (Edwards, Clarke, Harrison and Reeve 2002). But what is it that I must perform? And, perhaps more importantly, how should I perform it? I believe the answer to this is that I must perform 'knowing' – I must write. An instrumental becoming requires the performance of knowing through writing: without the performance there is no such becoming. Similarly, writing alone is not enough; becoming a professional doctor requires me to write *knowingly*. In other words, in order to become an authorised knower, I must perform 'knowing the world' by 'writing the world'. Yet many suggest that writing itself is a way of knowing – a way of inquiry - and *not* a way of telling (Richardson

2004). Nevertheless, I must produce a text, but not just any type of text - a thesis.

There are some tensions though for a professional doctoral candidates' thesis production. As suggested above, professional doctoral programs are new in Australian universities. Yet while they are new sites for textual production, they are premised on older traditions that might not necessarily fit with contemporary notions of a 'knowledge economy'. Professional doctoral programs complicate any notions of (imagined?) linearity. Candidates for these awards are more likely to be engaged in, and require training for, producing a diversity of textual products that transgress the boundaries of traditional PhDs in order to enter discussions between and among hybrid 'fields of practice'. Dissemination of the products of professional doctors' research is not limited to academic journals and audiences (although the same might be said for contemporary academics). In which case, rhizomatic practices rather than lengthy and sustained arguments may be more appropriate for such becomings – rhizomes, you may recall, from chapter three, 'foster connections between fields' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:14) whereas linearity suggests 'pruning'.

If professional doctoral programs are understood as a new or different type of 'ceremonial place' (Freadman 1994), then they might also require new and different types of practices (both textual and methodological): practices that privilege 'lines of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) rather than coherency grounded in linearity and wholeness. This is an interesting thought, but it is not without its own danger. There are criteria to be met: 'guardians' at the door (Usher, Bryant and Johnston 1997:214).

The criteria and the performance of the criteria

Becoming a professional doctor requires candidates ('not quite' knowers) to produce a thesis that meets some constructed criteria. Intellectual rigor and systematic inquiry for example are highly prized, and are purported to align their author with the conventions of academic writing for the purposes of being acceptable to 'guardians of the domain' (Usher, Bryant and Johnston 1997:214). Sandercock (1998) sums this up well by saying that 'all professions tend to draw tight boundaries around their identities for the

purpose of staking out their knowledge claims, for quality control, and to establish a 'closed shop" (1998:224). In this way the rules of production can be understood as prescribed by the community and enacted in its practices. However, while subversives from within may be tolerated, some warn that 'transgressives' or 'barbarians' may be considered 'dangerous outsiders' - thus causing serious jeopardy to their 'becoming' (Scott and Usher 1995:295) – *gulp!* While what constitutes 'a thesis' might be arguable – there remain some powerful and dominant ideals even despite orthodox theses having come under challenge (Hodge 1999).

The theses of professional doctorates are even more likely to differ from those of PhD candidates. A United Kingdom study concerned with finding appropriate criteria for practice-based doctoral texts found that their academic markers criticized professional doctoral theses for 'lacking coherence', among other things (Winter, Griffiths and Green 2000:33). Yet these texts were simultaneously applauded for the way the 'practitioner-inquirers' (notice that they are not quite '*researchers*') were able to grasp the scope and wider significance of their topic, and had multifactorial approaches that made good use of seemingly tangential aspects (Winter, Griffiths and Green 2000:35).

The explicit criteria for a successful professional doctoral thesis at UTS (with little difference between PhD or EdD – which lends weight to my point) focuses on the three broad areas; content, knowledge and presentation (UTS 2005c). Cogency and succinctness in conceptual work and problem identification are prime concerns to do with content, as is some indication that the writer has covered 'the field'. Importantly, the content must also demonstrate that the thesis offers some substantial contribution to 'the field' (UTS 2005c). In regard to knowledge, the thesis must 'exhibit' this while also demonstrating clear thinking, a mastery of techniques, and it must be written with authority demonstrating knowledge of the discipline (UTS 2005c). And finally, criterion concerned with presentation is concerned with structure and what Yates describes as 'hyper-correct grammar' (2004:73).

But this criteria is problematic, and perhaps even more so for professional doctoral candidates. Cogency, for example assumes a rational and coherent argument. In contrast to this is the rhizome that, while not satisfying criteria of

coherency, seems to offer potential. First, rhizomatic writing practices can offer potential for increasing critical understanding of the 'messiness' and 'wicked problems' of professional fields (Lester 2004:746). They might also increase understanding of research *and* the production of research texts. Moreover, they might contribute to research outputs' capacity to be more broadly disseminated among diverse audiences:

> ....[we] need to consider the whole spectrum of activity to which this 'doctoral' role might apply, beyond the traditional institutions of academic journal publishing [...]. 'Publishable' and 'originality' are (or ought to be) linked to concepts. Of course, we need to ask, 'Original for whom? Publishable where? (Winter,Griffiths and Green 2000:35).

This point has been taken up in the United Kingdom but not, it seems, in Australia as yet. Yet rhizomatic writing may be more *au fait* with professional doctorates than the capacity to produce internal coherency, given professional doctors are destined for careers more likely to transgress the boundaries of seemingly homogenous 'fields'.

Furthermore, covering 'the field' in addition to contributing to 'the field' assumes a homogeneity that has already been shown to be problematic. In my own example I need to ask which 'field' ought I cover, and to which field ought I aspire contributing. I have settled on three (one being too few), but this is more to do with word limits and energy than possibilities. Similarly a mastery of technique limits opportunities to explore multiple techniques - whereas, familiarity with a range of techniques might benefit professional doctors. Again I turn to Richardson who suggests that 'learning alternate ways of writing increases our repertoires, increases the numbers and kinds of audiences we might reach' (1994:936). If candidature is understood as an apprenticeship, then there may be merit in exploring a range of techniques – and particularly given the hybridity of the professional doctoral program and the various audiences for which candidates might write.

Writing the 'knowing the field'

An instrumental becoming means I must produce a thesis that speaks with authority about knowing a particular aspect of the world – even if writing with authority stands in contrast to an erotic becoming that suggests 'not quite' an authority. Nevertheless, a common way to perform knowing is to discuss what others have written about the topic. Indeed, reviewing 'the literature' or

'the field' is an anticipated move in most research games. It is a move that suggests that the researcher knows 'the field' (Petersen 2004). It is one that serves to demonstrate 'a scholarly and objective' overview of the field (Edwards, Clarke, Harrison and Reeve 2002:136). Taking up this orthodox strategy of performing knowing by reviewing literature serves to aid an instrumental becoming, as well as confirming the status of the 'guardians at the door' and maintaining the orthodoxy of practices of candidature (Edwards, Nicoll, Solomon and Usher 2004:97). However, writing one's knowing of 'the field' is problematic for the candidate if it presupposes a homogenous 'field' to overview, and then that this (imagined) field is knowable to begin with. Yet while I suggest that the performance of knowing the field is as much about constructing the field, I acknowledge that this presents a new set of challenges.

The idea of (ever *really*) knowing is problematic. Uncertainty around knowing (although not entirely unwelcome) has provoked new forms of scholarship, but these seem at a cross purpose with orthodox practices of candidature. Knowing, in the practices of candidature, is privileged and rewarded (Faigley 1992) - meanwhile candidates' strive to conceal their (k)not knowing (which I imagine is a significant part of most of our productions). Deviation from orthodox practices risks the candidate being refused entry to the academy: that is, if their thesis 'lacks unity', or is 'excessively concerned with its own production' (Hodge 1999:113-114). Yet these same practices might also be understood as opening up possibilities for a type of 'pagan knowing' that encompasses a more hesitant, partial (Lather 1991), as well as for ethical scholarship (Simons and Usher 2000; Usher 2000): through pagan becomings.

With that said, a successful thesis is one that participates in orthodox writing practices (Bizzell 1992:196). To be granted right of entry to the academy, the processes of research are 'written up' into objects of fate for the candidate. A thesis demonstrates that the author 'has done the appropriate research, performed convincing analysis, come up with original conclusions, and put it all together in a coherent narrative' (Luey 2004:133). So while this writing, is clearly part of the production, it is the finished product (ie, the thesis or the 'coherent narrative') that is prized (Faigley 1992). This is instrumental writing. With an emphasis on the products of research, the processes of candidature

(the writing) are overlooked. Little attention is paid to the proliferation of other texts involved in the production. Among the texts typically missing are the texts of frustration and excitement, of tears and smiles and 'knowing nods' during late afternoon conversations with overworked supervisors or with peers in writing groups - absent too are bodies, gendered and classed, erased are biographies and desires. Missing too, are the interruptions and contextual realities that coexist with the products produced for academic judgement – yet these are no less 'true' than others.

These texts write the writing and inscribe the writer – the candidate. She inscribes herself (as doctor) as an effect of her various writings, even if this much of this writings appears absent from the thesis. Rhodes and Pullen (2008 in press) might call these 'dirty texts' that have been 'cleansed' but no matter how much cleansing occurs, traces of dirt remain. Meanwhile an authorised bibliography, which adds the final punctuation to her production, overlooks the genesis of much of her thesis and appears oblivious to the possibility of less controlled 'collusions' (Lee 1997).

Yes, writing (evidencing) 'knowing' generally requires a cohesive text. To achieve a cohesive text means unwieldy ideas, that refuse silencing, need to be erased. Yet, the erasure of alternate ideas for the sake of cohesiveness seems counter productive to the criterion of rigour and systematic inquiry used to benchmark the production of a thesis (and decide my fate). Rather than 'coherency' aiding understanding, it can actually work to limit understandings (Faigley 1992:134).

Becoming an authorised knower and this game of *cat's cradle*

On the one hand I have staged a case for rhizomatic writing, on the other I have drawn attention to some criteria for instrumental becomings. Rhizomatic writing practices are a pagan strategy and one that I will later suggest enables the strategic deployment of (some) positivist ideas. Yet thinking about *knowing* and *writing* in light of an instrumental *becoming* suggests to me that one could do far worse than adhere to some orthodox *rules for play* espoused by the academy. These rules for play are presupposed - then

again, so too are counter moves – there remains some scope to make experimental moves in the games that situate us (Barron 1992:32).

I do not choose to risk being dubbed 'a transgressive barbarian' (Scott and Usher 1995:295) or being rejected by 'the guardians' (Usher, Bryant and Johnston 1997:214). I desire an instrumental becoming as much as appreciate an erotic becoming, and therefore my first pattern (the following chapter) makes use of some traditionally anticipated moves – be it without utopian purchase. Perhaps Parker's advice is useful here:

> The gamesman's [sic] art is to take the laws and customs of his [sic] game and then turn these rules upon themselves... to work to the gamesman's [sic] advantage (Parker 1997:68).

As an anticipated move, I draw data for my first pattern of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres from available literature and documentary sources. I am a pagan researcher after all: borrowing, adopting and adapting! I take heed of the 'servants of clarity' and endeavour to keep an 'uncluttered and sufficiently linear plot line' (Bem 2002:17-19). While I may appear somewhat mendacious in the name of becoming, there are other consequences to presenting the 'sufficiently linear' account that follows. First, the pattern is an important one because it serves to introduce neighbourhood centres. Next, through its production, I am performing my *knowing* of the field by *writing* the field (Petersen 2004:48) even if problematic, and subsequently (fingers crossed), *becoming* an authorised knower. Perhaps you will notice that 'I' am less visible. Don't be fooled. This is a textual illusion – 'the writer is never more present than when she seems to be absent' (Stronach and MacLure in Edwards, Clarke, Harrison and Reeve 2002:136).

But as pagan, I have made judgements. I have sought some criteria. I desire becoming/being 'an authorised knower' and so I strategically deploy some orthodox moves in effort to (instrumentally) do so. After all, while it has been pointed out that 'successful' texts participate in 'specific language conventions' (Bizzell 1992:196), it has also been added that this can be done 'critically' (Giroux 1993:34). In this sense I am implicated in what I might otherwise resist (Butler 1993:241).

And finally, in drawing this chapter to a close, I propose that the moves taken up here (and 'played out' in the following pattern) are not quite an end to

themselves. This is, after all, a game of *cat's cradle:* and a pagan game at that! The move of becoming is not limited to this, and the following chapter. Indeed, I do not stop *writing* or *knowing* (let alone *becoming)* post-chapter-five. These preliminary moves are taken up and replayed in various ways not only throughout this thesis but also (I anticipate) *post*-thesis in my perpetual striving for proximity to wisdom in effort to address desires for a *pagan becoming.*

Conclusion to chapter

This chapter began by troubling simple notions of becoming a professional doctor and in doing so pointed to the irony of actually ever becoming (being) an authorised knower. It then argued for a pagan becoming that both acknowledges and works productively within problematic notions of becoming. This discussion drew out specific criteria for a preliminary 'pattern' of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. In particular this criteria included locating the study in literature. The following chapter seeks to address this by offering a first version of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres that draws from available literature.

Chapter 5 The cat's whiskers

Introduction to chapter

In the previous chapter some 'preliminary moves' moved that a 'preliminary pattern' of the provision of learning in New South Wales (NSW) neighbourhood centres be provided. This chapter provides such a pattern. This first pattern might be understood as the 'cat's whiskers': cat's whiskers, you may recall, is the *cat's cradle* pattern that is typically created before attempting more complex ones. As a preliminary pattern in a doctoral thesis, it is first warranted because it locates the organisations under investigation in literature. Second, it locates the organisations and their practices in a broader socio-political context. It is also warranted because it facilitates the entry of neighbourhood centres into educational discourses[2].

As a preliminary pattern this chapter also provides further introductions to NSW neighbourhood centres, and then to the provision of learning in these centres. It does this by locating neighbourhood centres in broader contexts alongside ACE organisations, which, I argue, contributes to the current situation where learning in NSW centres remains somewhat invisible. This chapter also locates the study in a NSW context. This is important because of differences between Australian states and territories: differences that result in various understandings about adult community education and who can/does provide it – hence, highlighting a need to limit this study to NSW centres alone.

This 'pattern' is organised around four main parts. The first three parts are deductive and follow a marco, meso to micro logic. The pattern presented in this chapter might even be considered a momentary pause in a game of *cat's cradle* – a temporarily halt to display a newly created string pattern in order to engage the interest of onlookers.

[2] A version of this chapter is published in the Australian Journal of Adult Learning in an article entitled, "*Cinderella has balls?: other sites for adult learning*" (Rooney 2004a).

The first part is entitled '*environment and investments*'. Here, the socio-political environment of late modernity is presented as useful milieu for positioning a discussion concerned with the provision of learning and organisations that provide it. It is in this part, too, that some contemporary concepts such as micro-economic reform, social justice, and the precarious relationship between them, are discussed. Finally, '*environment and investments*' will conclude with a discussion of education, community and community development.

As evident from its name, '*organisations*', the next part of the chapter moves to discuss the organisational players that enact the concepts of adult community education and community development, by investing in ideas such as 'community', 'social justice' and 'education'. These organisations are understood as non-government organisations (NGOs), and the focus of this part is on two particular types of NGO in Australia. The first are adult community education organisations, the other being neighbourhood centres. A fragmented national picture of these organisations (and the relationship between them) is presented before turning discussion specifically to adult community education and also to neighbourhood centres, in a NSW context.

Having located and introduced NSW neighbourhood centres, the third part of the chapter, '*neighbourhood centre activities*', takes a micro perspective by exploring the various activities of these organisations. It does this by drawing largely on practitioner-oriented research literature. In doing so, drawing further attention to the need for new understandings of neighbourhood centre activities with reference to the contemporary socio-political climate.

The fourth and concluding part of this chapter is entitled '*cat's whiskers and this game of cat's cradle*'. Similar parts are a concluding feature in each of the move and pattern chapters presented in this thesis. In this part in *this* chapter the idea of knots and gaps (which came from the Harawaynian *cat's cradle* analogy) is mobilised (1994). Here I will highlight the knots and gaps created in the production of the pattern, and draw attention to some of the strings purposely held onto as well as those that are not. In addition, I pose questions: some of these I attempt to answer in subsequent chapters – others, I let go.

Environment and investments

Socio-political environment

There are various ways that one might describe the *socio-political* backdrop for a study focused on the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. Any description offered will have both possibilities and limitations. However, for the purpose here, the notion of late modernity is used.

Late modernity encompasses a variety of concepts and in doing so, acknowledges competing voices as actors endeavour to participate in practices with investments in various concepts. In other words, late modernity encompasses both old *and* new concepts (like social justice *and* micro-economic reform). Bauman talks about 'liquid modernity' as a phase where 'all social forms melt faster than new ones can be cast' (Bauman 2005:303). This concept is similar to how others might describe post-modernity or late-modernity – that is, modernity but without the illusions (Bauman in Abrahamson 2004:171).

Neo-liberal politics and micro-economic reform are popular concepts in OECD countries. These ideas have much currency and they have their critics and followers. However, micro-economic reform 'talk' has profound implications for community welfare, education and for adult community education (Marginson 1993; Marginson 1997). One of these implications can be noted in the privileging of particular types of education and learning. While liberal education is accepted to a point, the utility of 'education' is measured more often in terms of vocationalism. This is particularly so for adult community education where notions of liberal education are put forward in the public arena as nostalgic (Burke 2004), and learning for work is put forward as a more appropriate goal. This goal is perpetuated in government policy, and this can be seen in the Australian taxation system where liberal education attracts a goods and services tax (because it is understood as a *luxury*) whereas vocational education does not. Central to the 'learning for work' rhetoric and practice is the concept of individualism (Marginson 1997).

Community development and community

In contrast to the extremes of individualism, evident in education markets created through economic reform, are the practices of community development and the various concepts of community it espouses. It has been suggested that one characteristic that neighbourhood centres across Australia have in common is that they subscribe to a community development philosophy in order to 'respond to the needs of their own local area' (Natlink ny:np). Community development (CD) is a contested concept that became increasingly popular in Australia during the Whitlam era of the 1970s – a time that marked the shift from an older tradition of benevolent welfare to a community welfare that encourages people to make decisions about the issues that affect them. While definitions vary significantly, there is some broad agreement about some main tenets of this approach. Agreement includes an emphasis on 'the local', the importance of process, sustainability and holism, empowerment, and connectiveness (Kenny 1994; McArdle 1999).

Community development also has a significant ethical element and those who invest in its principles place an important emphasis on social justice. Central to community development is an assumption that people suffer from a range of structurally determined injustices and that CD practices can work to address these. Community development practices may take the form of lobbying for redistribution of resources or to change a social structure, providing information (so people can make informed choices) in addition to supporting vulnerable people. On the basis of this understanding education and learning are viewed as important components embedded in the overall ethos of CD (Butler 1992; McArdle 1999).

'Community' is a polyvalent term that is often associated with an unreflexive and uncritical sense of rightousness. In the early eighties, the term 'spray-on community' was coined to describe how community is used to evoke uncritically positive responses that appear beyond reproach (Bryson and Mowbray 1981). This idea is still useful to raise questions about how 'community' is appropriated in contemporary concepts like 'community *building*', 'community *capacity building*' and 'sustainable *communities*'. Many have noted a reinvestment in community by the state and in doing so have

raised questions about the state's agenda (Bradshaw 2000; Graig, Mayo and Taylor 2000; Shaw and Martin 2000; Gilchrist 2003; Simpson, Wood and Daws 2003; Brent 2004). The answers to these questions may indicate attempts to mask neo-liberal agendas that are at odds with the traditions of community development approaches. It is not however, just the state that can mobilize concepts of 'community'. A study by Bullen and Onyx (1999) provides an explicit example where the agenda was to trade on community's currency. This suggests that popular ideas can also be strategically mobilized for interests that deviate from or contest neo-liberal agendas.

Within CD there are various notions of what the term 'community' is referring to. One study found ninety-four different definitions of community in addition to noting the many inconsistencies between them, although 'all the definitions referred to people, and most referred to social interaction, common bonds or goals, and common territory as important elements' (Hillery cited in Kenny 1994:32).

For the purpose of this research, the notion of community being used is based on a reading of Bauman (2001b). Bauman's conceptual work is particularly useful because of his interest in social justice, coupled with a contemporary critique that accommodates the complexities of late modernity. The initial picture of community Bauman paints is one of Utopia – an imaginary 'warm place' conceived of as being intrinsically right and good (2001b). He then asks, 'who would not wish to live among friendly and well-wishing people whom one could trust and on whose words and deeds one could rely?' (Bauman 2001b:2). However, he goes on to argue that this 'warm place' is not actually possible – it is a no-place. Others also acknowledge the illusion of community as a nostalgic longing for an imagined past (Brent 2004:215-220). However, regardless of much critique, the concept of community is seductive and maintains 'utopian purchase' that on the one hand lacks substance, while on the other holds appeal (Brent 2004:221-222).

Bauman also correctly points out that community has a dark side. Acts of boundary making and inclusion necessarily mean exclusion. Communities, he argues, are built around difference and the construal and identification of difference leads to it being used as the reason for demarcation (2001b:76-77). Bauman suggests that those outside the boundaries of particular 'communities' are viewed as 'aliens', 'suspect' or 'criminals', and he (somewhat dramatically) purports that those who are building (gated) communities are out shopping for burglar alarms to keep these strangers and aliens out (2001b:54).

In teasing out the notion, Bauman differentiates 'community' into two types: *ethical* and *aesthetic*. He talks favorably about *ethical* communities which are 'woven from long-term commitments [and] from inalienable rights and unshakable obligations' (2001b:72). Bauman suggests a second form of community, *aesthetic* community, are often conflated with the more preferable ethical community but are in fact quite different (p.73). *Aesthetic* communities are short-term collectives of people with a shared interest around something – examples he gives are the plight of refugees, weight-watching, or a re-incriminating a pedophile released from prison (p.71). Bauman quickly dismisses aesthetic communities as 'perfunctory and superficial' for his larger purpose (p.71).

What also needs consideration, however, is the possibility that people are members of multiple communities – of varying shapes and formations – and that through the crossing between communities, tolerance and understanding about difference are possible. Multiple memberships create possibilities for dialogue – and even if this dialogue is around a seemingly unimportant issue (eg a sport, pop idol or cult television series) it serves a purpose of creating space for interaction amongst differences. Thus, multiple relationships negotiated through multiple community membership can offer opportunities to 'meet the alien' or to 'work *with* the stranger'. Some of the literature around social capital highlights the acceptance of difference as being a marker of communities with high levels of social capital. In their study, Bullen and Onyx emphasised the importance of building bridges *between* communities as well as developing internal bonds (1999). This offers some means to understand the complexities and the differing bonds between people and communities.

While *aesthetic* communities are largely dismissed by Bauman, an understanding of multiple community membership suggests possibilities in relationship *between* and *across* multiple communities (aesthetic and ethical) rather than focusing only on singular. This begins to suggest that a negotiated humanity may be sought against a backdrop of multiple, contingent and overlapping communities, and in considerations of the multiple memberships of the identities involved. Such an understanding is important when considering the community development work of neighbourhood centres, that works to builds bridges as well as bonds. The idea of building bridges between communities fits well with the idea of community that mobilizes community development practices. 'Process' is central to CD, and yet while there is in one sense a presupposed notion of community, it is intentionally a community that is never realised. Rather, it is the 'idea of community' that sustains community development practices.

Organisational context

Within, *across* and at times *against* the backdrop of late modernity, with varying investments in concepts of micro-economic reform, social justice and community, is a plethora of organisations. A useful categorization of these is by their location in one of three sectors: the state, business or the non-government sector (Lyons 2001). The first, or the state sector, includes organisations like hospitals, state run schools etc. The business sector includes privately owned *for*-profit organisations. And the third sector includes organisations that while not directly owned by the state, are also not engaged in operations with an explicit intent to make profit. For this reason many of them are also understood as *non*-profit organisations. In Australia the third sector includes a diversity of organisations that can range from large charitable organisations, churches, Returned Soldiers League (RSL) clubs, to the adult community education colleges, as well as small not-for-profit organisations like neighbourhood centres.

Both neighbourhood centres and (some) adult community providers are considered non-profit organisations located within the broader non-profit sector. In addition to this status, both can be understood as sub-sectors of other sectors. For example the ACE sector can be understood as a sub-set of

education, whereas the neighbourhood centre sector can be described as a sub-set of the community welfare sector.

Neighbourhood centres and the community welfare sector

The community welfare sector is recognised as a major provider of community services that is 'particularly important to people on low incomes' (ACOSS 1999:4). The Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS), the national peak council of the community welfare sector in Australia, suggests other notable contributions of this sector's organisations is that they;

- help support individuals and families, strengthen communities, build social cohesion, enhance equity, give voice to the needs of disadvantaged groups, and achieve systemic change.
- mobilise voluntary effort, community networks, participation and philanthropy.
- are one of the central mechanisms by which 'social capital' is built and strengthened, and by which effective, supportive and connected communities are created and maintained (ACOSS 1999:4).

Neighbourhood centres are one of many types of third sector organisations. Given this research is concerned with neighbourhood centres, then these organisations are of particular importance here. However, some discussion here also includes the adult community education colleges, because, in NSW at least, the work of neighbourhood centres can be described as resembling their activity - which itself is problematic for the plight of NSW centres.

To provide a generic national definition of the adult community education sector is made difficult through Australia's federation governance. The Australian nation is divided across six states and two territories, each with their own level of government. Adult community education typically falls within each of the state and territories' portfolio. Hence this situation produces differences that serve to make any national definition nebulous. Indeed, one point of agreement in most Australian studies is the ambiguity inherent in any definition of what adult community education actually is. Birch, Kenyon, Koshy and Wills-Johnson point out the 'lack of a coherent and agreed definition' (2003:13), as do others who suggest diverse definitions 'add a great deal of difficulty to the task of scoping ACE in Australia' (Borthwick, Knight, Bender and Laveder 2001:8). Still others confirm that definitions of ACE 'varies greatly among Australian States and Territories' (Golding, Davies and Volkoff 2001:8), never-the-less the quest for a national definition continues (Choy and Haukka 2006).

Similarly, complications brought about by federation governance contribute to an equally nebulous 'national' picture of neighbourhood centres – even the names given to these organisations at a state level reflect the difficulty in providing a generic picture. Nationally, there are around nine hundred neighbourhood centres located across all Australian States and Territories. In practice, even with shared investments in community development, they operate under different names. For example in Victoria they are commonly called *neighbourhood houses*, while in Queensland the term *family centre* is popular. Meanwhile in Western Australia they are usually referred to as *community learning centres* (Natlink 2003). The name *neighbourhood* or *community* centre is more common in NSW. Names aside, more important differences are noted when considering that individual states are responsible for the types of activities that centres provide. Despite acknowledgement that neighbourhood centres are among the nation's largest contributors to adult community education (Senate Standing Committee 1991), consideration of the relationship between adult community education and neighbourhood centres in each state draws attention to other important differences.

Victoria's neighbourhood houses number around three hundred and fifty. Victorian Houses are typically funded through the Department of Human Services, Health and Community Services, the Adult Community and Further Education Board (ACFEB) or through local government. This funding supplements user-pays fees and charges for house activities. Despite various sources of funding there is a strong emphasis on fund-raising to support the work of these Victorian organisations (Natlink ny:np). Houses are generally managed by volunteer committees as well as paid staff. Most offer childcare and playgroups, and provide opportunities for volunteer participation in a range of capacities (ANHLC 2003). An important feature of Victorian houses is their provision of adult community education and they are recognised as significant contributors to the adult community education sector.

Like in Victoria, the eighty-seven neighbourhood houses and centres in South Australia are resourced in a variety of ways. Some centres' funding is allocated through the State's Department of Human Services to organisations in areas with high needs based on socio-economic circumstance of residents. Some local governments also contribute to centres. Almost all centres in

South Australia depend on additional funding for specific purposes, as well as volunteer input, to sustain their work. 'Adult Community Education, although a critical element of the work of Houses and Centres, contributes only one off grants' (CANH 2003:29).

While the sixty-eight Western Australian community learning centres vary greatly in size and focus, they almost all utilise a community management model. Around half of these centres are self-funded, while the others receive some financial support from a variety of sources but primarily from the Western Australian Department of Community Development. Most centres in Western Australia are concerned with supporting local families and many also provide childcare alongside the other activities offered. However, the main work of centres 'is the provision of informal, low-cost adult community education, using grassroots community development principles' (LCL 2003:33).

Centres in the Northern Territory are less recognisable than any in other State or Territory. While it is assumed that more than a few organisations operate using the general community development principles seen in centres from other states, very few Territorian organisations actually identify as such. Notwithstanding, one Territorian centre suggests that their aim is 'to provide a community service offering family support and recreational activities to all people within our community without regard to age, race, colour, religion, sex or marital status' (Natlink ny). This centre is funded through the Department of Sport and Recreation, the Department of Primary Industries and Territory Health Services (Natlink ny:np).

There are over two hundred centres in Queensland (CCFSNAQ 2003). While in other states neighbourhood centres and family support centres are two separate but similar entities, in Queensland the distinction is arbitrary. The majority of Queensland centres identify as community development organisations yet almost half also identify family support as a major focus (CCFSNAQ 2003:9). Most centres foster community based service delivery for families and individuals in addition to developing responses to communities and their issues (Natlink ny:np). Services provided by Queensland centres reflect the centrality of the family.

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has around fifteen neighbourhood centre/house organisations which are operate under a similar model to that of Victoria, but (as they suggest) with less funding (Natlink ny:np). ACT centres/houses typically subscribe to a community development focus by responding to grass roots demands. They provide a range of health, education, training, leisure and inter personal communication courses as well as play school, playgroup sessions and school holiday programs (TuggLink 2003).

The state Department of Health and Human Services provides core funding for the thirty two neighbourhood houses in Tasmania. Most of these houses also receive additional grants from a variety of sources to carry out their work (ANHLC 2003). Tasmanian houses are recognised for the role they play in the adult community education sector and, in particular, for disadvantaged people. This is said to be because houses enable people 'to feel comfortable ... and to meet educators on his [sic] own terms until a trust relationship develops' (Ibbott in Natlink ny).

The two hundred and fifty five NSW neighbourhood centres operate from within the community welfare sector. As expanded below, centres provide a wide range of activities that include many groups and courses as part of their social justice mandate. While some limited collaboration occurs between the adult community education sector and neighbourhood centres (LCSA 1997; LCSA 1998b; LCSA 1999a; LCSA 2000; LCSA 2001a), adult community education is understood as something quite different from what it is that centres do. This understanding is not just that of outsiders, but also by the centres themselves (Flowers 2005). This situation has largely been set in motion by the simultaneous discursive establishment of (capital) Adult Community Education (ACE) as a legitimate sector in NSW that renders any learning or 'adult community education like' activity of neighbourhood centres invisible (Rooney 2004a).

Adult community education in NSW

Adult Community Education (ACE) in New South Wales (NSW) is typically understood by government, those involved in education and the general public to some extent, as the realm of the ACE sector. The sanctioned NSW

ACE sector comprises around sixty providers that include Evening and Community Colleges, Workers' Education Associations and Community Adult Education Centres (Choy and Haukka 2006:25-26). The core business of ACE providers is to 'offer quality, relevant, affordable and flexible adult learning opportunities that reflect the needs of the community' (LCSA 1999a:16-17). To this end, ACE organisations offer a range of courses including accredited and non-accredited courses in the areas of vocational education, literacy and liberal arts. ACE espouses an investment in the important role of lifelong learning and believe it can contribute to 'the Government's social justice objectives' (BACE 1996:3).

In NSW, ACE providers are supported by recurrent State funding through the Board of Adult and Community Education (BACE). Ultimately BACE determines what is and what is not to count as ACE, and through these understandings the organisations in the sanctioned sector are allocated Government funds. BACE also play an advisory role to the Minister of Education regarding the 'needs and trends in Adult Community Education' (BACE 1996:3). This relationship between the ACE sector and government was formerly recognised in 1990 with an Act of legislation, followed by the establishment of BACE in 1991.

'Recognising the value of lifelong learning for all' is the policy guiding ACE provision in NSW. This policy sets out the five broad goals of ACE as: *equitable, effective, responsive, efficient* and *complementary* provision (BACE 1996). These goals are designed to 'guide the development of Adult and Community Education in New South Wales and reflect the broader directions and goals expressed in the National Policy' (BACE 1992:np). Guided by policy, NSW ACE providers seek to provide access to the spoils of adult community education to '...*all* adults regardless of background and circumstance' (BACE 1992:np emphasis added).

However, while 'responsiveness' is a catchcry for ACE, questions have been raised around whom ACE is 'responsive' to (Rooney 2004a). The suggestion is that the recent trend of NSW ACE to a focus on delivering Vocational Education and Training (VET) shifts those whom ACE is responsiveness too. McIntyre suggests that ACE organisations have strategically shaped and re-shaped their activity in response to broader policy agendas (2001). This can

be noted by tracing NSW ACE activity from a liberal focus, leisure and self development, through to an ever-increasing concentration on VET in congruence with powerful encompassing stories and rhetoric, which sees the privileging of learning that leads to paid work (Rooney 2001). This is further evidenced by the strategic and timely production of a wealth of research that highlights ACE contributions to these broader policy agendas (McIntyre, Morris and Tennant 2003; ABS 1995; McIntyre, Brown and Ferrier 1996; Borthwick, Knight, Bender and Laveder 2001a, 2001b; Bowman 2001; Golding, Davies and Volkoff 2001).

It has even been suggested that these ACE organisations, or 'not for profit community based providers are currently the unsung heroes of the VET sector' (Bardon 2006:5). In general, the NSW ACE sector has undergone significant changes as brought about by re-positioning of the broader changes to the public sector. There is little doubt that NSW ACE organisations have become savvy in strategically positioning themselves in larger socio-political pictures, as McIntyre suggests, in response to broader policy agendas (2001). It appears that much ACE 'responsiveness' is mobilised by concern to strategically position 'the sector' by jumping on the vocational bandwagon:

> The point is, priorities change with administrations [governments], and adult educators have a choice: jump on whatever the current bandwagon is, or advocate for a larger vision (Richardson in Reid-Smith 2001:175).

Rooney, Rhodes and Boud (2007) put it another way, they described the 'flexibility' of one ACE organisation as a performance of 'organisational drag'. ACE organisations operate in an environment where traces of 'business' and 'community' as well as 'not-for-profit' and 'education' discourses are ever-present and are in contestation. Indeed, it is this contestation that enables ACE to perform who they are (becoming). These 'drag performances' require knowing not only *when* but also *how* to perform a 'community', 'business', 'not-for-profit', 'profit making' and/or 'educational' organization (Rooney, Rhodes and Boud 2007). The tensions bought about by multiple organisational identities though, has potential to create a new sets of problems (Traynor 2004).

Another claim of NSW ACE that has raised questions is that of 'equitable provision' (Rooney 2004a). NSW ACE organisations operate on a not-for-profit basis and so while ACE providers receive some State funding to provide for *all*, this is generally used for administration, and the majority of provision is reliant on participant fees. And while some concessions and fee waivers are offered to disadvantaged members of the community (for example in the areas of adult literacy, discounts for seniors and/or intermittent special programs), non-VET ACE focus typically remains on those who can afford to participate. A user-pays system is a major contradiction to the espoused social justice orientation of ACE that advocates for 'equitable provision'. While ACE has a history of providing 'second chances' for disadvantaged citizens (Whitelock 1974; McIntyre, Morris and Tennant 1993; Peace 1994; Reid-Smith 2001), there have been concerns raised about the direction of the contemporary ACE sector (Whyte and Crombie 1995:107).

These discrepancies between policy and practice have some interesting ramifications for the NSW ACE sector and the citizens of New South Wales. That is, either ACE is not what it says it is at all (ie, responsive/equitable/ accessible to *all*), or those without the fiscal capacity to participate in adult community education are not included in the *all* of the lifelong learning for *all* rhetoric (Rooney 2001).

If the latter is true then disadvantaged adults of NSW are relegated to a status of non-citizen. However, if the former is true, then researchers might look elsewhere for traces of adult community education and find a wealth of activity that, although typically unrecognised, is working towards addressing social justice through investing in, and importantly acting upon, the principles of 'responsive, equitable and accessible adult community education provision to *all*' (Rooney 2001; Rooney 2004a). This different perspective of NSW adult and community education activity returns to the idea set out in the *Cinderella* report which described adult community education as a diverse and vibrant sector that comprise provision by a range of organisations and furthermore, that its strength lays in this diversity (Senate Standing Committee 1991). While reinvesting in the idea of a diverse field of ACE may work to unsettle the monopoly held by some organisations over limited resources, it also can work to draw attention to the needs of other

organisations whose already significant provision of adult learning (particularly for disadvantaged communities) may be further developed. Such an argument has already been raised with an associated suggestion to turn towards the work of neighbourhood centres for further traces of adult community education in NSW (Rooney 2004a). It is therefore to neighbourhood centres that this discussion now turns.

Neighbourhood centres in NSW

The Local Community Services Association (LCSA) is the peak organisations for neighbourhood centres in NSW. The LCSA suggest a neighbourhood centre is an organisation that 'caters for people looking for local information, activities and community connections and typically receive 'Neighbourhood Centre Funding' through the Department of Community Services' (LCSA 2004a:3). Some other groups with differing mandates also use the name 'neighbourhood or community centre'. For example various council owned entities with primary interest in sport and recreation (ie, indoor soccer, swimming pools etc) operate under the name of 'community centre'. However, these types of centres are not included in this research because they do not subscribe to community development principles. The Local Community Services Association currently list two hundred and fifty five organisations that identify as neighbourhood centres under the organisation's definition (LCSA 2004a). This estimate also includes centres that meet the criteria of neighbourhood centres mentioned above, but which are not members of the LCSA.

Centres are located across seventeen geographic regions that cover both metropolitan and rural regions of the state of NSW. These regions are used by LCSA in their *2004 Directory of Centres in NSW* (2004) and in their annual census (Bullen and LCSA 1998a; Bullen and LCSA 2000; LCSA 2001a; LCSA 2004b) and useful because they help to demonstrate how centre locations are congruent with the population of the state.

Centres are community owned and managed non-government organisations. Almost all (97%) work under a community management model (LCSA 2004a:5). A community management model means that a volunteer committee, comprising local residents and co-opted members of other local

organisations (eg ethno-specific groups, other local services) manage the centre. Kenny (1994) suggests that a community management model is:

> ...essential for democratic decision-making; if procedures are clearly set out and followed, and decisions are carried out, the experience can be empowering. Of course, clear procedures cannot guarantee effective or democratic decision-making, but they can help to make an organisation, committee or meeting effective (146).

Under these management conditions centres adapt to meet changing community needs and develop their foci over time. Some have chosen to broaden their focus to a range of issues and have developed into large multi-purpose organisations, and some have made conscious choices to stay small grass-root organisations that are 'nimble and flexible enough to change direction as required' (LCSA 2004a:3). Centres may have more than twenty full time equivalent staff or less than one. Expenditure of centres can range from just five thousand dollars per annum to over two million. Similarly, centres can be large multi-purpose organisations, or can operate from a single room for just a few hours a week (LCSA 2004a:3). A centre can provide a wide variety of activities and services to communities, families, individuals and organisations. The LCSA propose that there are over forty different direct services that centres may provide including: information, advice and referral, groups, courses and classes, individual and family support, youth activities, emergency relief and practical support, child care, transport and community development (2004a:5). Some centres offer a wide selection of these, while others are more focused around a specific issue (eg, families, women, ethnicity) and provide a more contracted selection.

Centre funding

Almost all (90%) NSW centres are funded through the 'Community Services Grants Program' (CSGP) funding (LCSA 2004a:9). The NSW Department of Community Services (DOCs) administers this grant and appears at present committed to recurrent financial support of the majority of the state's centres. The majority (76%) of centres also seek other funding from other sources (LCSA 2004a:9). This other funding also contributes to differences between centres because it is typically earmarked for specific projects. For example Health and Community Care (HACC) funding may be sought to provide community transport, home maintenance, or provide meals for local aged or frail people. Emergency relief grants are often sought to enable centres to

provide immediate assistance, such as food, clothing or utility vouchers. Other grants might be connected to delivering services to specific groups of people such as families and children (a playgroup or a toy library), people from Non-English speaking backgrounds (a bilingual worker) or people with disabilities (respite for carers or a community bus for outings).

Neighbourhood centres in crisis

The neighbourhood centres of NSW are facing several difficulties. One such difficulty is that they have experienced a period of non-growth over the last decade. No new centres have been funded and there has been no real increase in funding for at least fifteen years (Suhood, Marks, Waterford and SONG 2006). This is despite the growth in centres' workload attributed to escalating demands for stringent accountability, as well as the additional workload generated by the need to conform to an ever-increasing variety of legislations (eg OH&S, Child Protection, etc). In other words centres, like many other organisations, are being asked to do more with less. These difficulties are even more pronounced for smaller organisations (LCSA 2002).

Other difficulties are being experienced in the sector as part of larger forces. Major reform in the community services' sector, driven by the State's investment in broader neo-liberal ideals, has resulted in shifts in the way community services are understood, planned, financed and delivered. Some of the ideas that are driving reform include: competition policy, marketization of human services, reduced roles of government, changes in government's 'core business', desire to reduce public expenditure, managing 'outcomes' and a new focus of 'capacity building' (ACOSS 1999:5-6). These shifts are challenging traditional beliefs of centres and complicating their work. For example increased demands on centres to document outcomes, outputs and performance indicators are viewed by many as counterproductive and in opposition to the core tenets of community development, which privileges process over ends (McArdle 1999).

Another difficulty is that the state is using competitive tendering processes to distribute limited resources to non-government organisations in the human services. This is often advantageous for larger charitable organisations that have the structural resources and experience to manage the complicated

tendering process. However it is more difficult for smaller grass-roots organisations whose voluntary community based management committees are generally less skilled at the processes needed to 'win' such tenders. More and more human services that were provided through small local community organisations are now being taken over by larger charitable institutions resulting in a decreased number of grass roots non-government organisations (LCSA 2004a). For example in NSW the Sydney City Mission, Benevolent Society, Uniting Church and the Salvation Army have become powerful players in tendering for the limited human service dollars. An associated concern is the loss of delivery by organisations with an underlying philosophy of community development and social justice, to a predominantly faith-based sector. This has profound implications for how the needs of communities, individuals and particular groups in the community are understood and provided for. Moreover, there are an increasing number of *for*-profit organisations tendering for human services that again raises questions about how such services (and the people that use them) are understood. These concerns are coupled with a government campaign that began in the early 2000s that has set about de-funding NGO organisations because, some say, they are 'interfering' with the market by overtly influencing public policy (Melville in Staples 2006:8). Moreover, larger charitable organisations may be more attractive options for the state because they 'do good works' but do not engage in public advocacy (Staples 2006:9).

Over the past three decades NSW centres have developed strong (if not sometimes precarious) relationships with successive Governments. Centre relationships with the State are multiple and often incongruent (Staples 2006). Kenny (1994) points out that community development organisations' relationships with the State can take on at least three forms: including state collaborators, state supporters and state critics (p.85). For example given that community development organisations are located within the broader community welfare sector that implicates them with State welfare, which in turn positions them as in *collaboration* with the State in terms of a joint concern for the wellbeing of the state's citizens. Further, most neighbourhood centres, as community development organisations, receive much of their funding through one or several of the State's entities. In the contemporary economic moment this has resulted in a purchaser/provider relationship with the State. And finally, community development workers work *within* and yet at

times *against* the State's social policies, which positions them in antagonistic relationships (Kenny 1994:85). It is important to also recognise that these various relationships occur simultaneously, which has potential to cause tensions for the management of centres.

These relationships are not only complex but also contentious as the government works at 'legislating' them into submission through 'employing a variety of mechanisms that serve to inhibit any public advocacy role' (Staples 2006:20). For example, newly inserted confidentiality clauses in centres' funding agreements are counterintuitive to the creating the type of democratic processes that these organisations typically espouse (Staples 2006:10). Centres' tax status as charitable institutions is becoming reliant upon them refraining from public advocacy (Staples 2006:11). An irony in relation to relationships with the state is that as 'community partners' neighbourhood centres (with their sealed lips) are trotted out for 'show and tell' when it is advantageous for the state. For example State Ministers responsible for centres have used parliamentary discussion time to publicly praise the work of centres (Tebbutt 2004), yet (far less publicly) deny them adequate resources to carry out their work. Meanwhile the rhetoric of an interdependent relationship between the state and the NGO sector suggests:

> Non-government organizations are also independent bodies that are free to pursue their goals, which may involve advocating for changes in Government policies and priorities. In this sense, there is a healthy tension inherent in the relationship between Government and the non-government sector (DoCs and FONGA 2006:5).

In all, multiple relationships with the State multiply the way centres (as well as other NGOs) are positioned in larger neo-liberal pictures. For centres, this is a time of crisis and uncertainty – although ironically there is at least agreement around one point of certainty: this is, that the crisis is not expected to end any time soon.

Neighbourhood centre activities

Neighbourhood centres offer a range of activities and services within their communities. As earlier noted, these differ significantly between centres and are often provided as result of some perceived need in the local community. Among the many possibilities are groups and courses. These constitute two

of many tools used in the processes of community development and consequently are an important component of neighbourhood centre work. One study showed that seventy five percent of NSW centres regularly ran groups and courses as part of their activities (LCSA 1998c). This provision includes a small annual project where centres have been partnered with 'real' ACE providers (LCSA 1997; LCSA 1998a; LCSA 1999b; LCSA 2000; LCSA 2001b). A recent LCSA report estimated around fifteen hundred groups and courses run in neighbourhood centres each week. These included; six hundred and eighty groups, eighty social action group meetings, six hundred and sixty courses, and eighty pre-vocational courses (LCSA 2004a:22).

Considering the provision noted above, in light of my overall thesis, raises the question of whether this provision might be considered as educational. The answer is probably not - not before wider understandings of learning and education are acknowledged. In general, education is narrowly conceived as that which schools and universities, along with Technical and Further Education and ACE colleges engage in. While there is substantial 'evidence' to suggest that learning occurs outside these educational institutions (and in particular organisations similar to NSW neighbourhood centres) this does not also warrant an educative function being acknowledged. In general, education and learning are not one of the same. While learning might include 'education', for the most part 'education' does not include all learning.

However, some time ago Brookfield provided an extensive list of activities, that were considered to be educative (1986:147-148). Brookfield not only recognised voluntary activities, health and informal groups as educative, but he suggested that the broad practice of community development could also be thought of as such. Indeed, the list of program types set out by Brookfield reads like an unadulterated list of contemporary centre activities (1986:148). More recently others purport the importance of the educative practices of a broad range of neighbourhood centre activities (Rooney 2004a; Flowers 2005; Rule 2005).

Moreover, other types of activities carried out by community organisations similar to NSW neighbourhood centres has been shown to be educative (Brookfield 1986:147-148). The broad practices of community development can also be thought of as providing learning opportunities: for example

community organisations' voluntary activities, health and informal groups, social action campaigns etc. In addition to structured activities, centres mobilise a range of volunteer programs, which also hold potential as having a learning or educative function. However, to understand these as educative requires 'wider understandings' of learning:

> These wider understandings extend the reach of 'learning' beyond the institutional settings and formats of 'education' and constitute a serious challenge to many established ideas of how, why, where and with whom learning might occur (Harrison 2001:11-12).

Despite calls for wider understandings, from the abovementioned activities only a small proportion of participants are officially recognised as being engaged in learning by the national reporting mechanisms that seek to capture adult education activity. The 'included' are participants in activities where centres are partnered with 'real' educators, like TAFE or ACE (LCSA 1997; LCSA 1998a; LCSA 1999; LCSA 2000; LCSA 2001b). In other words, very few potentially 'educational' activities in NSW are actually considered as such (NCVER 2001:34).

However, claiming the activities as educative is further complicated. This is because even though some suggest the work of the organisations might be educative; this is not how centres themselves understand what it is they do. For example Flowers (2005) suggests that practitioners in this sector 'conceive their practice largely as case work and program delivery' and as a result, 'informal and popular education are barely acknowledged' (p.22). This is also compounded by local understandings of a NSW ACE sector that is positioned as central to 'adult community education'. In all, this draws attention to the importance of naming and moreover, *who* is doing the naming.

Cat's whiskers and this game of *cat's cradle*

In a game of *cat's cradle* one typically creates *cat's whiskers* as a preliminary pattern before moving on to make more complex patterns. This 'cat's whiskers pattern' has provided a preliminary pattern of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. As a preliminary pattern it introduced NSW neighbourhood centres. It did this by not only locating these organisations in a wider context but by also locating the discussion in available literature.

In effort to qualify my (instrumental) becoming I have spoken authoritively about the topic at hand. I have followed academic conventions and have held the pattern together through acts of citation - even though some aspects are eschewed in order to present a 'neat' story.

Throughout this discussion I have suggested some ideas that demonstrate a gap in what is known about the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. Here, I hope to have convinced you that these ideas are not 'dangerous mavericks' but ones connected with 'a respectable community of practice' and an 'existing body of work' (Edwards, Clarke, Harrison and Reeve 2002:136). I began this chapter knowing that 'the pattern' would be partial - and knowing that, despite knots that hold it together and give it form (while hardly unanticipated), there would be also many gaps. Indeed, I attempted to persuade you that there *are* gaps in what is known about the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres and, as such, there is good reason for this research (Petersen 2004:48-49). Indeed in light of the 'gaps', the following chapter argues for some moves that will then be carried out to produce another pattern of the learning provision in NSW neighbourhood centres. Importantly, this 'other' pattern (chapter seven) is not meant to be a preferable substitute but one that (despite its own 'particular troubles') troubles the one you just read.

Finally I also want to acknowledge that it is not only neighbourhood centres that are excluded from NSW ACE. While the 'ACE sector' *per se* is relatively new, ACE-like activity has a long history in New South Wales, and Australia in general. This history includes the work of neighbourhood centres but also that of Mechanics Institutes, trade unions and libraries (Whitelock 1974; Reid-Smith 2001; Morris 2002), to name just a few. So, while centres are the objects of this study, other non-government organisations might also make similar claims (this is the work for an others' thesis).

Conclusion to chapter

This chapter began with the aim of locating the overall study in contemporary literature from across various fields of study. Taking a macro to micro logic, it positioned neighbourhood centres and their practices in a broader socio-political context. This discussion furthers the study by reiterating a dearth in

what is 'officially' known (and by whom) about the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. In light of issues raised in this chapter, the following chapter looks toward 'righting' some issues.

Chapter 6 Tragic Rightings

"Why do this study?"... the impetus asks.
"To *know* the world, and to *write* the world", the research claims.
"To *become* an authorised knower", answers the candidate.
"To *right* the world", the practitioner declares.

Introduction to chapter

The previous chapter created a 'pattern' of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. It performed 'knowing the world', by 'writing the world' (albeit a very particular version). While as a preliminary pattern it served to initiate readers to the broad field/s of study, the moves made in that chapter served another important purpose. The move of reviewing literature was understood as an anticipated move in the (instrumental) *becoming* of authorised knowers, and I suggested (in chapter four) that I desire such becoming. Yet, becoming an authorised knower is not my only desire. As a practitioner I want to *right* the world too.

This chapter teases out this notion of *righting* the world. I begin by exploring what I mean by righting and how, regardless of how noble I might try to convince myself it is, it is necessarily understood as a subjective and futile endeavour. Hence, righting is understood as a fatally flawed idea – a tragic project. Yet it is not one that I fully reject either. Futility aside I pursue such a project by discussing the potential of research, policy and writing for righting. And through this discussion I then propose some criteria, as well as how I might address it, to create a stringent pattern of learning in neighbourhood centres (presented in chapter seven), in all, serving my somewhat righteous (yet paradoxically tragic) resolve to 'right'.

Righting and writing

Righting

This research seeks to *right* the world. By righting I mean to act upon it – to change it. More specifically, I desire making the world a better place. If I ask myself *why* I want to right the world, I think one answer could be found in my biography and work history which has been focused on marginalised and disadvantaged communities – another because of 'a belief' in neighbourhood centres and what they do – or perhaps too, because I sense the survival of organisations in jeopardy – or maybe because poverty, racism, sexism, bigotry, rampant individualism still exist.

Leaving my answer unresolved, I acknowledge that I do want to act upon or change a professional field, and that this is a suitable activity for professional doctoral studies (Malfroy and Yates 2003:128). In my case 'the professional field' to be acted upon is broadly understood as one comprising NSW neighbourhood centres. These are not only organisations in crisis, but also organisations whose survival may be in jeopardy (LCSA 2002; Rooney 2004a). Earlier chapters of this thesis argued for different stories of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres from those commonly taken up *(or not)* by policy makers and educational researchers. This is because centres first need to be drawn into the discourses of education, as sites of adult community education, before they are considered as potential research sites. It is a catch 22 however, because the possibility of different stories is rarely spoken about and in order to speak *about them* they must be *spoken about*. Writing is useful in this regard because through the writing (creating) of various patterns these accounts are 'written up' – or as others suggest, 'languaged' (Davies 2000:287), 'discursified' (Petersen 2004:21) or 'worded' (Richardson 1994:923) into existence. Writing, therefore, contributes to my *righting* project.

Explicitly setting out to 'right the world' is not quite as 'righteous' as it may first appear. Righting is problematic, ambiguous and value-laden. First, it is a modernist pursuit that assumes a 'fault' to be righted – that *can* be righted. What is considered to be a 'fault' is contingent on the way the world is read and understood. In other words, a righting pursuit is not an innocent one: after all Hitler may have claimed to be 'righting' the world! However, this

game of *cat's cradle* is more cognizant of producing particular versions of worlds over others, which necessarily requires some consideration around what type of version is preferable (right), for whom, and why.

Responsible righting

Among many critiques of contemporary society Bauman insists that, despite the workings of neo-liberal economics (indeed even more so *because* of them), we are 'our brothers'[sic] keepers' (2000; 2001a; 2001b). Hence advocating an ethical framework necessitates the coupling of responsibilities with righting. Righting the world obliges researchers to take various responsibilities seriously. First, acknowledgement of being our brother's keeper can be understood as a responsibility to the other. While a responsibility to the other has been a given in some societies for many years, neo-economics arguments tend to undermine this – instead arguing for a more individualistic focus. For some, the onset of this shift marks the responsibility as more urgent than ever:

> The question 'Am I my brother's keeper?', which not long ago was thought to be answered once and for all and so was seldom heard, is asked again, more vociferously and belligerently by the day (Bauman 2000:9).

A second responsibility to be taken seriously in this project is my responsibility to the 'other' of the *researcher*: that is, to the *researched*. In this case 'the researched' are the workers, volunteers and users of NSW neighbourhood centres who contribute to my becoming. Their contributions were premised on my promise to share with them any patterns of the neighbourhood centre 'field' that I produce. It is this responsibility that reminds me how the patterns produced in this game of *cat's cradle* can be passed between the hands of various players (Haraway 1994a): others who might add their own moves and make further patterns, thus creating their own worlds. In other words, it is not my responsibility to be maverick and 'right' alone, but given my employment in a peak organisation, it *can* be my responsibility to open up possibilities to increase capacity of a group of organisations. Incidentally, this resembles a community development approach that encompasses not only individual but also collective responsibilities and collective action.

Tragic righting

The case for 'responsible righting' seems to suggest that righting is capable of being fully realised, but righting is more complex than some would have us believe, indeed it is a *tragic* pursuit. Much like *becoming* and *developing* communities, a *righting* project is untenable. Righting is a fatally flawed idea – a tragedy. Similar to the concepts of 'community' and 'becoming' discussed earlier, 'righting', while incapable of being realised, is nevertheless seductive and retains purchase.

Righting is hindered by the conditions that make it urgent. It is difficult to make a persuasive social argument in 'the cool and businesslike language of interests' (Bauman 2000:9). Responsibilities for the other have largely been staged in moral and ethical discourses, yet these arguments lack resonance within the dominant contemporary discourses of western societies (Bauman 2000:9). Indeed, taking responsibility can even be seen as unreasonable:

> Yes, let us admit – there is nothing 'reasonable' about taking responsibility, about caring and being moral (Bauman 2000:11).

Such a negative view might imply that one abandon the pursuit altogether, but the impossibility of the pursuit does not equate to its abandonment. Many argue the necessity (if not urgency) of taking up such untenable positions (Gergen 1999; Gergen 1999; Bauman 2000; Lather 2000; Bauman 2001b; Abrahamson 2004).

Consequently, similar to 'becoming', 'righting' is presented here in its present continuous form in reference to the impossibility of it being a project that can be 'completed'. Likewise, the projects of developing communities and adult community education (with their emancipatory agendas) will never quite be completed either. Despite the impossibility of 'ever really' fulfilling these imperfect projects, I reiterate that I am not absolved from trying ... for to *not speak* would constitute further injustice (Lyotard 1988).

The criteria and the performance of the criteria

While humbled by, yet committed to, this untenable project and its responsibilities, I continue knowing that research, and the patterns it produces, do not exist in a world purged of funding bodies, institutional priorities and histories (Edwards, Clarke, Harrison and Reeve 2002:136). Some texts, under some conditions, have more currency than others. An

example of this and one that contributes to this project is seen in the relationship between righting, policy and research. It is in consideration of this relationship that the ensuing pattern of learning in neighbourhood centres draws its criteria.

Righting and policy and research

With an explicit desire to act upon the world I start with the assumption that research has capacity to act upon the world by effecting policy. Indeed, research has much to do with how policy decisions come about (Blackmore 2004). It has been partly policy (driven by legitimate ACE organisations) that has created 'the world in question' to begin with. If it is through policy that activities are first validated and then rewarded, then affecting policy can serve to 'right' the world.

However, to change policy one needs to draw attention other ways of seeing the world – therefore to do this means writing a convincing 'account': to draw attention other ways that decision makers might see the world, its problems as well as any potential solutions. While evidence based policy making is not immutable to critique (Marston and Watts 2003), the Australian government retain a penchant for it (Australian Government 2006). With this in mind it is advantageous to look at what constitutes 'evidence' - because not any type of evidence will do – how *is* 'good' research understood?

This very question about what constitutes good educational research has been topic of debate within the academy. Indeed this is the title of Yates' book that answers the question by suggesting 'it depends' (2004). Yates discusses the United States' example where 'good educational research' is equated with 'scientific' research. Internationally, the OECD also takes the position of 'scientific' research as 'good' educational research (OECD 2004a), and in doing so shapes how governments make judgements based on a knowable and (ac)countable world.

This is the case in an Australian context where policies and programs are based on 'reliable' evidence (DoCs and FONGA 2006). A recent Ministerial Declaration on Adult Community Education suggested a need to research adult community education 'in order to measure and assess the unique role of adult community education' (MCEETYA 2002:7). The imperative for

quantifying is evident in 'measuring'. Despite a number of qualitative studies that might suggest otherwise, it is calls for 'hard evidence' that resonate (Neil Shepherd, Director General, Department of Community Services, at LCSA 2003 conference).

Hard evidence

Yet 'hard evidence' rings of a true, objective and verifiable science that contradicts what I profess to (not quite) know about research. In recent times this has been the subject of presumptive criticism (Flax 1990), perhaps most by educational researchers. However despite being maligned, the evidence made possible through positivist-like methods (like 'counting') is nowhere near obsolete. This may be even more the case for those with decision-making capacity. Hence, if effecting change is one's desire, and if 'fiction is a rhetorically poor strategy', then perhaps research methods that claim to collect 'the truth' hold far more potential (Richardson 1994:933).

Further tragedy

Once again I reach an impasse: a tragedy of being doubtful of what I seem to not be able to do without (Burbules 1998). I can lament imperfect associated practices and disparage, or from my pagan stance, I can accept their partiality and appropriate them in ways that contribute to my *writing* and *righting*, (not to mention *becoming*) project. This borrowing and adapting is the work of the pagan (Glick 2005:np): 'not quite' a methodology. A pagan researcher might as well work productively with quantitative methods as with any other. To be pagan is to accept that one can play many different games (Lyotard and Thebaud 1985:61), which is also to imply an acceptance of heterogeneity and this acceptance itself constitutes an ethical moment (Usher 2000:171). To be pagan is to accept that research 'games are interesting in themselves insofar as the interesting thing is to play the moves' (Lyotard and Thebaud 1985:61). Indeed, mimicking 'scientific' research or quantitative methods can be even considered a parody or even a deconstructive strategy (Parker 1997:69): through 'developing ruses and setting the imagination to work' (Lyotard and Thebaud 1985:61).

In addition to the detection of *differends,* Lyotard advocates for funding ways to phrase them (Lyotard 1988:142). Funding phrases invites a sense of the avant-garde through the creation of new rules for play, and Lane has put out

a similar call for 'new ways of playing' in relation to community development (Lane 1999:147). Experimenting with new and different strategies might be considered avant-garde (Ross-Smith, Kornberger and Rhodes 2004), as might the creation of new rules. However, I suggest that taking orthodox strategies and donning them with a new and different 'spin' can also be considered as avant-garde, not to mention promising for my righting purposes here.

Looking to play with numbers

What I am thinking now is that if the problem is inscribing neighbourhood centres, then writing them up numerically offers promise. A parody perhaps, but it does provide me with a (somewhat deliciously naughty) ruse. Numbers go down well with government policy and decision makers and it is clear that what is 'countable' counts. Rose points out that 'numbers':

> ...make modern modes of government both possible and judgeable. Possible because they help make up the object domains upon which government is required to operate. They map the boundaries and the internal characteristics of the spaces of population, economy and society. And other locales – the organization, the hospital, the university, the factory and so on – are made intelligible, calculable and practicable through representations that are, at least in one part numerical. ... [N]umbers do not merely inscribe a pre-existing reality. They construct it (1999:197,212).

Hence, I look towards the positivist-like methods of quantitative research for the criterion I might appropriate in order to make a pattern that appears legitimate in its 'truth' claims. As Parker suggests, I will take the rules of that game and make them serve the player/pagan's advantage (1997:68) and with these 'rules' create a 'realist tale' (Lather 1991).

In relation to criterion what then is needed is a stringent pattern that appears 'solid, neutral, independent of the speaker, and to be merely mirroring some aspect of the world' (Potter in Edwards, Clarke, Harrison and Reeve 2002:130). Yes, objectivity is a requirement - yet, while it might be implied it is a literary illusion because an absent 'I' does not mean that 'I' am absent (Stronach & MacLure in Edwards, Clarke, Harrison and Reeve 2002:136). I am reminded that my credibility as a quantitative researcher is reliant upon keeping personal bias in check (Anderson and Poole 1994:24). *Check!* Of course, it is conceded that there is always danger of personal 'bias interfering' with 'suitable interpretation' (ibid 28). Designing the study will be

crucial because 'if a wrong decision is made, the whole study may be criticised on the grounds of inappropriate design or, *even worse, as being unscientific or illogical'* (Anderson and Poole 1994:24 *my italics)!*

Moreover, if a realist text is the aim, then I will need to 'conceal, iron out inconsistencies and establish coherence' (Stronach & MacLure in Edwards, Clarke, Harrison and Reeve 2002:130). My 'legitimate' claims to authority should create 'true' research', that mimics academic conventions 'including a description of background, aims, methodology, and outcomes' (Edwards, Clarke, Harrison and Reeve 2002:136). In this way grounding the pattern in '...positivist assumptions about the nature, production, and function of knowledge' (Edwards, Clarke, Harrison and Reeve 2002:136). In all I suspect that this will require a 'more inventive use of the language' of science than 'traditionally respectable' (Parker 1997:69).

Performing these criteria will produce a stringent pattern. Yet, even while appearing otherwise, such a stringent pattern will not be so much concerned about objectivity, truth or even epistemology, as it is about ethics and justice. And again, I implicate myself in what I might otherwise oppose (Butler 1993:241).

In all, it is a cultural point that is being made here – not a theoretical one. In what follows I am not concerned with theory *building* but I am concerned with building or creating a pattern that makes visible the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres – a pattern made possible through 'writing up' the work of centres in very particularised ways.

Righting the world and this game of *cat's cradle*

Among the many desires that drive this study is one of righting the world. This chapter began by extrapolating this notion of *righting* the world. I explored what I mean by righting, and at the same time pointed to the futility of the endeavour. Even though a flawed project, 'righting the world' is a project that I do not fully reject either. In my tragic pursuit I turned to the potential of research, policy and writing for righting and proposed some criteria that would serve my paradoxically tragic resolve to 'right'.

I have looked toward 'science' and drawn some attention to the privileged place of positivist-like research methods and in particular, the privilege of these practices in educational research – and especially to those who have decision-making power. Despite malignancy most commonly associated with quantitative research among some educational researchers, these technologies are understood here as (ironically) promising. While oft maligned and vilified, make no mistake, positivist-like research is not obsolete either (Lather 1992:90).

If I am to speak I must choose a voice in a moment where there seems a proliferation of tragic voices. I must either choose among tragic voices, or remain silent. While this seems unjust, what is truly unjust is removing the possibility of speaking at all, so in my pursuit of righting I have chosen. It *is* risky, but given the stakes I believe it to be a necessary risk:

> Misunderstanding is the essential and hence necessary risk of all understanding. There is only one way to evade this risk, which is *not* to engage in an act of reading or interpretation at all (Biesta 2001:36-37).

Conclusion to chapter

This chapter has staged a case for the production of a stringent pattern of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. Positivist-like research methods, understood as a legitimising practice rather than trouble-free science, can be mobilised by the pagan researcher to legitimise other practices. This discussion has moved the creation of a stringent (and partially promising) version of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. Such a 'string(ent) pattern' is presented in the following chapter of this *tragic righting* project.

Chapter 7 A string(ent) pattern

Introduction to chapter

Looking first to the 'gaps' of the preliminary pattern (chapter five), the previous chapter (chapter six) moved the production of a particular type of pattern. It was argued that some 'hard' evidence was required if the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres is to be taken seriously by policy and decision makers, if not by centres themselves. In the previous chapter I argued that one way the type of evidence required could be achieved through a carefully produced empirical pattern – a (scientifically created?) stringent pattern.

This chapter creates such a 'stringent pattern' of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres[3]. To create this, a survey was undertaken. The survey conforms to the rigors expected of quantitative research and, through its purposeful design, has gathered much data that, in turn, provides a convincing foundation for findings. The findings of the survey demonstrate a substantial amount of learning provided by NSW neighbourhood centres: in numbers of actual courses, numbers of participants as well as student contact hours. Indeed (on one measure), neighbourhood centres are understood to be providing almost as much adult community education as the ACE sector itself. Furthermore, the findings also demonstrate a variety of practices employed by centres to organise their provision, as well as high incidences of targeted activities for disadvantaged groups. Overall, the findings of the survey provide compelling evidence that leads to the conclusion that neighbourhood centres are, indeed, 'significant' providers of adult community education in NSW.

This chapter is organised around five parts. The first part presents a rationale for the study, and reiterates the need for study that specifically scopes the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. Drawing partially from a different reading of literature from that presented in chapter four, this part

[3] A version of this chapter was given to the LCSA. Segments were published in *Local* (LCSA's member newsletter).

foregrounds some existing studies that are partly replicated in this *sub*-study. The second part of this chapter provides details of the processes of data collection. In particular it highlights the research design strategies that have led to the collection of a statistically reliable foundation for conclusions drawn in this chapter. Following this, the specific findings of the survey are analysed and presented. Some of the findings are compared to existing studies and it is here that aspects of the provision of NSW neighbourhood centres exhibit some interesting trends. The fourth part of this chapter further discusses the findings and draws some conclusions. Inferences are made and suggestions for further research are posed. The fifth, and final, part of the chapter returns once again to the *cat's cradle* analogy. Here, some different (if not contradictory) conclusions are drawn.

Rationale

Despite recognition in some research of the educative practices of neighbourhood centres, recognition of NSW neighbourhood centres being sites of learning is ambiguous. On the one hand there appears to be substantial literature suggesting neighbourhood centres are players in the national field of ACE. On the other hand, the examples used are almost exclusively drawn from outside NSW. For example, a national research project of Australian ACE in the early 1990s produced a seminal report entitled '*Come in Cinderella*' which provided glowing references to centres. However, it drew its data largely from the states of Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia (Senate Standing Committee 1991:59-62) where the provision of learning is state-supported. Similarly, other national research looks toward Victoria to inform generic accounts of neighbourhood centres' role in adult community education – even when the researchers themselves are NSW based (Knights 1995; McIntyre and Kimberley 1996). However, generalisations formed in this national literature fail to account for important contextual variances brought about through Australia's federation style of governance, which sees different practices across state borders (Morris 2002; Choy, Haukka and Keyes 2006). The result of using only a few states as 'the norm' are skewed national pictures based on atypical samples.

Furthermore, NSW research fails to account for any centre-based provision at all. Any NSW ACE research is primarily concerned with a particularised definition of adult community education. The provider defines the definition of ACE used in NSW based research hence only the activities of state-supported providers are included. This serves to distort any representation of the provision of adult community education activity in NSW. And again, the result is generalisations about the provision of adult community education is based on atypical sampling.

Atypical sampling, at both the national and state level in Australia, has resulted in any contribution to the national learning landscape by NSW centres not being fully acknowledged, understood or accounted for. This contributes to the current situation where significant gaps in knowledge are noted. The National Centre for Education and Vocational Education Research (NCVER) reports one example of a significant gap in what is known. They suggest that Australia's neighbourhood centres may account for approximately 120,000 to 150,000 students participating in learning not provided through formal adult education organisations (NCVER 2001:34). The inability to capture centre statistics in NCVER's study is because organisations that are not directly funded by the State to provide adult learning are not obliged to collect learner statistics, which is the case for the neighbourhood centres of NSW. It is this situation that gives rise to questions about how much of this estimate might be attributed to the work of NSW neighbourhood centres?

However, inability to capture appropriate data, does not preclude adult community education from being provided. Nor is provision that is organised through state-supported providers the only way that adult community education can be organised. What it does mean, though, is that any ACE-like learning activity that may be occurring in NSW neighbourhood centres is (by nature) organised differently from that which is state supported. If it is not state supported, then how *is* it organised?

One source of research that begins to address this question is that from the Local Community Services Association (LCSA). This organisation, as a peak organisation for neighbourhood centres in NSW, has taken a lead role in

producing knowledge about centres and their generalist work (LCSA 1994; LCSA 1998b; LCSA 2001a; LCSA 2002a; LCSA 2004a). Bullen also contributes some research concerned with NSW neighbourhood centres, with much being commissioned through LCSA (Bullen and LCSA 1998a; Bullen and LCSA 1998b; Bullen and Onyx 1999; Bullen and LCSA 2000). This body of work begins to draw attention to how NSW centres might be understood as doing something 'educational'. However the primary concern of this work has been to demonstrate and measure aspects of community development (Kenny 1994; McArdle 1999), of which adult community education and adult learning are only a proportion.

In stating this limitation it is important to note that the research undertaken by the LCSA does suggest that centres are working with some of NSW's most disadvantaged and marginalised people (LCSA 1997; LCSA 1998a; LCSA 1998b; LCSA 2004a). Research concerning the provision of learning opportunities for these people is important because education has been identified as a contributing factor to poverty and social exclusion. In order to increase opportunities for disadvantaged people, it is important that more is known about how to provide for their educational needs – clearly under-representation in more formal education is evidence for how the current situation is inadequate. Learning more about providing adult education for disadvantaged people is a priority both nationally and within the state of NSW. If neighbourhood centres are proven to be providing adult community education to these groups then it also has implications for formal ACE who may well learn also something about providing for these people's particular needs. So another question is around who neighbourhood centres provide any ACE-like activities for?

The Bullen / LCSA studies take the form of a census (Bullen and LCSA 1998a; Bullen and LCSA 2000; LCSA 2001a; LCSA 2004a). While there are common themes in each of these censuses, there is also a portion of each that focuses on a specific issue. Some of these have been: social capital, resources, people, funding issues and information technology. As a group of reports these provide some valuable information that can be used to identify any trends.

Therefore, an aim of this survey research is both to replicate parts of existing studies, as well as extend them, in order to produce a new understanding of the scope and potentiality of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. Like the work of LCSA and Bullen, this research asks 'how many' and 'what type of' activities are centres providing. This partial replication of existing studies enables commentary on whether the provision of learning of NSW neighbourhood centres is exhibiting any trends. However, unlike these existing studies, *this* survey research further contributes to knowledge about neighbourhood centres by exploring how ACE-like activities are organised, what is being provided, and who is it provided for.

Process

Collaborations with the Local Community Services Association (LCSA)

The process of collecting data for this study was multifaceted[4] and took place over a five-month period beginning in June 2004. A key strategy was to procure the cooperation of the LCSA, which is the peak association for neighbourhood centres in NSW. It was anticipated that LCSA cooperation would work to maximise participation by centres. Therefore LCSA management was approached and an agreement was reached. To this end, LCSA were involved in several aspects including taking part in a pilot study to test the data collection instrument as well as providing access to their network of centres.

Identifying neighbourhood centres

The LCSA suggests a neighbourhood centre is an organisation that 'caters for people looking for local information, activities and community connections and typically receive 'Neighbourhood Centre Funding' through the Department of Community Services' (LCSA 2004a:3). They further suggest that the practices of community development are a key characteristic in neighbourhood centre work. The LCSA currently list 255 organisations that identify as neighbourhood centres under the organisation's definition (LCSA 2004a). This estimate also includes centres that meet the criteria of neighbourhood centres mentioned above, but are not members of LCSA. This list of members of a homogenous group (Lewin 2004:218) provided 'an

[4] Indeed my entire project's data collection processes were multifaceted. However, it is only the survey research that is of concern here (other chapters deal with other bits).

excellent sampling frame' for this specialised research purpose (Babbie 2004:200).

Process of collecting data

Information about the research project was initially posted to all 255 centres prior to the actual survey being distributed in mid 2005. This was inserted as a brochure in the LCSA monthly newsletter (appendix A). The purpose of this preliminary information was to alert centres to the research project as well as incite some initial interest in participation. Packages that included the survey as well as some supporting information were then posted to centres in July. A central list of centres in NSW (derived from LCSA) enabled the tracking of individual centres' participation (Lewin 2004). Hence, in August, a second round was posted only to centres that had not yet responded. In September, attendance at the LCSA conference enabled personal contact with centre coordinators, and in particular from centres that had not responded. In October, a (Google) web search located non-respondent neighbourhood centre websites and enabled the accrual of additional data. Finally, in late October, non-responding centres from regions with a lower response rate were contacted and invited to participate in an abridged version of the questionnaire over the telephone.

Data collection instrument

The data collection instrument took the shape of a survey (appendix B), and this was specifically developed to achieve two important aims (Lewin 2004; Barnes and Lewin 2004). The first was that it should elicit appropriate information (Garratt and Li 2004:201). The data sought was particularly concerned with the number and types of activities, number and types of participants, organisational aspects and numerical questions that could be tabulated to appropriate student contact hours[5]. A second, and equally important, aim for the data collection was that it should be as easy as possible for responders to complete (Lewin 2004:219). This was considered important because complex or lengthy surveys would diminish the likelihood of centre coordinators completing it. To achieve both these aims the data

[5] One aspect of the survey that is not discussed here is the inclusion of an open-ended question about 'why centres ran particular courses'. This question was included for reasons that will be explored in detail (as will the responses it procured) in chapters eight and nine. In line with the overall purpose (and spirit) of the pattern presented in this chapter, it is not included for the moment.

collection instrument was limited to a one-page survey that asked only a limited number of critical questions (Babbie 2004:249).

Supporting documentation

An associated strategy employed to maximise data collection was the inclusion of supporting documentation to accompany the survey (Babbie 2004:250-261). Packages of several documents, in addition to the actual survey, were sent to individual centres. The package included a covering letter, a one-page document outlining 'tips' for potential responders (appendix C), a reply-paid envelope, as well as the actual survey (Lewin 2004:220). These documents were included to provide background information to the study, directions about how to participate in the project (including ethical considerations), reasons why they should consider participation and additional information about other ways they could participate (see chapter nine of this thesis). Furthermore, all these documents followed some basic design principles that included aspects like language conventions and use of blank space that facilitate understanding, and thus support the aim of maximising participation (Lewin 2004; Barnes and Lewin 2004).

Response rate

The survey achieved a response rate of 60% of the total population of NSW neighbourhood centres *(n=155)*. While a population survey was an ultimate aim, it was conceded that not all centres would participate ... 'because this almost never happens' (Babbie 2004:261). However a response rate of between 55-60% is considered 'more than adequate' for analysis and reporting purposes (Babbie 2004:261) and therefore the 60% response rate can be considered a reliable basis for research conclusions. Overall, data was collected from 1440 separate cases that are presented here as 'activities' (Garratt and Li 2004).

The 1440 cases were collected via several sources (see Table A. below). Of the 1440 activities 69.2% were from the written surveys. However, once the majority of surveys were returned then further data was collected by other means. For example, 23.1% of the final response was from an abridged phone survey, and a further 7.8% was collected from internet sources:

	Frequency of actual cases	*Percent of overall data collected in this manner*
Survey	996	69.2
Phone	332	23.1
Internet	112	7.8
Total	1440	100.0

Table A: Method of response

Decisions about which centres to telephone were based on stratifying variables, which then ensured reliable representation of the state's centres (de Vaus 1995:65). These stratification variables were seventeen geographic regions, and these regions are ones used by LCSA, and by Bullen (1998a; Bullen and LCSA 2000; LCSA 2001a; LCSA 2004a). Moreover, as Table B (below) illustrates, the LCSA regions are useful because they demonstrate how centre location is also commensurate with the state's population and this further qualifies the sample (Barnes and Lewin 2004, Lewin 2004). In all, an average of 60% of the total number of centres in each region are represented in the entire sample, and no region is represented by less than 50% of its centres

	NSW regions	*Number of Centres in region*	*Number of Centres in region responding*	*Percentage of Centres in region responding*	*% of Centres in larger region*	*Population in larger region**	*% of larger Region represented in sample*
Metropolitan NSW	Cumberland/prospect	19	10	53%			
	Inner West Sydney	21	14	67%			
	Macarthur	9	6	67%			
	Marrickville / St George	14	7	50%			
	Nepean	27	21	78%			
	North East Sydney	10	7	70%	70%	4,463,431	61%
	South Western Sydne	19	11	58%			
	Sutherland	6	3	50%			
	Hunter	23	13	57%			
	Illawarra	17	9	53%			
	Central coast	14	9	64%			
Rural NSW	Far north coast	14	8	57%			
	Mid north coast	13	7	54%	30%	1.908,314	60%
	New England	9	6	67%			
	Riverina Murray	14	7	50%			
	South East NSW	12	8	67%			
	Western NSW	14	9	64%			
	Total	225	155	60%			

*source: ABS 2001 census

Table B: Percentage of centres, population and responses by various NSW regions

Of the centres that did not respond, 10 non-participating centres were chosen at random and then contacted to ask why they had *not* participated. These non-participating centres gave the following reasons:

- Too busy to take time required
- Too many requests for surveys/data collections
- Forgot – meant to get around to it

There were no significant differences between participating and non-participating centres in the sample and thus no reason to believe that non-participation skewed results in any way. Similarly, there were no significant differences between data collected by written survey, phone or internet sources other than some questions not being answered. For example, because phone surveys were an abridged version, not all the questions were answered. Moreover, it was not always possible to collect data about targeted activities and enrolments from internet sources.

Although activities for children are important features of many neighbourhood centres' work, they are not included in these findings because they do not fit within the brief of a research project specifically concerned with *adult* learning. Hence, not all 1440 responses are included in analysis. A revised number of valid cases is 1406. The reason for this is because, while respondents were encouraged to include as many activities as possible, some included specific services for children.

Analysis and findings

Responses to the survey were analysed to provide a scoping of learning provided by NSW neighbourhood centres. The analysis here is largely descriptive (Garratt and Li 2004; Crook and Garrett 2004). The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer package was used for analysis (Garratt and Li 2004). In some instances correlation tests are applied to identify any trends. Extrapolated estimates are made for the entire NSW neighbourhood centre sector through linear extrapolation. This extrapolation is based on 62% of actual responses from participating organisations within the sector.

The findings of the survey are presented below. They are loosely organised around four broad themes; activities, enrolment, organisation and provision.

Activities

Extrapolating from the actual responses to the survey sees 2343 ACE-like activities being provided in a typical week in NSW neighbourhood centres. These have been categorised into smaller category types for further analysis. For the purposes of this study four activity types are used. These four activity types are groups, adult community education (ACE courses), social action and vocational/pre-vocational activities (VET/Pre-VET). These categories closely parallel existing studies (Bullen and LCSA 1998a)[6].

Valid	*Actual responses*	*Estimate for all centres*	*Percent of activities*
Groups	538	897	38.3
ACE Courses	538	897	38.3
Social Action	66	110	4.7
VET/Pre-VET	224	373	15.9
Unknown	40	67	2.8
Total	1406	2343	100.0

Table C: Activity type of centres in a week

Based on the findings of the survey, an estimated 897 groups are held in NSW neighbourhood centres in a typical week. Groups include activities 'where the purpose is to benefit the members of the group' (Bullen and LCSA 1998a). Examples of the ACE-like activities in the category of groups include:

- *Book club*
- *Seniors social group*
- *Tamil women's group*
- *Domestic violence survivor's group*
- *Playgroup*
- *Discussion group*
- *Amputee support group*
- *Alcoholics/Narcotic/Overeaters Anonymous*
- *Supported playgroup*
- *Cancer support group*
- *Dad's group*
- *Senior computer club*

An estimated 897 adult community education courses are provided in neighbourhood centres across NSW in a typical week. While in one sense all the activities of concern in this study might be described as 'adult community education', here the term specifically refers to activities that might also be

[6] Bullen makes a distinction between groups *with* leaders and leader*less* groups, however this was not viewed as a priority with the current study. Therefore both groups *with* leaders and those without appear in the data under the single category of 'groups'

called 'courses'. The purpose of these courses is specifically to develop particular skills, knowledge and/or attitudes. These adult community education activities are non-accredited and might also be described as informal. Examples of the range within this activity type include courses in:

- *Art/craft*
- *Parenting*
- *Yoga / pilates*
- *Guitar*
- *Tai chi*
- *Belly dance*
- *Anger management*
- *Teddy bear making*
- *Gentle exercise*
- *Paper making*
- *Permaculture*
- *Lip reading*

Approximately 110 social action activities are provided in NSW neighbourhood centres in a typical week. The category of social action refers to activities where people come collaboratively work toward addressing a common concern, and developing and carrying out strategies to address them. Examples of social action here include concerns in regard to:

- *Refugees*
- *Tidy towns*
- *East Timor*
- *Environment*
- *Resident action*
- *Reconciliation*
- *Gay & lesbian rights*
- *Saving suburbs/parks*
- *Public Housing Tenancy*

Vocational and pre-vocational account for an estimated 373 activities in NSW centres each week. As its name suggests, this category refers to activities where the primary purpose is to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes that prepare people for further vocational education or (paid or unpaid) work. Some example of VET/Pre-VET activities include:

- *English as a Second Language (ESL)*
- *Senior First Aid*
- *AUSLAN*
- *Computers & information technology*
- *MYOB*
- *Life experience counts (RPL course)*
- *Literacy, numeracy and various basic education*
- *Resume writing*

When these results of this survey are compared to Bullen and LCSA's 2000 census of centre activities (2001a), some interesting trends are noted (see Table D below). For example, increases are noted in the provision of activities in three of the categories (groups, adult community education and VET/Pre-VET), and a decrease in provision is noted in another (social action).

	Bullen's Estimate	*This study's estimates of activities*	
	Of activities (+ or – 10%)	(95% confidence interval)	
Groups	690 (621,759)	897 (807,987)	(23% increase)
ACE courses	600 (540,660)	897 (807,987)	(33% increase)
Social Action	165 (148,182)	110 (99, 121)	(50% decrease)
Pre-Vocational	130 (117,143)	373 (335,411)	(65% increase)
Total	1585 (1426,1744)	2343 (2108,2577)	(overall 32% increase)

Table D: Comparison of this study with existing study

Overall, these findings not only support the overarching hypothesis that NSW neighbourhood centres are providing adult learning, but when compared to existing studies also draw attention to an increase in the provision of these types of activities.

Bullen states in the LCSA Data Collection that 'the estimates for activity counts are + or – 10%', similar intervals were calculated for the current study (2001a). As the intervals from the Bullen study and the current study do not overlap, the differences are significant.

In regard to the question of the content of these activity types, the survey enabled the classification of activities by employing the 'broad fields' categories of the Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED), Field of Education (FOE). However, an additional field was added because of the need to classify many ACE-like activities where the content focused specifically on families and family relationships. The table below shows the break up of the various content areas of activities.

	Actual responses	*Percent*
Health (eg Exercise, Weight control, Diabetes /Cancer or other medical condition support etc.)	345	24.5
Creative Arts (eg Craft, Art, Woodwork, Dance, Music, Theatre Appreciation etc.)	254	18.1
Society and culture (eg Ethno-specific groups, Punjabi Culture, Reconciliation, History, Heritage, Senior's etc.)	193	13.7
Mixed Field Programs (eg Literacy, Numeracy, English as a Second Language, Work Skills, RPL programs, Resume Writing etc.)	185	13.2
Family/Family Relationships (eg Playgroup, Supported Playgroup, Parenting, Parenting Teenagers, Young Mums support etc.)	151	10.7
Information Technology (eg Computer Classes, Internet, MYOB etc.)	85	5.9
Uncoded (eg not enough information provided and/or unable to be coded)	77	5.5
Food, hospitality and personal services (Food Handling, Microwave Cooking, Carer's Information etc.)	46	3.3
Management and commerce (eg Organising Income Tax, Community Management, Starting a Small Business etc.)	40	2.8
Environmental & related (eg Environmental Action Groups, Community Gardens, Permiculture etc.)	30	2.1
* Categories adapted from broad fields of study with the addition of 'family/ family relationships' Total	1406	100.0

Table E: Broad areas of activities*

These findings show that health related content is the largest single broad field of study in neighbourhood centres (24.5%). Followed by creative arts, society and culture, mixed field programs and then 'family'. These five broad areas account for the majority of all centre provision (80.2%).

The emergence of a community concern with the 'take up' of information technology is also evident in these findings and it will be interesting to note if this percentage increases in future studies.

Enrolments and participation

The extrapolated survey findings suggest some 29,980 enrolments in the ACE-like activities provided through NSW neighbourhood centres in a typical week (based on an enrolments figure of 18,223 from the survey). A limitation in regard to this estimate is that it is unknown how many individuals participate in more than one activity provided by centres. Therefore, it is emphasised that these (and following) estimations are understood as 'enrolments' of centre activities - with the understanding that individuals may participate in more than one activity run by the centre: this is consistent with national reporting mechanisms. A second limitation in regard to enrolments is that where data was sourced from the Internet, estimates were based on an average number of participants in identical groups/courses derived from survey responses where all information was provided. Bullen's work suggests an average of 10-12 participants in most centre activities, and this was also found to be the case in this study. And finally, where groups are targeted to families (playgroups for example), only the adult participants are included in estimations.

The results suggest a 32% increase in enrolments compared to a similar study. While this research suggests around 29,980 enrolments a week, an estimate of 19,000 enrolments was made around five years earlier (Bullen, 1998a). This 32% increase in enrolments in neighbourhood centre provision over the past five years is commensurate with the 32% increase in provision (see Table D).

To further address issues around the scope of provision, the study estimated the enrolments in each activity-type. Results show that most enrolments are in group activities or ACE-like courses (see Table F below). There are an estimated 12,000 weekly enrolments in group activities, and a further 11,500 in ACE-like courses. The survey also highlights that there are more weekly enrolments in VET/Pre-VET activities than in social action.

Activity type	*Actual weekly enrolments from sample*	*Estimated weekly enrolments for all courses (95% confidence interval)*	
Group	7335	12067	(11233, 12901)
ACE course	6992	11502	(9652, 13352)
Social action	1011	1663	(1301, 2025)
Pre-VET	2307	3795	(3558, 4032)
Other*	578	950	(642, 1258)

*The 40 activities that were unable to be easily classified into the four categories (see Table C) appear as 'other' in Table F.

Table F: Estimate of weekly enrolments by activity type

Targeted activities

NSW neighbourhood centres target their ACE-like activities to a diverse range of groups of people. The results found that most (62.7%) neighbourhood centre ACE-like activities are targeted toward particular groups of people (Table G).

		Frequency	*Percent*
Valid	Yes	833	62.7
	No	495	37.3
	Total	1328	100.0

Table G: Positive responses about targeting neighbourhood centre activities

In some instances where data were sourced via the internet the actual name of the activity suggested that it could reasonably be added to data concerned with 'targeting': for example a 'women's group' clearly targets women. The table below shows positive responses from all data sources; negative responses are only included where there was an actual response to the question.

Not only are 62.7% of neighbourhood centre ACE-like activities specifically targeted, but they also target people who are members of (well recognised) disadvantaged and marginalised groups. The survey used an open-ended question to ask centres what groups of people (if it were the case) they targeted their activities toward. Based on responses concerning 833 activities

that targeted a particular activity, a diverse range of groups of people emerged from the data as being targets for these activities. Several common themes were seen in response. These are tabulated below (Table H).

Groups of people to whom NCs target their activities	*Percentage of activities targeted to this group*
Women	15 %
NESB/ Ethno-specific (includes ATSI)	15%
Families	14 %
People aged 40-55	10%
People with specific relationship to another (eg, primary carer)	9%
People with some kind of health condition	8%
Senior / frail aged persons	6%
Young people	6%
People experiencing a 'problem' (eg a gambling addiction)	5%
Volunteers	3%
Economically disadvantaged	3%
Men	2%
Other (including another organisations, unemployed)	4%

Table H: Groups of people to whom neighbourhood centres activities are targeted

There are, however, some difficulties with the categories that emerged from this data. One difficulty is that they are not mutually exclusive. For example a mother can be included in the categories of families, women, ethno-specific, unemployed and/or socially disadvantaged. A further difficulty is that some groups either do not appear visible or the findings suggest lower representation. Two of these are 'isolated people' and 'people with low socio-economic circumstances'. It is suggested that, given the strong social justice mandate of centres, these are inherent in most centre activities. Moreover, as the Vinson studies demonstrated (2004), the demographics of particular areas will reflect particular groups of people. For example, the demographics of a small central western NSW town will assume 'isolated peoples', or the demographics of a suburb in south-western Sydney is likely to assume 'low socio-economic background' as a 'given' feature. Therefore, it is further suggested that while the findings do not adequately represent these

categories, this does not mean that provision does not occur for these groups.

Furthermore, while it is clear that disadvantaged people are targeted in centre activities, it is interesting to note the relatively small targeting of unemployed people in this data – yet also note an increase in the provision of VET/Pre-VET (see Table B). This raises questions for further research, as well as the centres themselves. Does this mean that people's status as family member is more privileged by centres than their employment status? Or might it mean that VET/Pre-VET programs are tailored to the specificities other than employment status (eg Computers for NESB Women)?

Nevertheless, the results appear indicative of centres' social justice mandate that calls for a redistribution of resources and a more equitable spread of (educational) opportunities. It also draws attention to another interesting point in regard to the targeting of activities in light of a decrease in social action coupled with an increase in VET/Pre-VET. On the one hand this trend might be understood as a lessening of concern for social justice in preference to getting people into paid work. However, given the clear targeting of centre activities, all provision might also be understood as 'social action' by addressing inequalities.

Organisation of activities

Given that the provision of adult community education in NSW neighbourhood centres is not state-supported, and thus not organised within existing educational structures, little is known about how else educational activity might be organised. In this study, centres were asked if any other entities were involved in organising activities. Of valid responses, almost half of the activities (45.1%) were organised in collaboration with one or more organisations. The chart below illustrates the break up and types of partnering organisations in these collaborations (Table I).

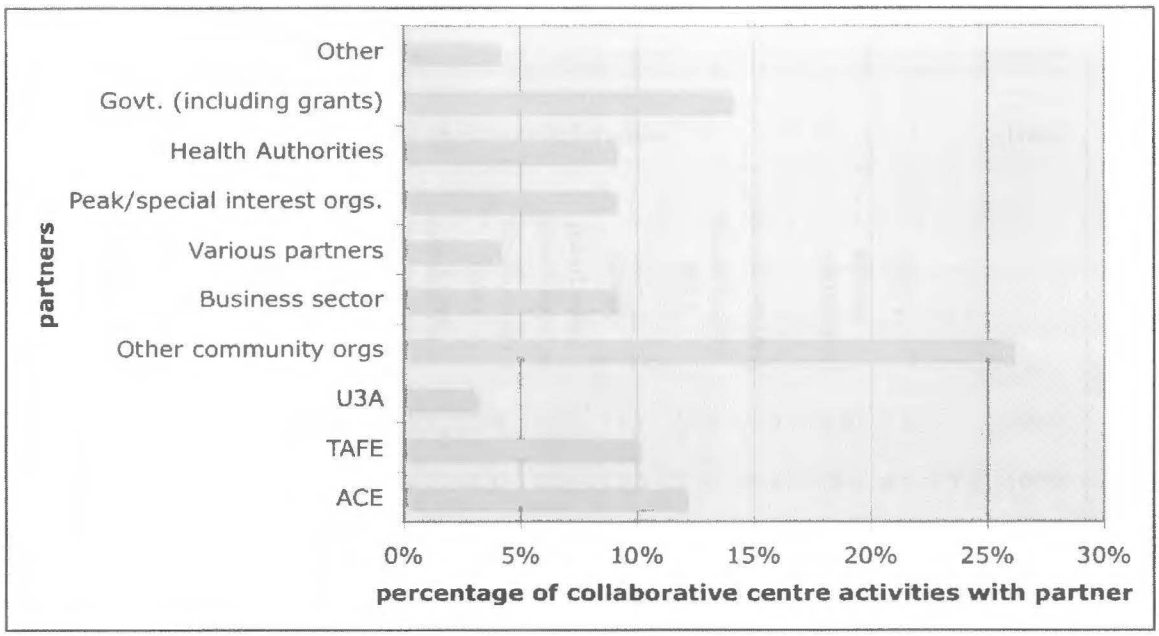


Table I: Who centres are partnering with when working in collaboration

An observation about these findings is the low representation of educational authorities as collaborating partners in Centre provision. While the table above is based on 598 responses, when these figures are expanded (by multiplying up) to include all provision by NSW neighbourhood centres, it becomes obvious that the majority of learning provided by NSW neighbourhood centres is done so in the absence of state-sanctioned educational providers. The findings suggest that the vast majority (86%) of learning provision in NSW centres is organised in the absence of any participation by educational authorities. Collaborations with educational authorities account for less than one fifth of the overall provision (14%). This draws attention to questions around the organisations that centres collaborate with to provide these activities, and furthermore poses questions about possible correlations between targeted groups and partnering organisations. The table below (Table J) looks at these issues.

		Partners in collaboration											Total
		TAFE	ACE	Community Organisation	Local Government	Government Department	Health	Peak Organisations	Various partners	Business / Private	Other	U3A	
Activity type	Group	1.3		40.4	10.0	5.0	12.1	19.6	5.4	5.0	1.3		100.0
	ACE Course	5.2	21.6	23.2	2.6	2.6	11.3	2.1	2.1	18.0	4.1	7.2	100.0
	Social Action			29.6	14.8	22.2		7.4	18.5	7.4			100.0
	VET / Pre-VET	41.1	25.0	7.1	2.7	4.5	2.7		1.8	4.5	9.8	.9	100.0
	Unknown		3.6	7.1	17.9	71.4							100.0
Total		9.8	11.8	26.6	6.8	8.0	9.0	8.8	4.0	9.0	3.7	2.5	100.0

Table J: Cross tabulation showing percentage of activity type by partners in collaboration

These findings set out in Table J suggest that when centres collaboratively organise 'groups' they are more likely to partner with another community organisation or a peak organisation. When organising an ACE course, centres are more likely to work with another community organisation, an ACE provider or a private business respectively. When organising social action collaboratively centres are likely to partner with either another community organisation, a government department or partner with more than one organisation. Vocational and pre-vocational courses that are organised collaboratively are most likely work collaboratively with TAFE, or with an ACE organisation. Government departments are most likely to be partners in activities that were unable to be coded in this study.

Funding activities

Funding for the learning activities provided in NSW neighbourhood centres can take a variety of forms. Addressing the question about how centre activities are funded was important because criticism has been made of the formalised ACE sector for their overt reliance on a user-pay system and, in particular, what this might mean in regard to access for disadvantaged

people (McIntyre and Kimberley 1996; Rooney 2004a). The survey achieved usable data from 939 cases, from which some interesting findings emerged around what organisations funded the centre provision (Table K).

		Frequency in sample	*Percent*	*Valid Percent*
Valid	User Pays	232	23.3	24.8
	Centre (with a donation from user)	188	18.9	20.1
	Centre only	247	24.8	26.4
	Another organization	157	15.8	16.8
	Grant/project funding	80	8.0	8.5
	Other	32	3.2	3.4
	Total	939	94.0	100.0

Table K: Who pays for activities provided in NSW neighbourhood centres

A user-pay funding arrangement was evident in 24.8% of cases. This does not include a further 20.1% of participants who were asked for a donation. Over a quarter of activities are funded through centres themselves (26.4%). Another organisation pays costs of provision in 16.8% of cases. Specific grants or project funding covers the costs of provision in just 8.5% of cases.

The break up of funding for the provision in centres raises an associated organisational issue concerning possible relationships between particular types of ACE-like activities and who might pay for these. The table below (Table L) looks at this aspect.

		Who pays for it?						*Total*
		User Pays	Centre (with donation from user)	Centre only	Another organization	Grant / Project Funding	Other	
Activity type	*Group*	18.5	26.1	29.3	14.5	8.1	3.4	00.0
	ACE Course	**46.8**	18.6	17.2	10.7	4.5	2.3	00.0
	Social Action	2.3	14.0	**55.8**	9.3	18.6	.0	00.0
	VET/ Pre-VET	11.8	**3.7**	29.4	**39.7**	9.6	5.9	00.0
	Unknown	17.2	17.2	10.3	6.9	**41.4**	6.9	00.0
Total		27.1	19.4	25.5	16.2	8.5	3.3	00.0

Table L: Cross tabulation showing 'activity type' by 'who pays for it'

Insofar as how particular ACE-like activities of centres are funded, the table above suggests that this, too, takes a variety of forms. A range of organisations funded the provision of groups and there was a spread across users, centres and user donations. This spread is in contrast to almost half (46.8%) of participants paying for activities that were classed as adult community education. Where activities were classed as social action then it was more likely that the centre itself pays (55.8%). However, centres pay for very little VET/Pre-VET (3.7%), activity in this category was more likely to be funded through another organisation (39.7%).

Student contact hours

A final aspect considered by this survey research is that of Student Contact Hours (SCH). This is the standardised measurement of educational activity is derived through multiplying the number of participants by the face-to-face hours of activity. In the sample the total number of student contact hours accrued in a typical week (calculated as attendance X hours) was 53,199. When extrapolated by multiplying up the estimate of weekly student contact hours in NSW neighbourhood centres is 87,521. Furthermore, in the sample

the total number of student contact hours accrued over a year (attendance X hours X weeks) was 1,871,063, and an extrapolated estimate of SCH over a year is 3 078 200 (Table M).

Activity type	*Sample: total annual student contact hours (number of courses in sample)*	*Estimated student contact hours per year for activity type*	*95% confidence interval for total student contact hours per year*
Group	815,162 (522)	1,341,073	1,136,637 – 1,545,509
ACE course	627,384 (528)	1,032,148	788,366 - 1,275,930
Social action	56,102 (64)	92,297	62,796 - 121,798
Pre-VET	319, 671 (222)	525,910	351,627 - 700,194
Other	52,744 (38)	86,772	30,202 - 143,343
Total	1,871,063 (1374)	3,078,200	2,710,638 - 3,445,764

Table M: Student contact hours per year by activity type

This annual estimate positions neighbourhood centre provision as substantial indeed when it is compared to the formal NSW ACE sector whose annual accrual of SCHs was 3,394,300 in 2003 (BACE 2004:22). This draws attention to the possibility that NSW neighbourhood centres are providing almost as much adult community education as the recognised (and funded) ACE sector itself.

Survey conclusions

The research reported in this chapter set out to draw attention to the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres by a scoping exercise. With some 35,000 weekly enrolments (of predominantly disadvantaged people) and over 3 million SCHs per annum, this research represents a substantial narrowing of gaps indicated in previous research (NCVER 2001; MCEETYA 2002; ABS 2003). If this study is only representative of NSW, and specifically neighbourhood centres in NSW, then research by other NGOs in NSW, as well as by centres and NGOs in other Australian states might aid in further narrowing these gaps.

What is particularly interesting about these results is that adult learning provision in NSW neighbourhood centres is organised in a variety of ways

and that collaboration plays a pivotal role in almost half (45.1%) of the total provision. While these collaborations are with a diverse range of entities, around 86% of all provision by NSW centres is largely provided in the absence of participation by recognised educational authorities.

In regard to the content of the provision, highly represented are the areas of health (24%), mixed field programs (including literacy) (13.2%) and family/family relationships (10.7%): all of which are priority areas for learning among OECD countries (OECD 2001; OECD 2004a). Furthermore, the results demonstrate that the provision by neighbourhood centres is increasing. A comparison of numbers of actual activities between this research and a study undertaken in 1999 has seen an increase of 32%. Commensurate with this increase in numbers of activities has been a 32% increase in numbers of enrolments.

Overall the results of this research conclude that neighbourhood centres are making a substantial contribution to the adult learning landscape of NSW. As substantial contributors, whose work has been somewhat overlooked till now, neighbourhood centres provide potentially interesting sites for researchers concerned with learning more about providing for the needs of people under-represented in more formal learning: *What might neighbourhood centres know and understand about providing adult community education that formal learning institutions do not?* Furthermore, because much neighbourhood centre provision is organised in collaboration, useful questions might be asked about these collaborations: *What makes for successful collaborations, and how might this be extended in other sectors keen to promote cross-sectorial partnerships?* Finally, while this research has served to draw attention to how one type of small non-government organisation is contributing to the educational goals of the State, future questions for researchers and policy makers might include: *If, and if so then how, this type of provision can be supported and developed: as well as exploring the impact and outcomes for participants?*

A stringent pattern and this game of *cat's cradle*

I'm back... although I haven't been that far away really. This chapter was staged in very particular ways and although I strived to make it appear 'authorless' by letting 'the text persuade readers by logic' (Lindlof 1995:24), any objectivity was merely an illusion (Weiss 1991:43).

I preceded this chapter with an argument that I wanted to 'right' the world (although I also argued it to be an untenable project). In my tragic pursuit I turned to numbers. Strange - even if I am sceptic (somewhat of a non-believer if you will), the numbers have seduced me. *But why? What is it about the numbers that create these patterns that have such seduction? How can I be both devotee and dissonant?* Perhaps it is the 'knots of extraordinary density' that Haraway describes (1994a:63), or the 'trees with foundational root systems' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) that give this pattern an illusion of an anchoring *solid-ness*.

Working with quasi-educational categories drawn from educational discourses has helped produce this very particular pattern of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. Given its claims (say, the thirty five thousand weekly enrolments or the three million plus SCHs) it might even attract the interest of BACE. But before I adorn the pattern this chapter presents with accolades, there are some issues about the technologies that were borrowed and adapted for the production that need further discussion.

This pattern was premised on what comes before method. In this case I argued that responsibility to the other was my pagan (and just) pursuit. As a pagan player of *cat's cradle* I created this pattern mindful of the many hands that the pattern already passed through, not to mention those hands of others that might take up this pattern for their own games. For me this responsibility means taking seriously the promises made to neighbourhood centre participants to pass on these patterns in order that they might 'add new moves' for their own games (Haraway 1994a:69-70) – the solidity may have some limited (if not bittersweet) currency here.

While adopting the technologies of statistics has created some impressive knots that appear 'solid' enough, I cannot help also noticing what has been

left out – that is, the gaps. Numbers, remember, can also depoliticise and sanitise what is being measured (Rose 1999:205). I need to ask if in my effort to 'right' have I undermined the spirit of justice that I sought. In framing neighbourhood centres in 'educational speak' I cannot help but notice a different sort of gap than the one presented in the first subversion (chapter five). As I look over the stringent pattern, I wonder if other activities undertaken as part of neighbourhood centres' social justice mandate (activities that might otherwise be understood as those where learning is happening) have been purged. Indeed have I purged 'the community' I desired *righting* in the first place? Are differences inaccessible? Are centres reduced to 'the same'?

Oh, 'the impossible possibility of justice' (Biesta 2001:50)! Impossible because, aside from any limited value, this pagan pursuit may have concretised the work of centres in quasi-educational frames. Yet rather than think of this as a complete disservice it is better understood as 'bearing witness to the *differend*' - where the work of neighbourhood centres is not captured in the overarching (and powerful) categories of education. So, on the one hand is a stringent pattern that may have some limited value for centres, and on the other might be something quite different indeed. What is clear though is the need to note not only what was countable, but also *what counts* and for whom!

Conclusion to chapter

This chapter presented a very particular version of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. Drawing empirical data from survey research, it made various propositions about the scope of this activity. It concluded by returning discussion to, and locating the survey research within, the *cat's cradle* game plan and by bearing witness to a *differend*. The following chapter adds another move to this game.

Chapter 8 Pleasurable playing

"Why do this study?", asks the impetus.
"To *know* the world, and to *write* the world", the research claims.
"To *become* an authorised knower", answers the candidate.
"To *right* the world", the practitioner declares.
" Oh, and because there is pleasure in *playing*", the pagan adds.

Introduction to chapter

"To *right* the world", the practitioner declares. "It's important because....", she said. Yet her noble pursuit was perhaps itself an injustice not to mention a mask that concealed less altruistic desires. Multiple desires ensnarled her. While she desires to *right* (and to be and to know) her game is complicated by a desire for the hedonistic pleasure of the textual play itself.

The previous chapter (chapter seven) presented a 'stringent' pattern of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. It selected its data by way of a piece of survey research. Notions of *righting* the world moved its creation, and it was the second pattern presented in this thesis. The first was the 'preliminary' pattern (chapter five) that drew its data from literature, and was moved by problematic notions of *becoming* a professional doctor. In this chapter I move towards a third pattern of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres: one being two few, and two being only one possibility (Haraway 1994a:115). Just as the moves of *becoming* and *righting* were problematised in chapters four and six respectively, this chapter plays with notions of *playing.*

The moves of *this* chapter provide impetus for the third and final pattern of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres to be presented in this thesis (chapter nine). I will get to that soon enough, but first I want to move on to some ideas about playing that I am playing with. 'Playing' is a

slippery word that has multiple meanings, and it can be deployed in several ways. Indeed, this chapter begins by suggesting that 'playing' has been deployed in various ways here already. After identifying these various playings, I make a tenuous case for pleasurable playing with others - a collaboration that sets out to play at troubling and linking. Together these (playing together, troubling and linking) constitute the criteria that move the pattern of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres that will follow in the forthcoming '*Bridges*' (chapter nine).

Playing

The term 'playing' has many meanings, several of which have been deployed in this work hitherto. I started by suggesting that I was 'playing' *cat's cradle*. Playing, in this sense, infers the participation in a particular game. This type of playing (that is the playing of research games) is not a new concept and there is well cited commentary of this type of playing (Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotony, Scott and Trow 1994). However, I imagine it is difficult for readers to pin down exactly what game is actually being played and when, because I have played overlapping and intersecting games. In this overarching *cat's cradle* game I have also been playing *word* games, *language* games, as well as various intersecting sub-games: in the last pattern, for example, where I was 'playing' for stakes in education by playing a quantitative sub-game. Yes, I am participating in (that is, *playing*) particular games, but this type of playing is not (quite) this chapter's only concern.

There is also a notion of 'playing' used to talk about the staging of the dramatisation of a story – that is, the play. The play. Act one: the curtain opens and the characters are introduced. Act two: a conflict arises - until the resolution of conflict sets up the characters to live happily ever after. A thesis can be a bit like that. Act one: neighbourhood centres. Act two: organisations in crisis, and so on. As this thesis moves towards the upper limits of its word count, readers might expect such a resolution of conflict – leading towards 'a big reveal' where all the threads are drawn neatly together, complications resolved, and a final pattern organises into perfect completion. While readers might reasonably anticipate such a 'Hollywood plot' (Connelly and Clandinin 1990:10), those expecting 'a big reveal' are in for 'a big disappointment'. While there have been several 'once upon a times' already, the 'happily ever afters' are left for others - this type of play is not (quite) playing here.

Related to the above notion of playing is one of performance or imitation – that is, playing a role. Yes, in a sense I *am* performing, that is playing 'the researcher', 'the candidate' and 'the practitioner' yet even though the candidate-practitioner-researcher is playing 'the pagan', this chapter is not (quite) as concerned with this notion of playing for the moment.

A third way 'playing' might be deployed in a thesis is in the sense that I employ tragedy, irony and play which themselves have been put forward as postmodern troupes (Burbules 1998). And while I might also be reasonably accused of this type of playing (for I do engage in this type of play at times) it is not quite the playing that concerns me now either. I have been playing *cat's cradle* for some time now and as I move toward completion I ponder where to now:

> To contemplate what remains to be done is to experience an ineradicable tension between pleasure and pain: the pleasure that comes from always being able to conceive of possibilities beyond what already exists, and the pain accompanying the realization that whatever exists now never quite attains the horizon of the conceivable. Ultimately, whether we are energized or paralysed by this sentiment depends on where we choose to place the emphasis (Barron 1992:39).

I am choosing *pleasure*! In this chapter the playing fore-grounded simply refers to my taking part in an enjoyable activity for the sake of pleasure ... perhaps some call it childlike pleasure – I am calling it textual. For me there *is* something pleasurable about producing patterns – about creating text – about producing a thesis – about writing. Despite lamenting the perils of candidature, with the production of a thesis as central, there is also a sense of pleasure to be derived from the engagement itself: textual pleasure. It is this type of playing, and the pleasure it derives that now moves this pagan researcher.

While satisfying urges for textual pleasure might attract accusations of self indulgence, I believe mine to be a counter argument. This is because through paying attention to pleasures of writing *others* are drawn in. Reflexivity is not necessarily an indivualistic pursuit (Davies, Browne, Gannon, Honan, Laws, Mueller-Rockstroh and Peterson 2004), and while I have been frank about satisfying my own urges for the pleasure to had from playing, playing with others can also offer mutual satisfactions.

Furthermore writing is only part of the deal; reading also brings about similar pleasure (Barthes 1990). There is pleasure to be had both from acts of producing *and* consuming text - although easy definitions between the two are tricky (Rooney and Solomon 2006). But do 'the masters' know they have seduced I wonder – that they have lured me into this literary liaison. Yet mine is a troubled pursuit. At times (I jest) reading the 'masters' is likened to being voyeur in acts of cognitive masturbation, and being a voyeur is only so satisfying. Yes, there is the pleasure to come from a semblance of understanding but if I am to consummate such a literary liaison then I wonder if it is more pleasurable when there are others playing along with me. Hence, while I have already drawn attention to *cat's cradle* being a collaborative game, my objective is now to overtly invite others to play (consensually) along with me. To create – to co-produce - to play, for our mutual 'pleasures' - to 'share the joy of satisfying and making connections with both similarities and difference' (Lorde 1993:342-343).

The criteria and the performance of the criteria

With a pagan desire for pleasurable playing, I turn attention now to the criteria proposed for the following pattern. Here I propose three inter-related criteria: playing with others, troubling and linking. Below I tease out each of these as well as discuss how they might be addressed.

Playing with others

A first criterion that I aim to address is that others join me in playing this game of *cat's cradle*. While others have unwittingly 'joined in' before this point (through acts of citation, and through participation in survey research), I now focus on less covert participation. Moreover, a *cat's cradle* analogy reminds me that it is arrogant to believe that the patterns presented here have been my work alone: that is, the individualistic pursuit of my own 'objective hands'. Understanding this has drawn my attention to other contributors as well as my responsibility to them. I am also reminded of possibilities of handing over any co-produced patterns so as others can add their own moves (Haraway 1994a).

Given this all takes place as part of a professional doctorate program it is reasonable that these others are the women and men who are involved in NSW neighbourhood centres. Hence the following pattern is a *co-creation* of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. It is a pattern where the pagan has borrowed and adapted the vignettes of people that are involved in NSW neighbourhood centres. While I would like to say it is 'truly' collaborative, I also acknowledge the power of the one doing the borrowing and adapting. At the same time, what follows was not merely a situation influenced by my aims and me alone: as Lindlof (1995) points out, the researched also have some control in interviews (p57). In other words, people in centres also had 'agendas' (Rule 2006), and these agendas undoubtedly shaped the following pattern too.

Nevertheless, to address a criterion of 'playing with others', I made the orthodox research move of initiating and carrying out a series of interviews and conversations with centre coordinators, volunteers and others that use centres. While survey research (like in chapter seven) attempts to control and regulate, the data generation method employed (open-ended questions) to produce the following pattern left me open to unanticipated responses, while still bringing particular frames of reference to bear (Lindlof 1995:56-58). This method also generates a description with different sort of viscosity than the previous pattern, and because of this viscosity, attention is drawn to the complexities of human actions (Caulley 1994), let alone accounts of learning in neighbourhood centres. Importantly, with an interest in linking, and pre-armed with some loose framing categories (introduced below), open-ended questions allowed for slippage *between* categories.

I have no doubt that my pre-existing relationship with the sector, and employment in neighbourhood centre member association, contributed to a rapport between the centres and myself that facilitated trust (Lindlof 1995:180). There were few or no problems enlisting participants for interviews. A request in a sector newsletter, and also included as part of the survey (chapter seven) asked centres to participate in the study. The response was overwhelming and there were many more willing centres than were manageable. Five centres were chosen because they were representative of rural and metropolitan, and large and small organisations. Having limited resources, I was also pragmatic in that I selected these

centres because they were located in areas where I could reasonably carry out one 'field trip' and visit centres along the way.

I asked contacts in each of the centres to arrange for me to interview people that were involved in a neighbourhood centre in some capacity. While in my initial request I mentioned 'coordinators, volunteers, management committee members and people that used centres', some of the participating centres also arranged for teachers of their groups, collaborating partners in their activities and various others to contribute as well.

A *crowd* met me at the first centre. I had initially envisioned about twelve one-on-one interviews, by the end of the field trip I had 'officially' spoken with over thirty people. Not only that, but on arrival at the first centre six people were seated at a table: the participants themselves had turned my first 'interview' into a 'focus group'. This turned out to be serendipitous, because it enabled a 'billiard table effect' that is described as one where:

> ..someone tosses in one idea; it ricochets around the group raising several other ideas in quick succession; one of those ideas combines with another person's idea to remind someone of something else they'd never thought of linking to the original issue at hand (Wadsworth 1997:43).

These interview-come-focus groups along with their effects enhanced 'interactive dialogue' (Lindlof 1995:272). In addition they served as reminder that issues of power in research are not uncomplicated or entirely one-sided. Indeed, as some have pointed out 'contamination is [not only] everywhere' (Holstein and Gubrium 1997:125-126), but anticipated. Similar 'interview-come-focus scenarios' were repeated in other centres.

Interviews/focus groups were electronically recorded and transcribed. Field notes were also made, as were unstructured observations. Analysis largely consisted of looking for reoccurring themes that illustrated and supported my claim (Eagleton in Lindlof 1995:25) that centres provide learning. In particular, I was interested in themes that *troubled* existing understandings of educational categories.

Troubling education

Yes, 'troubling' is another criterion for the pattern that follows. A central theme of the entire thesis provides second criteria for the following pattern. In the introduction I set out to trouble understandings of legitimate providers of learning in NSW, and this criteria still holds. What 'we' now aim to trouble are some of the categories that have not been helpful in pursuing 'our' claim that learning is provided by neighbourhood centres. The more obvious category, and one that provides other sub-categories is that of 'education' itself.

'Education' has not served NSW neighbourhood centres well. The 'field of education' has been a closed one for centres (see chapter five), not to mention being a closed one for many of the people that use centres (see chapter seven). With that said, education is still a popular idea that produces understandings and makes visible particular practices and organisations: hence, it is not in our interest to do away with it entirely either.

Conceptualising a 'field of education' not only establishes its boundaries but also inscribes organisations and practices in policy in turn becoming deterministic in decision making in regard to who/what is (and is not) included in 'the field" (Edwards 1997:68). Framing patterns within the 'field of education' works to constitute and maintain its borders – not to mention providing a distorted view of what is deemed educational. Continuing to play by these rules works to maintain a peripheral position for neighbourhood centres. However, when learning is understood to be located beyond educational institutionsthen 'a greater multiplicity of activities is seen as involving learning and hence can be deemed educational' (Edwards and Usher 2001:276). A decade ago Edwards argued for, and employed, the metaphor of 'moorland' rather than 'field' (1997), and although his broader points are taken, he is right to also point out that 'moorland' it is not entirely helpful in all contexts (p67). For example, in an Australian context moorland is not a customary part of the landscape.

Indeed conceptualising the territory as 'learning landscape' rather than a 'field of education' conjures up variance, and an acceptance of diversity. A landscape is unpredictable and hybrid and so there is always the possibility that anything might be included. A learning landscape is a fluid metaphor,

and this resonates with the fluidity of practices in neighbourhood centres. Further, a learning landscape is a horizontal concept and therefore pays less reverence to hierarchy (both in terms of the organisations involved and the learning that is occurring). This horizontality is important for eschewing categories of formal and informal that can haunt educational researchers (Colley, Hodkinson and Malcom 2003).

Learning landscape is useful because it acknowledges the de-differentiation of boundaries/identities implied by the 'field' view, as well as accounting for the shifts in organisational identities that appear less apparent in adult education 'field' stories. Landscape also has connotations with art, which draws attention to ideas about the pleasure in noticing details that might otherwise go unnoticed. Furthermore, it draws attention to texture and contribution to the overall work a contributor in the landscape might make, rather than simply on size and prominence. And finally the notion of 'landscape' draws attention to place and specificities, which helps develop a regional view rather than a universal focus and avoids the compartmentalising of 'fields'.

Against the learning monopoly of education then, lifelong learning advocates recognise that learning takes place in a variety of sites (BACE 1996; Delors 1996; ANTA 1999; Brown 2000a; Brown 2000b; OECD 2000; Harrison 2003; OECD 2004c). This is not to suggest a general or universal consensus about what actually constitutes lifelong learning. Rather, like a 'learning landscape', meanings of lifelong learning are *not* entirely fixed. This serves to retain some space for negotiating meanings that encapsulate important differences as well as similarities.

This argument is perhaps more pertinent in Australia, where the discourses of lifelong learning are yet to be embedded in the landscape with the similar fervour as some other OECD countries. Some suggest the term in an Australian context is little more than a 'hollow motherhood statement' (Axford and Mayes 2003:*viii*). Aside from an intermittent take up, 'there has been little evidence in Australia of [an] overall or widespread adoption of [a] more integrated, multi-faceted approach towards lifelong learning' (Aspin, Collard and Chapman 2000:173). Hence, while the concept has gained momentum elsewhere, the Australian response to the calls of 'lifelong learning' has for

the most part been a deafening silence (Watson 1999; Aspin, Collard and Chapman 2000; Brown 2000a).

So to conclude this section the ideas of lifelong learning and of a learning landscape fit with the broader issues at stake: to trouble education. Learning is a process - with possibilities. This is unlike education, or adult community education in particular, because any processes have been nominalised to the point where ACE is now viewed as either a program, a product or an organisation (McIntyre 2001). Investing in learning reinstates process, as well as ideas that learning can also serve the interests of social justice. This last point is an important one because it (re)links education to a social purpose – yet (like a bridge links two land masses) manages to keep difference in play. In other words, while a learning landscape and lifelong learning discourses might *trouble* education, their deployment is not an effort to annihilate it either.

Linking

The idea of troubling rather than annihilating draws attention to a third criterion for the pattern that follows – that is to link. It is not as easy as calling a third party arbitrator to judge truth (or not) of the denotative statement of 'neighbourhood centres are ACE' providers. If only we could simply convince the ACE sector that neighbourhood centres are providing adult community education then perhaps we could all live happily ever after! But there are problems with such a proposal. It suggests an overarching discourse that is amenable to both the 'rules' of NSW neighbourhood centres *and* the Adult Community Education sector. An earlier chapter of this thesis attempted this (chapter seven) but the result was a pattern that appeared to erase the social justice-ness of centres, and in doing so might have done further injustice.

On the other hand, those patterns bore witness to a *differend* and in doing so demonstrated that it was *not* transferable to a third party. With 'refutation useless' and approval not an available option (Lyotard 1988:23) a remaining possibility is to develop ruses:

> For Lyotard, the only available option is to match wits, or 'ruse' [...] to make experimental moves within the language games that situate us [...] and in this way to generate new effects throughout the social network (Barron 1992:39).

Thus to link is essential, but *how* to link is another story (Lyotard 1988:29). Yes, linking is necessary so as not to engage in the 'gladiator' strategy (Rojeck 1998:12) of overthrowing an educational frame for a learning one, but to argue for the inclusion of learning in education – and *vice versa*. If one starts with an 'education' then what is learning is limited, conversely if one starts with a 'learning' then what can be conceived as educational is broadened significantly. A learning landscape framing does this because it does not outright deny 'education', but acknowledges educational institutions being one of many possible learning sites. Hence linking 'learning' to 'education' retains the category of education (ie, differences).

Playing and this game of cat's cradle

With criteria presented all that is needed now are some framing categories, and these I have taken from the discourses of lifelong learning. In particular the work of Delors, who in 1996 submitted a report to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century. This report built on what was known as 'the Faure Report' of 1972, which was one of the first international attempts to influence educational policies along a lifelong learning perspective (Medel-Anonuevo 2002:xv). A central concept in the Faure Report was the idea of 'learning to be', and twenty four years later Delors' added three more such concepts. The concepts central to Delors' report were four interrelated 'pillars of learning'; learning *to know;* learning *to do*; learning *to be; and,* learning *to live together* (Delors 1996:37*).*

These pillars, along with the rest of what has come to be known as 'the Delors' Report', have had both its critics and champions (eg Forrester 1998, Teasdale 1999, de Leo 2006). Moreover, some view the Delors' report as both 'visionary *and* flawed' like Teasdale (1999) for example who critiques it on the grounds of it being Euro-centric, and also for promoting learner centred school education. However, he also calls the report 'inspirational' as well as 'challenging' (1999:1). One of the challenges he sees is the tension *between the* pillars. Although, Teasdale sees this as a necessary tension:

> ...between preparation for work and preparation for life: between learning to know and do, and learning to be and to live together. But its very difficult to get the tensions right...in Australia the balance is far from right. We're putting too much emphasis on knowing and doing, and not enough on being and living together (1999:5).

Teasdale's latter point about an emphasis on learning concerned with 'knowing and doing' over other concerns (like a social purpose), is shared by many (Johnston 2000; Armstrong and Miller 2006). Interestingly it is also one that is currently reclaiming ground in high-level policy. For example the OECD have re-thought human capital as an independent 'be all and end all', rather there is now some agreement that human capital has an intimate and interdependent relationship with *social* capital. So while emphasis for OECD is on the development of stocks of *human* capital, this development is increasingly seen alongside the development of the *social* variety too:

> Human and social capital enable individuals, communities, firms and societies to cope with the demands of rapid social and economic change ... reskilling adults for new types of work and providing the trust and sense of common purpose on which most social and economic activities depend. Such capital represents a key resource for sustainable development (OECD 2001:65).

Another double-sided point concerning the pillars of learning is their simplicity. While their 'floweriness of expression' and 'idealistic' nature of the pillars have been acknowledged (Teasdale 1999:2), it has also been suggested that the pillars' framework is 'easy to use and to apply flexibility in any context' (de Leo 2006:3). Indeed for some the appeal of mobilising the framework provided by Delors' pillars is *because* it is 'simple':

> The framework presented by the four pillars has not yet been fully explored nor implemented and should not be discarded due to its simplicity ... In fact, I would argue that its merit lies precisely in its simplicity... (de Leo 2006:3).

Here I use the framework provided by the pillars not only because of its simplicity, but also because these pillars enable linking the work of centres to that of education. I am not alone in noting the linking capacity enabled through the pillars (Axford and Mayes 2003:5). The pillars cut across traditional educational categories. As such, they make a helpful heuristic for framing learning provided in NSW neighbourhood centres because it enables linking the work of centres to education. The general ruse *is* to link, and to link *is not* to subsume. Hence, while Delors' pillars are helpful for describing the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres, they cannot be conceived independently either. It is the inter-relatedness of the pillars that serves to link learning to education. But like a bridge, differences are retained.

An apt description of a pillar, in the case of the following chapter called '*Bridges*', is one of pillars being part of a connecting structure. Like the Sydney Harbour Bridge, a bridge can make use of four pillars - two on each side of the expanse. In general two of Delors' pillars appear familiar in educational settings (learning *to know* and learning *to do*) whereas the latter two (learning *to be* and learning *to live together*) are more familiar in other settings (like neighbourhood centres). With this as a starting point the forthcoming pattern show how the pillars are not so mutually exclusive. With this now said my pagan aim for the following pattern is for a collaboratively created pattern that troubles existing categories – but one that works to link education to learning as well.

"Can you help me to produce a pattern about the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres?", I asked. "*With pleasure*", centres responded (no strangers to troubling, given the predominance of 'activist' tendencies). And now I muse, 'how deliciously naughty are our intersecting pursuits for trouble!'

Conclusion to chapter

This chapter has staged a case for the production of another (and different) pattern of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. It discussed various criteria and through this discussion has moved the creation of another version of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. The criteria include playing with others, troubling education, and linking education to learning. The following chapter seeks to address this criterion.

Chapter 9 Bridges

Introduction to chapter

Cat's cradle, you might recall, is about the ongoing production of string patterns: with a twist here and a new knot there the string is rearranged and yet another pattern is created. With a twist on the previous chapters, and new knot or two, another (sub)version of 'the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres' is created here.

Two such patterns have been presented hitherto through the deployment of conventional research methods. *Cat's whiskers* (chapter five) presented a preliminary pattern drawing from literature. Then a *string(ent) pattern* (chapter seven) was produced as result of piece of survey research. In *this* chapter, a third version of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres is produced. While this chapter makes some (limited) use of the patterns that came before, it also draws data collected from interviews and focus groups with a range of people that are associated with NSW neighbourhood centres[7].

However, while 'evidence' of people learning in a neighbourhood centre has already been suggested in earlier chapters, for the most part this has been framed in educational categories. Neighbourhood centres also provide opportunities for learning in ways that do not so easily fit in this framework, hence eschewing being tagged educational:

> *I don't know if I'm raving now – you can't begin to record the level of learning that happens at every angle at every opportunity – and what it does for people's lives – I've found them [centres] to be really valuable places – its also very much about how committed the staff are to community development – to helping people – but having said that personally for me its been a huge learning curve* (Centre coordinator).

This chapter endeavours to destabilise educational categories by *'recording the level of learning happening at every* [well not *quite* every] *angle'*. It does

[7] A version of this chapter was presented at the Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA) in July 2007, in a paper called, *'Bridges: linking the work of NSW neighbourhood centres to education'.*

this by framing centre activities in notions of learning, in particular in categories drawn from the work of Delors' four pillars of learning (1996).

The chapter begins with a broad introduction to Delors' four pillars of learning. Next, I set about evidencing each pillars' existence in neighbourhood centres. I do this through drawing heavily on empirical data gathered via a series of interviews and focus groups with various people involved in centres. Throughout the evidencing of each of the pillars, other important features of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres are also alluded to. In all the discussion provides a rich description of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres: a richness not possible via an educational framing alone. Finally, the chapter turns to suggest some potential links and then concludes by troubling the idea of neighbourhood centres being adult community education providers.

Delors' pillars

Taken at face value the pillar *learning to know* suggests knowledge acquisition. While this is partly the case it also refers to '...learning to learn, so as to benefit from opportunities education provides throughout life' (Delors 1996:37). While this pillar is partly concerned with knowledge acquisition, it is also about gaining the skills that enable learning: that is, *learning to learn*. In doing so, it acknowledges the impossibility of knowing everything, but through the development of concentration and memory skills and the ability to think, it helps people to navigate vast knowledges (UNESCO ny).

Learning to do is a second pillar from Delors (1996). It is said to be the pillar that helps people 'acquire not only an occupational skill but also, more broadly, the competence to deal with many situations and work in teams' (Delors 1996:37). This pillar incorporates the concept of learning by doing and is most often associated with the labour market (UNESCO ny). Examples of activities that promote *learning to do* include training in occupational skills, learning an application, artistic/craft activities and even sports and/or dance (UNESCO ny).

Learning to be is purported to 'develop one's personality and be able to act with even greater autonomy, judgement and personal responsibility' (Delors 1996:37). It recognises that learning takes place in a social context and that the concept of learners is culturally loaded and the notions of learning and being are not universally understood (UNESCO ny). This pillar was the dominant focus of a UNESCO report in early 1970s (Task Force on Education for the Twenty-first Century 1999). *Learning to be* incorporates activities that promote personal development, mind, body, sensitivity, aesthetic appreciation, spirituality developing imagination, poetry / art, membership in family, community, and as citizen as well as cultural activities (UNESCO ny).

Learning to live together is the fourth and final pillar to be presented here. This pillar's focus is on developing 'an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence – carrying out joint projects and learning to manage conflicts – in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace' (Delors 1996:37). Activities of this pillar are said to include those that peacefully resolve conflict (UNESCO ny). It is stressed however that it is not enough simply to set up contact with 'difference' but to build bridges too. Hence activities that form this pillar are ones that not only help people discover 'the other' but also encourage common projects (UNESCO ny).

Learning *to know*

In a general sense the idea of *learning to know* is about knowledge acquisition. Educational institutions are founded on this idea and the 'knowledges' they disseminate often appear as discrete disciplines. An earlier chapter presented neighbourhood centre provision in neat disciplinary areas. Provision was presented as a list of broad areas that included *learning to know* about; society and culture; information technology; management and commerce; and, the environment etc. It is safe to say then that in around two thousand and thirty neighbourhood centre activities a week people *learn to know* about a range of broad fields of study. Hence *learning to know* can be said to be a pillar in the provision of NSW neighbourhood centres because people are 'acquiring knowledge' from a number of legitimate educational categories:

> *The most interesting thing I learned was the Chinese medicine – that wasn't formal learning it was just a lady who practiced it here* (Centre user).

> *We sit together and we talk – we talk about anything – fishing – going to the doctors – dancing – I think I always learn something new* (Volunteer)

Yet a list of broad areas of study (itself, a legacy of education) does not adequately describe the extent of *learning to know* inherent in neighbourhood centres' community development work. It eschews adequate acknowledgment of the knowledge 'acquired' in relation to *learning to know* about the world, the local world of neighbourhood, *and* the people that occupy these worlds.

Learning to know the neighbourhood

To work towards the idea of social justice, centres engage in several practices that come under the broad heading of community development. Part of this work is providing information and referral (LCSA 1998a; LCSA 2004a). Both these practices can be understood as ones where *learning to know* is occurring because knowledge is being 'acquired'. Take 'providing information' as a first example:

> *They're learning about life – you know, things that can help them get through their daily life – yeah you can go to TAFE – and yeah you can go to ACE – and you can go to all those things – but if you can't get through your everyday life then its difficult to even put your name down to do a course – and I think this centre is especially good at this – they can come and get a combination of information that helps them get through their daily lives and so they can think outside the box – and what else is available for them – and now I'm feeling a bit happier about myself – I have a roof over my head – I have somewhere to live – and maybe I got some help with my welfare and maybe now I can do something else – but if you haven't got those basic needs met then its difficult to think about other things* (a neighbourhood centre worker talking about a group of women attending a group).

> *If you want your lawn mowed – if you want a handyman – its all there for you to find out – its just a hive of information that you can tap into – are you bored? come with me* (Volunteer).

> *I learn at the centre just because I'm here – through osmosis a lot of the time I think – you learn what's going on* (Centre user).

Providing referral is also a community development practice and this too can be understood as *learning to know* through acquiring (local) knowledge. Basically, referral is about providing a metaphorical compass or map to help

people find their own solution/s to any number of possible problems. Hence, referral can also be conceived as a practice where people acquire knowledge, this time about how they find their own solutions:

> *We have a really good saying here – we say come down to the centre and we can tell you 'where to go' – so we use this around all our advertising – basically its what we do – if you need to know something about the town – or you need a service – we can tell them or refer them on to other services* (Neighbourhood centre volunteer).

> *We have a network here where we can refer people to the right people* (Volunteer).

Both sets of comments suggest that providing information and referral, as part of neighbourhood centre work, constitutes knowledge acquisition - hence, *learning to know*. And while it is a particular type of 'knowledge' that is acquired, it is evident that people acquiring it are *learning to know* something.

Others *learning to know*

It is not only centre users that are *learning to know* in NSW neighbourhood centres. Workers, volunteers and others in various relationships with centres also suggest that they acquire knowledge through their association:

> *Well, just working on that constitution was an interesting one – the legal problems I had no idea how difficult the legal problems were until we began to put that document together* (Centre management committee member).

This management committee member has learned about the 'legal problems' of the wider environment in which the organisation operates, and in doing so has increased what he 'knows'. Moreover the types of 'problems' are not limited to those experienced by the organisation:

> *The centre has opened up a new world for me – to social problems we have* (Volunteer).

> *You've got different groups coming in and you go to different sessions and things you find out – what's going on in the area- you're always learning* (Volunteer).

Learning to know others

Aside from legitimate categories, people are *learning to know* others as result of their association with neighbourhood centres. While it is known that working with clients in the human service sector facilitates *learning to know* others (Eraut 2004:267), it is not learning that is limited to paid workers. As a

volunteer suggests, she is *learning to know* - not only about others, but also inside knowledge about 'the industry' itself:

> *I was in marketing – but coming here was just a – a huge learning curve – how people live – what can be done – what can't be done – and how many people fall through the cracks – extraordinary extraordinary – and it happens without anybody knowing except those in the industry – which is extraordinary* (Volunteer).

A volunteer in another centre further exemplifies this point. The users of this centre include prisoners and their families. In the process of his work, the volunteer is also *learning to know* others differently:

> *I thought that was just something that happened to other people – it happened in the news – and then all of a sudden you have contact with these people – its not just the person in jail that suffer – you have the family and its not their fault either – makes you ask why they did it – the circumstances – there's always two sides to every story – you only ever get – news – the criminal – the police side...* (Volunteer).

For this volunteer his new knowledge about the other has led him to question previous beliefs that may have hindered his capacity to empathise. His work in the centre has not only brought him in contact with 'the other' but also challenged what he 'knows' about them. Yet it is not only the workers (paid or otherwise) that are *learning to know* others through their work. Centre users are also learning to know others differently:

> *What I found was – all along the way I mix with so many different cultures – we stop and have a cup of tea – and in the morning tea we talk about all sorts of things – like sometimes we talk about our countries – what happened to people - and then you learn too – cause I suppose every culture has different ideas* (Centre user).

Not only do these comments describe *learning to know* but they also flag a good first example of linking pillars. While there is evidence of *learning to know*, it is not simply 'legitimate' knowledge categories, but also knowledge about the world and about others in the world that is being acquired. Knowing about others can also be associated with the pillar concerned with *learning to live together*. Further examples of linking are forthcoming but for the moment there is more to be said about *learning to know*.

Learning to know how to know (learning to learn)

As pointed out, the pillar of *learning to know* is not only about gaining knowledge but also incorporates the idea of *learning to learn* (Delors 1996:37; UNESCO ny-a). *Learning to learn* is a popular mantra in education,

and perhaps for good reason. The argument usually goes something like this: it is important for people to continually learn because of a complex and rapidly changing society. Literacy is a prime example of *learning to learn* because it is through literacy that people are able to navigate textualised knowledges. For this reason adult literacy classes are embedded in the field of education. Yet while the provision of literacy classes is most commonly associated with educational institutions there is also similar provision in NSW neighbourhood centres.

However, there is also evidence of other provision where people are *learning to learn*. Take for example ...a quilting group:

> *Well, I always wanted to do quilting – I started doing that – so the women in the quilters group we all swap books and things – until I joined I hadn't read the sort of books that they're into though – so its picked up my – what I read now – and that's part of the quilters group* (Centre user).

For this participant the quilting group doubles as a reading group ... a reading group where the participant has 'picked up' her reading. She is *learning to learn*. But how are these groups to be understood by onlookers? ...by funding organisations? ...and by educational 'authorities'? What educational categories can contain it? In previous chapters these groups and other neighbourhood centre activities have been categorised in ways that make them appear clear-cut. But what's at stake now ... and for whom? How might 'education' attract this woman to a 'real' literacy class when a quilting group in a neighbourhood centre is the site where she is already *learning to learn*?

These questions aside, it is clear that *learning to know* and the associated notion of *learning to learn* are evident in the work of NSW neighbourhood centres. This is so in the traditional provision of courses as well as in other activities that are generally purged from 'educational' categories: community development and volunteering practices being only two examples, and a seemingly unremarkable quilting group being another. Furthermore, this seemingly unremarkable craft group provides a second example where one pillar (*learning to learn*) is linked to a pillar concerned with acquiring skills (*learning to do*).

Learning *to do*

Learning to do is the second of Delors' pillars to be discussed here. Just as the idea of gaining knowledge is prominent within education, so too is the idea of gaining skills. In other words *learning to do* is also a feature of education. For the most part these are generally skills presumed necessary for paid work: that is, vocational skills. That educational institutions provide for the development of vocational skills is not in dispute, but neighbourhood centres also provide activities where people are engaged in this type of *learning to do*.

Learning to do 'it' for work

Earlier (in chapter seven) I reported not only the existence of VET/Pre-VET provision in neighbourhood centres but also noted a sixty-five percent increase over the past five years. In a typical week there can be almost four hundred VET/Pre-VET activities provided in centres. These range from resume writing, senior first aid or introductory computers to 'start your own small business'. This itself might be evidence enough to suggest that a pillar of *learning to do* applies to the work of neighbourhood centres.

It is not only however the people enrolled in VET/Pre-VET courses that are *learning to do* 'work' in NSW neighbourhood centres. Volunteers are learning to do a range of things that can easily be described as work skills too, and these can also lead to paid work:

> *I answer the phone – emails - send faxes – all those office things* (Volunteer).
>
> *The fact that I did volunteering here helped me get the job in the first place* (paid NC worker – former Volunteer).
>
> *I've actually seen changes in people that come in and work for me – I've seen a lot of changes in them - and a lot of them have gone on to get paid work* (Centre coordinator talking about Volunteers).

This is in accord with those who have already noted the vast learning opportunities inherent in volunteer work (Hayward-Brown, Bragg, Leonard and Onyx 2003). However learning work skills is only part of the story – people *learn to do* for purposes other than work.

Learning to do for other purposes

A privileged view of *learning to do* concerned with 'doing work' is not the only possibility. People are learning to do a range of things in NSW centres:

> *We have other groups that aren't so crafty sort of thing – like look at the board and see what's on it – from like prophecy seminars through to tarot card reading - I think [name] said once we had 500 to 600 people a month – and they had life writing – that was good* (Volunteer).

Another volunteer from the same Centre (and in the same focus group) adds:

> *Let's not forget the harmonica group – they're here on Friday – you've got seniors and juniors and you learn how to play the harmonica - $2 – our group they did a gig and had the spoons and the harmonicas and they were good – some of them are a bit rough – but you've gotta learn* [laughs] (Volunteer).

Both these comments describe learning skills other than those that are perceived as relevant to work. Some would argue that learning to read tarot cards or play the harmonica contributes little to one's human capital. Education's potential to contribute to the nation's economy by increasing stocks of human capital remains foremost in economist's mindset (Marginson 1993). With this view it is little wonder that *non*-vocational courses have come under fire in the last decades. While categories like formal and informal, VET and non-VET these have been well-troubled (Colley, Hodkinson and Malcom 2003) there is little doubt that they remain influential organising principles for policy makers and funding bodies in regard to education. These categories often emphasise the acquisition of skills that will enable learners in a presumed quest for paid work, but this can be to the detriment of other possibilities ... and again I pose the question of how a quilting group might be categorised.

Regardless, the state has reneged its funding of what might have been described as liberal education in the past but more recently has been termed even less favourably as 'cappuccino courses'(Rundle 2004). Yet a commonly stated importance among centres providing courses that might be 'cappuccino courses' is the social purposes of such provision: as demonstrated below, provision that might be described as contributing to the nation's stocks of *social* capital. Drawing only from what might be collectively considered craft courses are some examples of why centres choose to provide them:

> *An opportunity for women to get together [and] exchange ideas, share skills* (Sewing).
> *A social group for working women to share skills, ideas and support* (Folk Art).
> *To provide a fun and supportive environment for women* (Scrap Booking).
> *To reduce social isolation* (Art).
> *To eliminate loneliness, provide sound activities at low or no cost* (Craft).

Each of these craft groups can be understood as people *learning to do*, but *learning to do* 'craft' is not the prime intent of the providing centre. A broader definition of *learning to do* fits with the one subscribed to by UNESCO and can include activities that extend beyond training in occupational skills (UNESCO ny) (read 'economic' outcomes). Despite not overtly contributing to paid work these can serve an important societal purpose. While it *is* possible to make a convoluted argument about how *learning to do* craft might also contribute to paid work, these examples draw attention to another point besides. That is, they begin to demonstrate that for those doing the provision the *learning to do* component of a non-vocational course is of less importance than learning *to be* or learning *to live together*. Thus providing another example of the potential of linking pillars and in doing so linking education and learning.

Learning to do 'it' in teams

Thinking about groups draws attention to another facet of *learning to do* evident in neighbourhood centre provision: this is *learning to do* 'it' in teams (Delors 1996:37). Call it teamwork, group work or working in groups, the point is that it is a skill that is transferable into paid work because it is viewed as a valuable skill in its own right (Rychen and Salganik 2004).

Centre activities are ripe with examples of people working in teams – thus developing this important workforce skill:

> *I think that people that are involved in groups are learning a lot about what being in a group involves – they learn from those groups – more about people's lives – as well as more about what's available to them* (Centre coordinator).

But what this further suggests is that the 'provider' and 'provided for' distinction does not hold for NSW neighbourhood centres. This is seen in the many leaderless groups held in centres as the participants below explains:

> *We talk about things – we begin the group and if you've got a problem - sharing is very important part of the group I belong to –*

> *because we've got others – and we teach each other* (Garden group participant).

And paid workers reiterate the point:

> *There's huge amounts of learning happening in groups... parents learning from each other – they're learning from each other – they're learning from the mums sitting next to them's grandmother – there's huge amount of collective women in the room – and there's no 'teaching' to be done by a worker as such - its not a strictly student/teacher environment – but it works like this in all the groups we run – and workers learn about themselves – and the people that come learn about themselves – and like we're saying, people learn to get a more broader view on life* (Centre worker talking about supported playgroup).

> *The younger women were learning from the older women and the older women from the young* (Associated worker talking about supported playgroup).

In education the teacher/learner positions are clearly demarcated, in the examples above the positions of provider and provided for are more ambiguous. In neighbourhood centres people are *learning to do* as well as *teaching others to do* and those 'doing the teaching' are not always those typically associated with a 'teaching' role. Similar instances of people learning *(to do)* in the absence of a 'teacher' are acknowledged in other non-educational sites (Hughes 1997; Boud and Middleton 2003). In other words, the privileged version of *learning to do*, a view monopolised by education, is not the only one.

Learning *to be*

Learning to be is the third pillar to be explored here in relation to the work of NSW neighbourhood centres. While some educators struggle with questions about whether or not their role actually includes encouraging personal growth, others simply accept that the nature of learning inherently involves this type of work (Connole 1992:274). Personal growth is defined as expanding horizons and 'our consciousness of both self and others and opens us to more choices in beliefs, emotional reactions and behaviour than were previously available to us' (Connole 1992:273). Those with humanistic intentions advocate for 'whole person learning' (Heron 1999).

More recently education and learning have been acknowledged as sites of *self* work and the concept of identity has become central to much of this discussion (Usher and Edwards 1994; Stuart 1995; du Gay 1996; Hall 1996;

Wenger 1998; Gore 2001; Paechter, Edwards, Harrison and Twinning 2001; Chappell, Rhodes, Solomon, Tennant and Yates 2003). Whether personal development or self work is a marginal activity in education is not the issue, the suggestion here is that it is an explicit part of neighbourhood centre provision.

***Learning to be* in a neighbourhood centre**

A glance down a list of courses and groups provided by centres makes clear the existence of a *learning to be* pillar associated with personal development. This extensive list includes but is not limited to; *playgroups, family groups, spirituality groups, weight watchers, exercise, ethno-specific support groups, various health condition support groups, breastfeeding, yoga, pilates, self esteem, stress management, laughing workshops etc...* Each of these can be described as activities where people are *learning to be*.

***Learning to be*(come)**

An example of self-work is seen in the 'Life Experience Counts' program offered in a number of centres across NSW. The objective of this program is to assist participants to 're-write their selfs' from that of 'a housewife' to 'a skilled capable woman' (LCSA 1999a; LCSA 2000; LCSA 2001b). While the overt intention of external funders of this program may be to facilitate the recognition of prior learning (RPL) process in efforts to get participants moving along education or employment pathways – the centres appear less insistent on these types of outcomes.

For many centres an important outcome for this sort of re-writing of the self is that of empowerment – the empowerment of women in this case. Empowerment remains a catchcry for centres because of their humanist traditions – and again while this idea is might be debated, it is a pursuit underpinning much centre activity. Moreover, it seems that a general concept akin to empowerment is recognised even beyond the confines of centres' workers:

> *One of the barriers would-be volunteers have to go through is convincing their families that the neighbourhood centre won't corrupt them or empower them too much* (Centre coordinator).

While *learning to be* (empowered) is another way this pillar is mobilised in centre provision, there are others still. Another is exemplified in the story of a

volunteer who notes how her association with the neighbourhood centre contributes to her *learning to be* ... 'kinder':

> [I've learned about] *big families with no money – usually no husbands there to give any support – well, that's opened my eyes - not that I can do all that much – but I can be kinder in my attitude to people – if you do have a problem its not always your fault* (Volunteer: responding to a question about what she gets from her volunteer work).

It seems that *learning to be* 'kinder' comes about by *learning to know* about others, and so acquiring knowledge of others might reasonably also contribute to *learning to live together* as well. Furthermore, if this is understood as 'empathy' then she might also be learning an important skill (*learning to do*) that can be used in employment.

However, people are *learning to be* many other things besides 'kinder':

> *I found that I had to become involved in the local community because I just wanted a life after work* (Volunteer).
>
> *I was a very shy person – and people can't believe – but I was – and I really have changed* (Group participant).
>
> *The lady who works with me on Tuesdays – she's what? – 80? Lets say 70 – she only comes up and sits there all day on the computer playing card games – just to get away from the family – she's been doing it for what? – ever since [name]'s been here* (Volunteer).
>
> *Yeah – gives her a break – she's a volunteer – well I think a sort of volunteer and she gets away from the kids or grandkids* (another Volunteer following on from previous one)
>
> *I was facing massive marital problems and I think it was like my escape and I didn't know how to cope – and so it wasn't the thing to talk about – but the neighbourhood centre gave me an understanding about these things too* (Centre user).

Learning to be <<insert any number of possibilities here>> is clearly an important pillar in centres. However, the list does not stop with attitudes – people in centres are *learning to be* everything from active citizens, to a family and/or community member, to a gendered, older, and/or healthier person:

> *I got involved in calling the first public meeting as part of [name] neighbourhood centre – and I just totally got involved – I don't know why I was so driven – but I was so driven – I never was that sort of person before* (Volunteer involved in a local social action campaign).
>
> *We have volunteers who go out and visit the elderly and the disabled in their home – people that are in danger of being socially isolated – people that mightn't see anyone from week to week – just to have someone call is so important – we do that* (Centre Coordinator).

> *They're meeting other families and making new connections – its meeting people and creating networks and also learning what's available here – its really important – and it's a combination of all of us working together to provide that* (Worker from organisation partnering with a Centre).

And to conclude this discussion on *learning to be* - importantly, people are *learning (not) to be* as well:

> *We don't assume deficit* (Centre Worker).

Learning *to live together*

Learning to live together is the final pillar to be presented here. Ironically even though it has been suggested that this pillar resides predominately in the domain of neighbourhood centre provision, much evidence of its existence has been provided already within discussions of the pillars hitherto: *learning to know* others and *learning to do* things in the company of others being two examples. Yet while examples of people coming in contact with difference have already been alluded to, there are more still:

> *There's a group that learns English and they're all different nationalities – you get to know them – and sometimes they're a bit difficult to understand but its nice to make that contact* (Centre user).

> *In our gardening club have some young members – so they range from mid 30s to about 82* (Participant).

Another example is one of a volunteer who describes her understanding of people with disabilities - a woman with a niece with an intellectual disability – a niece she said that she had avoided physical contact with:

> *I don't think I saw them as real people – that they have needs like we all have – I knew a couple of shop owners who would not want them in their establishment because they were not the type of people – not complete human beings – and they look down on them – they look down on them – they didn't want them in their shops – and I understand to a certain degree ... but volunteering has given me – I just want to hug [name] now – it affects me – I think I am a nicer person for having come in contact – I hope I don't have that problem anymore – I can give [name] a hug when she wants to – and I don't feel uncomfortable – I've learned a lot* (Volunteer).

Learning to live together requires learning to know difference differently. This can require moving out of the safety of ones own community and coming in contact with an other – or as Bauman suggests the 'alien' (2001b). Coming face to face with the alien is a daily occurrence in neighbourhood centre. Take for instance the older women in a 'teddy-bear making group' that meets

in a centre every Wednesday. In another room of the same centre, every Wednesday, is another meeting. The men in this other meeting call themselves the 'ACON boys' (ACON is a group primarily concerned with meeting the needs of gay men, with a particular concern for those living with HIV AIDS). For both groups, it is customary to break mid-morning in order to seek sustenance. One of the teddy-bear makers tells me how both groups chat in the kitchen. She doesn't think she's met a gay man before these encounters.

Some dismiss single-issue groups (like teddy-bear making?) as being potential sites for building long-term and meaningful relationships (Bauman 2001b), meanwhile others recognise their societal potential (OECD 2001:49). Either way, a neighbourhood centre provides a site where different groups *are* coming in contact with one another and finding similarities despite differences. Moreover relationships established in centres endure beyond the scope of these sites:

> *It came out of a parenting 'being a dad' course – and they wanted to keep meeting – and they have about a dozen guys who get together for over two years now* (Coordinator talking about a group of men who continue to meet after completing a course).

> *When I first started we had a group of about 8 women who were coming regularly – and then they started meeting regularly on Tuesdays and they'd rotate it at different peoples' homes – so they were getting together Tuesdays and Thursdays – and then they stopped coming because they were meeting twice a week in peoples' homes – they didn't need it anymore but they were introduced to each other through the ante-natal group* (Health Worker who runs groups in a Centre).

These last vignettes, along with the many examples provided through discussions of earlier pillars are indicative of how centres are providing opportunities for people to *learn to live together.* In a world that is increasingly becoming even more suspicious of difference (Bauman 2001b), the provision of learning in centres is not only able to build 'communities' but also build a complex network of bridges *across* communities.

Bridges

The inadequacy of educational categories is evident when attempting to contain the provision of learning in NSW centres. Learning includes education, but education does not include all learning. Take, for example, the terms *course and group.* A course assumes a defined program of study: eg a

computer *course* is a defined program of study where participants learn about computers. Moreover, when considering the provision of these courses there is an associated assumption that the purpose of providing a computer course is so that participants will learn about computers. Likewise, with the adjectives that precede the term 'group'. However while the earlier example of a quilters group might first suggest that participants will learn the various techniques of quilting (*learning to do*), the participant indicates otherwise (*learning to learn*) meanwhile the centre coordinator might suggest something else again (*learning to live together*).

The title of this chapter is intentionally plural. The process of bridging the pillars was primarily to link education and learning and in doing so link the work of neighbourhood centres to that of sanctioned educational providers. But linking pillars themselves draws attention to several possible bridges. Some of these have already been hinted at already. While it is not the intention to do the intellectual work to construct the bridges, I turn now to their possibilities.

One such bridge is that between *economic* and *social* outcomes. Contemporary ideas of education in Australia abound with notions of learning *to know* and learning *to do:* the first two of Delors' pillars. It is easy to imagine these as central to educational institutions like schools, universities and adult community education providers. The transferring of knowledge and skills is said to promote a healthy economy through the individual citizen/student's investment in *human* capital. On the other hand the latter two pillars, learning *to be* and learning *to live together*, are familiar within the work of neighbourhood centres. Yet these might seem unfamiliar or strange in educational settings. This does not preclude them from them being present in education but with educational outcomes measured largely in economic terms any *social* measures are obscured. Unlike the former pillars these do not always 'make good economic sense', but then again neither does the work of social workers (Bauman 2000:5). However, linking these forms of capital via a discussion of pillars offers other possibilities (OECD 2001:65).

A second bridge is that of phrases. To say '*this* is education' or to say '*that* is education' is to make a denotative statement. Part of the overall argument of this thesis has been to (try and) say that what neighbourhood centres do is education. Neighbourhood centres' work resides in propositional phrases (*could* bes) and so to insist that 'neighbourhood centres are ACE' only gets me so far before the *differend* becomes obvious. Lyotard's suggestion, in such a dilemma, is develop ruses that *link*.

Regardless of 'diversity of both process and product, educational thought has been dominated by the largely unquestioned assumption that the most valuable learning is of just one kind' (Beckett 2001:108). Thinking about *learning to know* and *learning to do* in regard to education draws attention to both the site of transference (education) as well as the products acquired (skills and knowledge). Education is product centred. On the other hand *being* and *living together* are processes. Moreover, the community development practices are processes too. Indeed, because of this community development focus, neighbouhood centres' work is focused on the collective, whereas traditional educational pillars tend to be more individualistic. So in many ways the exploration of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres through these pillars begins to highlight the potential to construct bridges between these products and process, as well as between people. The richness and diversity possible through such linking of education and learning has only been glimpsed thus far.

Bridges and this game of *cat's cradle*

Butler suggests that the 'incalculable effects of action are as much a part of their subversive promise as those we plan in advance' (1993:241), and at this moment her point resonates. In contradiction of, and despite, the work here that has claimed neighbourhood centres are (or might be) adult community education providers, this final part now troubles the earlier assertion that neighbourhood centres are education providers. While education and learning have now been linked to some extent, they are not the same. There is little to be gained by recourse to an overarching discourse – indeed it is important to keep the differences open – least of all because there is value in neighbourhood centres *not* being education too!

It is helpful to the overall project of education to conceive learning differently. Ironically, by centres' provision *not* being obviously educational in a traditional understanding, they are able to provide for people not traditionally represented in 'education' yet widely perceived to be in need of it.

The 'problem' of how education can attract people from particular groups labelled as 'disadvantaged' is a commonly lamented one. Yet it may be that 'education' itself is part of the problem. Forrester notes a parallel argument suggesting education institutions are often part of the problem inhibiting the development of [...] learning' (Forrester 1998:429). It may be that sites like neighbourhood centres are more suitable to promote disadvantaged and marginalised peoples' capacity to learn because they are *not* obviously education. Centres' social justice mandate, which calls for a redistribution of resources, means that centres are already providing for people typically under-represented in more recognisable educational institutions. This means that the problem of attracting is already lessened because for the most part potential learners are already there! This capacity to attract hesitant learners might be attributed to centres being generalist organisations, *rather* than educational ones.

Neighbourhood centres describe themselves as generalist organisations because they do not focus on a specific issue, service, or activity type (like education). Rather, these organisations work across issues and services and may focus on several simultaneously. On the one hand this may account for some misunderstandings about what centres actually do:

> *People go past and think 'I wonder what's down there [at the centre]' – and they don't realise – unless they have a need or someone sends them here – they don't actually know what a centre is – a lot of them – so I don't actually think people are fully aware of what is available and that its available to everyone* (Volunteer)

But on the other hand this same ambiguity can be understood as advantageous for attracting hesitant learners. Potentially, learners attending neighbourhood centre activities may avoid being tagged as deficit or in need of 'welfare' and/or 'education':

> *I think its good because there's so many specialist services – there's no stigma- anyone can go into a neighbourhood centre* (Centre user).

> *They* [the local organisation that concerns itself with domestic violence] *tried over and over and over to get a group up and running at community health and then they moved it down here – because its less imposing – once someone walks through the front door no-one knows what they come in here for and they just go straight through to the domestic violence group – and no-one knows – at community health they just wouldn't go because its associated with medical and professionals and here we're just open and relaxed – I mean if you walk in here you might be just going to the toilet* (Centre Coordinator).

> *It gives people privacy – and I think that's important – I mean if you've got a problem the last thing you want is to be upfront for the whole world to see – I mean if you walk into Women's Health then the whole town knows you've got a problem* (Associated worker).

A generalist feature of neighbourhood centres contributes to them being valuable sites to provide learning for people that have not benefited from formalised 'education'. This is because, as generalist organisations, potential learners may not associate centres with educational institutions. Rather, as centre users suggest, they are 'homely', 'safe', and 'friendly' places, but more importantly places that differ from educational institutions. Some participants below make a further comparison between learning in educational institutions like 'school' and learning in a neighbourhood centre:

> *In a school like when I went to a full class 30 years ago – you have to study and do exams – but I don't have to do that here – just learning and practice* (Participant).

> *Class in Sydney used to be like 22 people and here we have 5 – we have time to think and it doesn't matter if we're wrong – we're always laughing* (Participant).

> *I think more casual – more relaxed – you always learn better if you feel relaxed* (Participant).

> *I can speak and read – but I come back here to improve my English – I think I haven't got so many mistakes – I think they have a different system here* (ESL Participant).

These participants highlight the relaxed environment of learning in a neighbourhood centre – a relaxed environment that can be encouraging for non-traditional learners – a place that welcomes learners that are *learning to know, to do, to be and live together*. Moreover, these are often learners who are unlikely to enrol in recognisably educational institutions: hence the importance of retaining differences - a point that moves this thesis to its closing stages.

Preparing to pause the playing

In this 'playing section' I have 'written up' the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres – talked them up – in effort to legitimise the learning that these organisations provide as well as to trouble neighbourhood centres' absence from the discourses of education in NSW. The various versions of the provision of learning in neighbourhood centres show how the provision is indeed significant in its empirical state. This final version, as well as 'the preliminary pattern' and 'the stringent pattern' are now 'written up'. As such, they are now available to interrupt and to trouble unproblematic understandings of what education might look like, and who might provide it.

However, it is no mistake that I end this thesis at a point that somewhat resembles the one where it began. I began (way back in chapter one) by making the case that neighbourhood centres ought to be considered legitimate adult community education providers. Yet, I have ended (in chapter nine) by troubling the assertion that neighbourhood centres *are* adult community education. This last pattern has made the case that it is important that centres *are not* considered education providers too – that differences ought to stay in play. On the one hand this makes a nice loop – a loop that contributes to the *cat's cradle* analogy. However 'clever' this loop might appear, it is a mistake to assume that I have arrived at the beginning in a literal sense. 'Playing' makes 'the beginning' an impossible destination. The troubling though, helps make another point besides. This is a reminder of the dangers of research. Whatever righteous researchers claim, must be read against the possibilities of doing quite the converse: that is, further damage. This is a humbling (but important) detail to consider least I be tempted now to re-cap conclusive findings and assert the importance of their significance.

With this said, here marks an end to the *playing*. This section, Section two (*Playing*), played this pagan game that was introduced in Section one (*Preparing*). To achieve this, the section presented three 'patterns' of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres, and it also presented three related 'moves' concerning the candidate-practitioner-researcher who produced the patterns. However, three sets of patterns and moves are not 'the final word' on the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres (if ever it could), or of the only identities of she who played.

Conclusion to chapter

This chapter has presented a third version of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. It drew from empirical data and then framed discussion in terms of Delors' four pillars of learning. While this served to link ideas about education and learning, and of educational institutions and neighbourhood centres, it also had the benefit of retaining differences. The following (and final) chapter takes up this point not only in relation to this chapter, but also in relation to the entire thesis.

PAUSING (section three)

Although not exhausting infinite possibilities, the patterns and moves made hitherto are almost all to be presented here. It is necessary to pause – my word limit, candidature term and energy are depleting. So I now turn attention to what might otherwise be considered a conclusion (knowing that aspects of this 'research game' will be taken up again elsewhere). Be pre-warned though that this thesis will not 'conclude' in the traditional sense: in that it wraps up what has been presented hitherto and makes a well-formulated announcement as to what has been newly 'discovered'. Many others have argued the reasoning behind this point more eloquently than I (Nicoll 2003) – besides any attempt I might make at a 'conclusion' would probably read something like 'research is tricky business' and that 'it poses tricky questions'. Rather, the remaining chapter will try to make some sense of peripatetic wonderings that have shifted attention and focus throughout this work. And although this took writers and readers into divergent theoretical and contextual territories, I reiterate that this has been necessary in preparing a professional doctor as a practitioner in a problematic 'practice'.

Despite avoiding 'conclusions' *per se*, the following (and final) chapter *will* do a little summative work. It will recall the initial problematics that incited my wonderings and seek to offer them further warrant. Hence, as is the want of chapters that some call 'conclusions', chapter ten *((K)not quite knowing)* will revisit and address some of the pertinent (and tricky) questions that have been posed throughout this work – and this will pose a new set of questions:

Why did you do this study?
"To *know* the world, and to *write* the world", the research claimed.
"To become a licensed knower", answered the candidate.
"To *right* the world", the practitioner declared.
"Because there is pleasure in playing", the pagan added.

Well then, do you know the world; did you write the world; have you become a licensed knower; is the world right; and, has there been pleasure?

Chapter 10 (K)not knowing

Introduction to chapter

The title of this final chapter provides a hint of its flavour. It remembers the pagan approach, that serves to mark a *(k)not knowing.* The chapter begins by revisiting the two problematics that have been the foci of this research. First, the issue of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres is revisited, and then the issue of identity. Following 'revisitations', two related contributions are proposed. The chapter goes on to suggest a third contribution before addressing some questions that have been posed.

The provision of learning in neighbourhood centres

In one sense this has been a thesis about the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. It began with an undertaking to produce new understandings about the provision of learning in these organisations. The production of these understandings was underscored by desires for particular effects. The production was first deemed an important undertaking because it was held against a dearth of knowledge concerning the provision of learning in these organisations. Moreover, this was understood as even more important when considering that these organisations typically work with some of the state's most disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, it is advantageous for 'education' to know how to better cater for the learning needs of these groups of people. In other words, there was 'justice' at stake. This drew further attention to the usefulness of producing alternate accounts of the provision of learning in neighbourhood centres through conceptualising the current situation concerning centres' exclusion from 'education' as unjust.

I imagined this situation as unjust on at least two fronts. First, it was socially unjust when different knowledges (and perhaps a reallocation of resources) might promise new ways to provide 'education' for people poorly represented in official (and sanctioned) educational institutions. While further research might address this by drawing on the experiences of centres, these

organisations first need to be considered as sites where learning is provided. This consideration is unlikely to occur until the provision of learning in NSW centres is acknowledged. Moreover, centres themselves may also need to recognise their work in terms of learning. Hence the necessity to 'talk up' the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres.

Second, conceptualising the situation in terms of Lyotard's notion of the *differend* drew attention to a further injustice to neighbourhood centres because attempts to claim 'educational' status were silenced. A further undertaking of this work was to draw attention to the *differend* caused through such silencing, and to imagine possible ruses that link the work of neighbourhood centres to that of education.

To accomplish these various undertakings this thesis presented three sub-versions of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. First there was *'A preliminary pattern'* (in chapter five) that introduced NSW neighbourhood centres and their broader socio-economic context. This version also served to locate the study of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres within literature. A second version (chapter seven) presented '*A stringent pattern*' that drew data from survey research. This version though was bittersweet; while it claimed to be 'righting the world' through bearing witness to the *differend,* it simultaneously did further injustice to those I desired 'righting' in the first instance. And finally, '*Bridges*' (chapter nine) drew on interviews with people involved in centres to present a third version of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. This last production was underscored with a dual desire for 'taking pleasure in the production' as well as linking the work of neighbourhood centres to education.

At this point I reiterate a warning made earlier. That is, the production of three versions was never meant to produce a triangulated fantasy seeking to get closer to the truth by employing multiple methods. Nor was it an attempt to align with those who desire a pragmatic reconciliation or combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (Morgan 2007) – although this door is not necessarily closed either. Rather, here it was an attempt to bear witness to the *differend* and develop ruses that would undermine untroubled accounts of what 'education' might look like (and who might provide it).

Yet, seeing these 'pattern chapters' alongside each other does some other important work. First, it gives a clear reminder (lest I ever forget) that no version of the world is ever a finite one. These multiple versions are beset with contradictions and inconsistencies that might be eschewed in some others' work. These multiple versions demonstrate how it is possible to understand the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres in various ways. Indeed, it is not even enough to understand this point, but it is also *necessary* to have multiple understandings. To this end, I have argued *for* and then demonstrated *how to* work productively *with* multiplicity. This represents a departure from those who would argue that among the utmost of standards for research (and theses) is the premise that they should strive for truth.

An important implication of the patterns presented here has been the politics of 'naming' (or not) of 'education like' activities. This naming, and the naming of organisations as 'providers' (or otherwise), has tangible implications. If the ACE-like activity in neighbourhood centres remains unnamed by both centres and those in the sanctioned education sectors, then it loses opportunities to develop at a time where it might be needed the most (Suhood, Marks and SONG 2006). This is not only an issue for the centres that as a sector are in a state of crisis but also for those participating in local community development processes. What focusing on education alone can overlook is the important learning involved in community development campaigns, lobbying, support groups, community action, volunteering and/or community management committees. While these have been noted for their educative potential (Newman 1994; Foley 1995; Whyte and Crombie 1995; Newman 1999; Flowers 2005), they have been all but been subsumed by concerns for learning that addresses economic concerns. I am suggesting it is time to remember what else is at stake; even when this is a problematic idea of justice.

Looking elsewhere for further inspiration to end this thesis (having long since bypassed the advice of most 'how to' texts), I turn to Butler who points out the 'incalculable effects of action are as much a part of their subversive promise as those we plan in advance' (1993:241). I ask myself then, what *was* it that I 'planned in advance'? Well, I planned to produce three sub-version of the

provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres and I believe that I have delivered on this promise. Yet implicated in this plan was that these productions were never intended to be 'innocent'. As already indicated, they were produced with the aim of troubling and destabilising, and for entering various discourses.

So have the patterns entered various discourses? To some extent they have. A version of the preliminary pattern (in chapter five) appears in a legitimate academic journal (see Rooney 2004a), and through acts of citation has since been incorporated into academic exchange (Deer and McCrae 2005; Rule 2005). A version of chapter nine (Bridges) was presented to an international audience at an academic conference (Rooney 2007). And aside from appearing here as 'chapters', versions of chapters seven and nine (*A string(ent) pattern* and *Bridges*) have passed between my hands and the hands of LCSAs, and through extension to the hands of the women and men who constitute 'NSW neighbourhood centres'. Thus, as Haraway suggests, they can add their own moves, in effort to play their own games. Any effects of the latter comprise the incalculable. In all, this exemplifies a potentially wider dissemination of research than a mono-visionary text, and one that I argue to be of particular importance to professional doctorates.

A concern with identity

In another sense, this has been a thesis concerned with identity. Aside from imagining identities of neighbourhood centres in various discourses, I was interested in the various identities of those that produce professional doctoral theses. To this end I teased out an unproblematic notion of 'I the author' to present the 'I' of the candidate, the 'I' of the practitioner and the 'I' of the researcher. This 'I' was conceptualised as a hybrid candidate-practitioner-researcher. I asked then whether my various 'I's could 'live together' in this text – although this itself was a trick question because they were already 'living together' in unresolved contention. Nevertheless, the implications raised, promised the production of a thesis that, while resisting the erasure of dissonant voices, was coherent enough to be considered 'a thesis'. In all, this strategy served to keep the play of difference open and avoid resort to a monotone and unproblematic 'I'.

This then, my polyvocal 'I', encouraged me to consider '*why do this study?*', and my various answers included; to *know* the world; to *write* the world; to *change* the world; to *become* an authorised knower; and, because the pursuit promised *pleasure*. So, as is the want of evaluations and conclusions, some obvious questions remain unaddressed: Do I know the world? Did I write the world? Have I become a authorised knower? Have I changed the world? And, has there been pleasure? Rather than answer these questions *in toto,* each will be addressed as it arises, but to do this I need to first turn attention to the relationship *between* the problematics of pivotal concern to this work.

Relationship between problematics

For me, a most poignant feature of this work has been at the junction of its two problematics. It has not simply been about producing a text (or even multiple ones) about the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres. Nor was it simply about the hybrid identity producing (and produced *by*) this text. If I have learned anything in a profound way, it is that the writer and her text are inseparable: the know*er* is not separable from the know*ing*. Moreover, the writer and her text are inexplicably linked to the context in which texts are produced. So, here I might address one of the first questions I ask of my selves.

Knowing 'the world'

Do I know the world? Well, not quite. However, I *do* know that what I profess to know raises as many ethical questions as it might epistemological ones – indeed exploring the *why* of the text (along with the *how*) has been another productive move for me here. What I also know, is that anything I profess to know is contingent on how it is held together, and the knots and the gaps that give it form.

Hence, *(k)not knowing* is the term I prefer to identify any 'knowing' to come from this work. I use this somewhat (yet not quite) playful term in reference to the game of *cat's cradle* that has been played herein. And this game of *cat's cradle* has been an accommodating one insofar as drawing attention to the hands of the players of research, the *patterns* (and the limits of the patterns) candidate-practitioner-researchers produce, and the desires that underscore the *moves* made when creating textual products (and worlds).

Related to knowing, and linked to writing is another salient feature of this work for me in regard to knowing the world. This has been my engagement with (and (k)not knowing of) some ideas and words: for example practices of community development, adult community education, becoming, righting, playing and knowing – *and,* ideas of social justice, adult community education, adult learning and lifelong learning. This scholarly engagement has provided illusive glimpses of ideas and words that seemed less troublesome before I began. These words and ideas now seem to have a simultaneous capacity for both disappointment *and* promise. Words and ideas that once felt and tasted 'right', now have a bitter aftertaste, and any rightness ascribed them is much more negotiated. They are ideas and words that are both imperfect and promising and I have glimpsed their promises as well as their disenchantments – and sometimes I was simply left (k)not knowing the difference.

Writing the world

(K)not knowing has also drawn attention to how the text writes the world as much as it appears to be simply written accounts of it... So, *have I written the world?* Well, yes, albeit in very particular ways. I say in particular ways because there was something else at stake. The production of the sub-versions of the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres was not an 'innocent' pursuit of justice. I produced them with an aim of entering broader discourses: for instance, academe, the neighbourhood centre sector and education. And even this was not innocent because my purpose in entering these broader discourses was to have some type of effect (ie, trouble). In a simple sense, entering academic discourses would serve to warrant my licensing as a knower. Similarly, entering neighbourhood centre discourses would serve the purpose of making available different ways for centres to understand themselves, as well as providing potential wedges for the sectors' claims for acknowledgment in addition to any associated resources that such acknowledgement might bring. And, entering 'educational' discourses was warranted because of the limited understandings of what is deemed worthy of being called 'education'. Yet these warrants are not mutually exclusive either. Entering 'education' discourses can further my 'becoming', as might writing, righting and playing

for that matter. Similarly, entering 'neighbourhood centre sector discourses' may demonstrate 'evidence' that warrants an instrumental becoming. Hence it cannot be said that 'the research knows', 'the candidate becomes', 'the practitioner rights', or 'the pagan plays' without acknowledging the inter-relationships and inconsistencies, not to mention what other becomings might also be possible.

In this work inconsistencies are not only visible but also used as a resource. In this way it might be understood as rhizomatic. 'Rhizomatic' it may be, yet ironically I wonder if it also might be 'all the more total for being fragmented' (Delleuze and Guattari 1987:6). Contradictory identities, polyvocality, and multiple accounts of the provision of learning in neighbourhood centres, made for some challenging methodological and textual work. The methodological and textual promise of a 'game' of *cat's cradle* opened up possibilities to establish some connections, and yet destabilise these connections at the same time.

Changing the world

I have been explicit about desiring effects in the world, but have I achieved these effects – *have I changed the world?* This was another trick question, because even the (not quite so) innocent act of *asking* questions changed the world already. I can only speculate about what effects my interventions into 'the neighbourhood centre world' in the name of 'research' might have. How might neighbourhood centres understand themselves differently because I asked these 'education/learning' questions? What effects have my interventions had on the people that I spoke with (and those they might have spoken to since)? Yet, despite desiring changes to the world, and regardless if I 'know' or have 'become', 'righted' or 'played', the world *has* changed through my interventions.

The world has changed in unanticipated ways too. My four years as candidate-practitioner-researcher has been marked by an interest in learning in neighbourhood centres and professional doctorates. I set out to know, change and write these worlds, and have succeeded to some extent (Rooney 2004a; Rooney 2004b; Rooney 2006; Rooney 2007). However, over these years my circumstances changed. My *co*-location in a university Research Unit became a *re*-location. Projects finished (as projects do) and

opportunities arose to work on different sorts of projects (Australian Research Council ones). This relocation has meant scholarly interests 'gained another dimension', and this newly gained dimension has necessarily meant 'changing the nature' of my world/s in unanticipated ways (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:249).

Newly developed interests in workplace learning shifted what constitutes 'my world', as did what 'it' and 'I the practitioner' might be becoming. Yet another beginning has meant writing other worlds too, and for the most part, these texts 'talked to' those also interested in *workplace* learning (eg Price, Rooney, Boud and Scheeres 2007; Rooney and Boud 2006; Solomon, Boud and Rooney 2006). Yet while learning in 'neighbourhood centres', 'professional doctorates' and now 'workplaces' might seem dissimilar, there are some similarities. One is an interest in learning outside of obviously educational organisations.

Be it a neighbourhood centre or a workplace, the spatial aspects of learning have triggered my imagination – and I have written about this too (Solomon, Boud and Rooney 2006; Solomon, Boud and Rooney 2004; Solomon, Boud and Rooney 2003). And as exemplified by 'space', the sorts of understanding metaphor can promise fascinates me - this too emerges in the 'other' work produced over candidature (Rooney, Rhodes and Boud 2007; Rooney and Solomon 2006).

Another similarity between these candidate-practitioner-doctoral worlds is a reflexive interest in collaborative textual production. Texts bearing my name in the (co)author position are a result of collaborative efforts. From the collaboration of the candidate-practitioner-researcher within, to collaborations with people from neighbourhood centres, to the collaboration of research team members and colleagues: each has in common a need to negotiate texts and identities (Harman, Boud, Leontios, Rooney and Solomon 2003; Rooney, Boud, Harman, Leontios and Solomon 2003).

In all, these emergent interests and their textual produce are 'new' dimensions to my candidate-practitioner-researcher world. So when I ask again if the world has changed, the answer is an empathetic 'yes'. Although what this means in terms of becoming, I do (k)not, and cannot fully, know.

Some contributions

This work makes three related contributions. First, as a thesis concerned with the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres it contributes new knowledge about the provision of learning in these (non-educational?) organisations. The implications of this contribution are very much dependent on how these sub-versions might be understood, mobilised or re-deployed. Hence, if the problem of 'writing up' the provision of learning in NSW neighbourhood centres then this has been accomplished by locating them in literature, writing them up in numerical language and prompting discussions. In doing this, I have drawn attention to how neighbourhood centres, as sites of learning, are potential research sites for those interested in bettering educational outcomes for marginalised people.

In this work I have drawn attention to the relationship between the identities that produce a professional doctoral thesis and the types of texts they might produce. This has enabled me to make a second contribution, and this is one to contemporary discussions around professional doctorate practices in an Australian context. In this work I have conceptualised the candidate not as a homogenous entity, but as a hybrid of candidate-practitioner-researcher (among many other possibilities). This conceptualisation has triggered an assertion that the relatively new practice of professional doctorates in Australia requires new and different textual and conceptual practices that work productively with multiplicity. I then went on to perform 'working productively with multiplicity'. The pagan game of *cat's cradle* has been promising in this regard because as a textual and conceptual device, it demonstrates a way to work productively with – while still (and importantly) retaining difference. Indeed, I suggest that a third contribution *is* this pagan game of *cat's cradle*.

The problematic and this game of *cat's cradle*

Through coupling Lyotard's notion of the *pagan* and Haraway's *cat's cradle*, I contribute to conceptual discussions by arguing for, and demonstrating how to, work productively and ethically with the complexities inherent in a research project situated in the contemporary context of a professional doctorate. In doing so I offer a new 'game plan' – and one that is helpful for professional doctoral candidates. This is a game plan that can be put productively to work within the multiple games that situates hybrid candidate-practitioner-researchers who must produce texts within these emerging sites.

The conceptual and textual framework provided by *cat's cradle* makes up a third contribution of this work. Borrowed and adapted, and building on the work of Haraway, it offers another version of a reflexive text. Such a framework enables (*insists* on) a focus on epistemological *and* ethical aspects of research. It works productively with multiplicity. It enables hybrid candidate-practitioner-researcher opportunities to produce a variety of texts and to enter a variety of conversations – this latter point is not only helpful for the professional doctor but also (I suspect) for the contemporary researcher/academic as well. This is important because practitioner-researchers (and the texts they produce) must interact in the world in a different ways. Traversing fields, as well as mobilising (and practicing) a variety of research methods, also affords opportunities for candidate-practitioner-researchers to practice 'new languages' (Richardson 1994:936,940). While this thesis is necessarily plural and has traversed disciplines and 'fields', it serves to demonstrate how working productively with multiplicity can also contribute to outputs that extend beyond academic journals (Winter, Griffiths and Green 2000:35).

Yet, and perhaps to the puzzlement of some, the 'methods' of this thesis did not assume centre stage. Nevertheless, a significant methodological contribution is offered. Methods have not been employed here as a mechanism 'to control the 'threat posed by writing', nor have I forgotten the texts own 'written-ness' (MacLure 2000:105-106). The reflexiveness of *cat's cradle* foregrounds the 'crafted nature' of what has been written, and consequently draws attention to the presence of its hybrid author (MacLure 2000:111).

With all this said, I ask now, *if I have become an authorised knower?* In an instrumental sense this is not for me to say, but there is another becoming. The pagan researcher has glimpsed, and continues to glimpse other (imperfect) ideas that in turn prompt (re)consideration of *how*, and *why*, this game might be played differently. Indeed, I suspect I shall (in some *other* game at some *other* moment) resume this game of *cat's cradle* - although it would be right to be reminded that it would never be an absolute reproduction (if ever it could). However, for now I am exhausted and besides, it is 'officially' time to pause this game.

It has been an exhausting game. I have presented a thesis explicitly as a reflexive piece of work that was politically motivated and personally mobilised. Specifically, I provided three representations and analyses of the provision of learning in neighbourhood centres that drew from three different sources of data. Reflexively each (sub)version was premised on the desires of the candidate-practitioner-researcher. Analytically, data sources and desires were positioned against each other enabling acknowledgement as well as to work within and against the problematic categories they relied on. In all, this thesis refused, established, and destabilised the categories of its own analysis simultaneously. Drawing on Haraway's analogy of research as a game of *cat's cradle*, and Lyotard's theorisation of the pagan, it developed a new and different conceptual and textual framework and used this to pursue its investigation. This approach was justified in response to the legitimacy and authority of research and its practice, as well as to calls for developing new textual practices for professional doctorates in Australia.

In a game of *cat's cradle*, when one is exhausted (not to be confused or conflated with having 'exhausted possibilities'), one might simply shake the string and put it in a pocket until next ready to 'play'. But before I am done there is one final question to answer: *Was there pleasure?*

Was there pleasure? "Well, *not quite,"* answers the pagan. There was though a bittersweet sense of establishing and then destabilising an array of ideas that served to move this thesis beyond (some might say) traditional limits. This pagan 'becoming' has established ideas, and yet simultaneously it has worked to destabilise them as well. This is understood here as a necessary

pursuit, in effort to resist the take-up of authorised knower status without also leaving opportunities open for other knowing - differences are left in play.

"Ah, such bittersweet pleasure," she repeats to herself as she tucks a tatty loop of string into her pocket.

APPENDICES

a) **Information brochure**

b) **Survey**

c) **'Tips' for completing survey**

About the researcher:

Donna Rooney

Donna Rooney has been involved in learning and Neighbourhood Centres for over 10 years. As well as being on her local Centre's management committee, she has worked with Centres on several learning projects. Her most recent employment was with Local Community Services Association (LCSA) where she co-ordinated several adult learning projects (Partnerships in ACE, Hands On and BACE IT) for 5 years. She has also; taught at several TAFE colleges; coordinated a Community College in South Western Sydney, worked as a community development worker in a Campbelltown high school; worked as an research associate and is currently doing some lecturing at UTS.

Donna is especially concerned about the increasing gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots', and believes in education and learning's capacity to make for a more just and equitable society. Through her experiences in education, and her personal biography, she believes strongly in a commitment to 'lifelong learning' for *all*.

Donna has a degree in Adult Education from the University of Western Sydney, and holds an honors degree in Education from University of Technology, Sydney. She has recieved several academic prizes for her work and is the recipient of a competitive scholarship which is enabling her to work full-time on this project. This study is her research project for her Professional Doctorate.

Want more information?

If you want to talk about this research project, or have further questions regarding participation, there are a few people you can contact.

You can:

- talk with **Donna** on 02 9514 3044 or [redacted]
- talk with Donna's academic supervisor, **Carl Rhodes**, on 02 9514 3930
- talk to **Louise Abrams** from the UTS Human Research Ethics Committee on 02 9514 1244
- write to any of the people above at the address below

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SYDNEY

Faculty of Education
PO Box 123
Broadway, NSW, 2007
Phone: 02 9514 3044
Fax: 02 9514 3077
Email: Donna.L.Rooney@uts.edu.au

Exploring Neighbourhood Centre's contribution to the learning landscape of New South Wales:

a request for NSW Neighbourhood Centres, and the people that use these Centres, to participate in a research project.

Donna Rooney

University of Technology, Sydney

Tel: 02 9514 3044

Appendix a) Information

What is this research about?

This research aims to explore the contribution that Neighbourhood Centres are making to adult learning in New South Wales (NSW). I am doing this study because I believe that in NSW the work of 'adult education' is traditionally understood as the work of Universities, TAFE colleges, workplaces and the Adult Community Education (ACE) sector. In other states, Neighbourhood Centres are seen as very much implicated in the world of adult education, but this is not generally the case in NSW. Governments are becoming increasingly interested in the benefits (both socially and economically) that 'learning' can deliver. Because of these benefits, they are keen to support learning that helps achieve national goals. Its important that Neighbourhood Centres' work is acknowledged and on the agenda especially at this time.

Having spent much time involved in Centres, in addition to 5 years at LCSA, I believe that there is much learning happening in Neighbourhood Centres in NSW. Unfortunately, this 'learning' is seldom captured in 'official' reporting systems, nor is the contribution it makes to society adequately acknowledged in terms that those involved in 'education' understand.

While the work of Centres is well understood within the 'Neighbourhood and Community Centre' sector, little is understood from within the 'educational' fields: *How much learning? Who is it for? Why? How is it organised? And what is the significance for the learners, organisations, communities and society as a whole?*

This study hopes to answer some of these questions. It will do this by surveying all NSW Centres about their activities, and interviewing a number of people involved in Centres and Centre activities.

Questions and Answers

Here are some common questions & answers that might help you decide about participating in this study.

- **Who can participate?** Neighbourhood Centres (workers, co-ordinators, volunteers and management) and people who use Neighbourhood Centres can participate in this research.

- **What does participation mean for Centres?** Your Centre will soon receive a one-paged survey in the mail. The survey asks questions about the types of activities happening in your Centre. 'Participation' will mean completing the survey (which will probably take about 10 minutes) and returning it to Donna.

- **What does participation mean for individuals?** If you decide to participate you will attend an interview at your local Neighbourhood Centre, where you will be asked questions, and be encouraged to talk, about your general experiences with the Centre. Interviews will take about 30-45 minutes, and will be recorded on an audio-cassette. You will also be asked to sign a form that says you understand what participation means, but before signing the researcher (Donna) will explain the forms' contents.

- **What happens to the information that is collected?** The information (data) that is collected throughout this research study will be stored at the University of Technology, Sydney in accordance with strict ethical regulations. Tapes and paper copies of transcripts will be coded so individuals and Centres aren't identified. Paper copies of surveys will be filed in locked cabinets that are only accessible by the researcher. All this data will be destroyed 5 years after the completion of the study.

- **Will anyone know it is 'me'?** When the research is published it will not have your name anywhere on it. Indeed, it will not even have your Centre's name on it. The closest you will be to being identified will be something like, '*the person is from a large/small regional/metropolitan Centre*'. Publications may use a few of your exact words, but they will have a pseudonym (a fake name).

- **Are there risks involved?** While there is no harm intended, any research has the potential hurt people. And while there are no physically painful procedures involved, there is the possibility that talking about personal experiences might cause some people embarrassment or distress.

- **What if I feel distressed or embarrassed after the interview?** If you have these feelings during or after your interview, you can talk to someone at your Centre about them.

- **What if I change my mind part way through an interview?** That's OK. You are free to withdraw your support at any time, without having to give a reason.

- **What if I have more questions, or want to complain, about my participation in this research?** You can talk to a number of people about this research. Their names and phone numbers are listed on the back of this brochure.

- **I think I want to participate, what do I do now?** Contact Donna on 02 9514 3044 or [redacted].

☆ **Name of Centre:** …… (for administrative purposes only - your Centre's name will not be included in final research)

What's the name of the group/course?	**What's the purpose of this group/course? In other words, what's if for?** **eg** to create opportunities for … *to learn about …* *to provide support for …*	What other organisations are involved (if any)? (**eg** *TAFE, ACE, Council, etc…)*	**Is it aimed at a specific group? If, 'yes', who?**	Who pays for this course/group? *(eg ACE, TAFE, CSGP, the participants, etc.)*	**How many people attended *this* week?**	**How many hours a week does it run for?**	**Over how many weeks does it run?**

☐ Yes, you can contact me [name] …… about participating further in this research, on the following telephone number ……

PTO for more space

What's the name of the group/course?	**What's the purpose of this group/course? In other words, what's if for?** **eg** to create opportunities for … *to learn about …* *to provide support for …*	What other organisations are involved (if any)? (**eg** *TAFE, ACE, Council, etc…)*	**Is it aimed at a specific group? If, 'yes', who?**	Who pays for this course/group? *(eg ACE, TAFE, CSGP, the participants, etc.)*	**How many people attended *this* week?**	**How many hours a week does it run for?**	**Over how many weeks does it run?**

You might find these tips helpful:

- Grab a cup of tea/coffee, sit in a comfortable space, and **read over the survey and the example below**.
- Think about your Centre's activities **one day at a time** – that way you'll remember to include all possible activities.
- Include **as many activities that you can think of** – even if you don't think they are specifically about 'learning'.
- Fill out the (yellow) survey **using a 'typical' week** in your Centre as an example.
- If you are unsure about numbers, then just **make your best estimate**.
- If you are uncertain how to answer a particular question about one of your activities, then just leave it blank.
- Use the (white) copy of the survey to **photocopy additional pages if you need more space**.
- If you think you might be willing to participate further, don't forget to complete the question on the bottom of the first page.
- Call Donna on 02 9514 3044 if you want to ask more questions.

Here's an example of what your completed survey might look like.

What's the name of the group/course?	**What's the purpose of this group/course? In other words, what's if for?** **eg** to create opportunities for … *to learn about …* *to provide support for …*	What other organisations are involved (if any)? (**eg** *TAFE, ACE, Council, etc…)*	**Is it aimed at a specific group? If, 'yes', who?**	Who pays for this course/group? *(eg ACE, TAFE, CSGP, the participants, etc.)*	**How many people attended *this* week?**	**How many hours a week does it run for?**	**Over how many weeks does it run?**
Young Mum's Club	To provide opportunities for young mothers to get together and support each other	none	Young women who have babies / children	The young women make a gold coin donation (if they can afford it)	7	2.5	ongoing
English Conversation Class	For NESB people to practice their English skills	TAFE Outreach	Local people from non-English speaking backgrounds	TAFE	8	3	8
Friday Walkers Group	For local women to meet one another, participate in gentle exercise, and to discuss health issues	Women's Health	Women over 45	Our Centre through CSGP funding	5	2	ongoing (except for school holidays)

When you're finished, put your yellow survey (and any additional pages) into the enclosed pre-paid envelope and return it to:

Donna Rooney
Faculty of Education
University of Technology, Sydney
PO Box 123, Broadway NSW 2000

Reference list

Abrahamson, P. (2004). Liquid modernity: Bauman on contemporary welfare society. *ACTA Sociologica, 47*(2), 171-179.

ABS. (1995). *Outcomes and pathways in adult and community education*. Melbourne: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

ABS. (2003). Themes - education and training statistics national centre review on adult and community education. Retrieved May, 2005, from www.abs.gov.au

ACOSS. (1999). *Common cause: relationships and reforms in community services: a joint paper by ACOSS and the State and Territory Councils of Social Service* (unpublished paper). Sydney: Australian Council of Social Services.

Altman, D. (1997). (Homo)sexual identities, queer theory and politics. In G. Stokes (Ed.), *The politics of identity in Australia* (pp. 105-116). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Anderson, J., & Poole, M. (1994). *Thesis and assignment writing*. Milton, Queensland: John Wiley & Sons.

ANHLC. (2003). Victoria's report: Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres. In Local Community Services Association (Ed.), *Annual state reports to National Link* (pp. 19-22). Sydney: Local Community Services Association.

ANTA. (1999). Why we need lifelong learning. In T. Brown (Ed.), *Lifelong Learning: making it work* (pp. 18-19). Jamison, ACT: Adult Learning Australia.

ANTA. (2003). *Shaping our future: Australia's national strategy for vocational education and training 2004-2010*. Brisbane: ANTA.

Armstrong, P., & Miller, N. (2006). Whatever happened to social purpose?: adult educators' stories of political commitment and change. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 25*(3), 291-305.

Aspin, D., Collard, J., & Chapman, J. (2000). Lifelong learning in Australia. In J. Field (Ed.), *Lifelong learning* (pp. 171-190). Florence, KY, USA: Taylor and Francis.

Australian Government. (2006). Evidence-based practice Retrieved September, 2006, from www.aifs.gov.au/sf/findings/evidence.html

Axford, B., & Mayes, T. (2003). Lifelong learning: an annotated bibliography. In Lifelong Learning Network University of Canberra (Ed.). Canberra: Department of Education, Science and Training, Commonwealth of Australia.

Babbie, E. (2004). *The practice of social research* (10th ed.). Belmont, California: Wadsworth.

BACE. (1992). Lifelong learning for all. Retrieved February, 2004, from www.bace.nsw.gov.au

BACE. (1996). *Recognising the value of lifelong learning for all: New South Wales government policy on adult and community education*. Sydney: Department of Training and Education Co-ordination, New South Wales.

BACE. (2004). *NSW ACE enrolment statistics 2003*. Sydney: NSW Board of Adult and Community Education.

Bardon, B. (2006). *Community education and national reform* (Discussion Paper). Canberra: Australian Government, Department of Education, Science and Training.

Barnacle, R. (2005). Research education ontologies: exploring doctoral becomings. *Higher Education Research and Development, 24*(2), 179-188.

Barnes, S., & Lewin, C. (2004). An introduction to inferential statistics: testing for difference and relationships. In C. Lewin (Ed.), *Research methods in the social sciences* (pp. 226-236). London: Sage Publications.

Barron, A. (1992). Lyotard and the problem of justice. In A. Benjamin (Ed.), *Judging Lyotard* (pp. 26-42). London, Great Britain: Routledge.

Barthes, R. (1990). *The pleasure of the text* (R. Miller, Trans.). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Bauman, Z. (1993). *Postmodern ethics*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Bauman, Z. (2000). Am I my brother's keeper? *European Journal of Social Work, 3*(1), 5-11.

Bauman, Z. (2001a). Can we live together? Equality and difference. *New Political Economy, 6*(3), 427-429.

Bauman, Z. (2001b). *Community: seeking safety in an insecure world*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc.

Bauman, Z. (2005). Education in liquid modernity. *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies, 27*, 303-317.

Beckett, D. (2001). *Life, work, and learning: practice and postmodernity*. Florence, KY, UAS: Routledge.

Bem, D. (2002). Writing the empirical journal article. In J. Darley, M. Zanna & H. Roegiger (Eds.), *The compleat academic: a career guide*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Biesta, G. (2001). Preparing for the incalculable: deconstruction, justice, and the question of education. In *Derrida and education* (pp. 32-54). Florence, KY: Routledge.

Birch, E.-R., Kenyon, P., Koshy, P., & Wills-Johnson, N. (2003). *Exploring the social and economic impacts of adult and community education*. Leabrook, South Australia: Australian National Training Authority.

Bizzell, P. (1992). *Academic discourse and critical consciousness*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Blackmore, J. (2004). Researching policy. In C. Lewin (Ed.), *Research methods in the social sciences* (pp. 97-103). London, GBR: Sage Publications, Incorporated.

Borthwick, J., Knight, B., Bender, A., & Laveder, P. (2001a). *Scope of ACE in Australia: analysis of existing information in national education and training data collection* (Vol. 2). Leabrook, South Australia: National Centre for Vocational Education and Training.

Borthwick, J., Knight, B., Bender, A., & Laveder, P. (2001b). *Scope of ACE in Australia: implications for improved data collection and reporting* (Vol. 1). Leabrook, South Australia: Australian National Training Authority.

Boud, D., & Middleton, H. (2003). Learning from others at work: Communities of Practice and informal learning. *Journal of Workplace Learning, 15*(5), 194-202.

Boud, D., & Tennant, M. (2006). Putting doctoral education to work: challenges to academic practice. *Higher Education Research & Development, 25*(3), 293-306.

Bowman, K. (2001). Recent research on the role and contribution of ACE. *Journal of Adult Learning, 41*(1), 40:55.

Bradshaw, T. (2000). Complex community development projects: collaboration, comprehensive programs, and community collaborations in complex society. *Community Development Journal, 35*(2), 133-145.

Brennan, M. (1997). Struggles over the definition and practice of the educational doctorate in Australia. *Australian Educational Researcher, 25*(1), 71-89.

Brent, J. (2004). The desire for community: illusion, confusion and paradox. *Community Development Journal, 39*(3), 213-223.

Brookfield, S. (1986). *Understanding and facilitating adult learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Brown, T. (2000a). A national lifelong policy for Australia? In T. Brown (Ed.), *Lifelong Learning: Making it work* (pp. 6:8). Canberra: Adult Learning Australia.

Brown, T. (2000b). Lifelong learning in the community. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning, 40*(1), 10:25.

Brown, T. (Ed.). (2000c). *Lifelong learning: making it work*. Canberra: Adult Learning Australia.

Bryson, L., & Mowbray, M. (1981). Community: the spray on solution. *Australian Journal of Social Issues, 16*(Nov), 255-267.

Bullen, P., & LCSA. (1998a). *1998 census report: neighbourhood and community centres in NSW*. Sydney: Local Community Services Association.

Bullen, P., & LCSA. (1998b). *Building community: providing services - neighbourhood & community centres in NSW*. Sydney: Local Community Services Association.

Bullen, P., & LCSA. (2000). *2000 census: neighbourhood and community centres in NSW*. Sydney: Local Community Services Association.

Bullen, P., & Onyx, J. (1999). *Social capital: family support and neighbourhood centres in NSW*. Sydney: Local Community Services Association.

Burbules, N. (1998). Doubt and educational possibility. Retrieved July 2004 from http://faculty.ed.uiuc.edu/burbules/articles.html

Burke, K. (2004, 6 November). Forget the feng shui or loose funds, colleges told. *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: on the discursive limits of "sex"*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Butler, P. (1992). Reflections on 'good' community development. *Community Quarterly*(24), 5-9.

CANH. (2003). South Australia's report: Community and Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association. In Local Community Services Association (Ed.), *Annual state reports to National Link* (pp. 27-30). Sydney: Local Community Services Association.

Cannarozzi, S. (1995). Shamansim and string magic of the Tolupan of Honduras: a summary and partial translation of an Article by Ann M. Chapman. *Bulletin of the international string figure association, 2*, 8-13.

Caulley, D. (1994). Notes on the basic characteristics of postpositive interpretive inquiry. In P. Neville, P. Willis & M. Edwards (Eds.), *Qualitative research in adult education*. London: Centre for Research in Education and Work.

CCFSNAQ. (2003). Queensland's report: Community Centres and Family Support Network Association of Queensland. In Local Community Services Association (Ed.), *Annual state reports to National Link* (pp. 7-10). Sydney: Local Community Services Association.

Chappell, C., Rhodes, C., Solomon, N., Tennant, M., & Yates, L. (2003). *Reconstructing the lifelong learner: pedagogy and identity in individual, organisational and social change*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Cherryholmes, C. (1999). *Reading pragmatism* (Vol. 24). New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Choy, S., & Haukka, S. (2006). *National database of ACE providers: preliminary analysis*. Canberra: Adult Learning Australia.

Choy, S., Haukka, S., & Keyes, E. (2006). *Adult and community education: a meta-analysis to explore the capacity of ACE for skilling Australia*. Brisbane: Adult Learning Australia, Queensland University of Technology and Learning Network Queensland.

Clarke, J. (1996). *Why EdD and not PhD?: some student perceptions*. Paper presented at the Which way for professional doctorates? Contexts and Cases, Coffs Harbour, 16-18 October 1996.

Clegg, S., Kornberger, M., & Rhodes, C. (2005). Learning/ becoming/ organizing. *Organization, 12*(2), 147-167.

Clegg, S., Rhodes, C., & Kornberger, M. (2007). Desperately seeking legitimacy: organizational identity and emerging industries. *Organization Studies, 28*(4), 495-515.

Coleman, J. (1995). Learning through collaboration in the creation of a people's park. *The National Bulletin of Good Practice in Adult Community Education, 3*(UTS), 17-21.

Colley, H., Hodkinson, P., & Malcom, J. (2003). *Informality and formality in learning: a report for the Learning and Skills Research Centre* (Report). London: Learning and Skills Research Centre.

Commonwealth of Australia. (2004). *Backing Australia's ability: building our future through science and innovation*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Connelly, M., & Clandinin, J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher, 19*(5), 3-14.

Connole, H. (1992). Education for personal growth. In R. Harris & P. Willis (Eds.), *Striking a balance* (pp. 273-284). Adelaide: Centre for Human Resource Studies, University of South Australia.

Connor, C. (1993). House of many peoples. *Community Quarterly*(27), 25-27.

Cox, B., & Cox, S. (1997). Going fishing. *Bulletin of the International String Figure Association, 4*, 12.

Craig, G., Mayo, M., & Taylor, M. (2000). Globalization from below: implications for the community development journal. *Community Development Journal, 35*(4), 323-335.

Crook, C., & Garratt, D. (2004). The positivist paradigm in contemporary social science research. In C. Lewin (Ed.), *Research methods in the social sciences* (pp. 207-214). London: Sage Publications.

Davies, B., Browne, J., Gannon, S., Honan, E., Laws, C., Mueller-Rockstroh, B., et al. (2004). The ambivalent practices of reflexivity. *Qualitative Inquiry, 10*(3), 360-389.

Davis, S. (2007). A word from UTS ethics manager. Retrieved August, 2007, from http://www.bell.uts.edu.au/ethics

de Leo, J. (2006). *Social and cultural perspectives of ESD: cultural diversity and intercultural understanding within ESD.* Paper presented at the UNESCO Expert Meeting on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): Reorienting Education to address Sustainability, Thailand 1-3 May 2006.

de Vaus, D. A. (1995). *Surveys in Social Research* (4th ed.). St Leonards: Allen & Unwin.

Deer, F., & McCrae, C. (2005). Legacy of learning: the impact of community-based adult education in Saskatoon. *University of Saskatchewan* Retrieved February, 2007, from www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/branches/fn-me/docs/LegacyofLearning.pdf.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia* (B. Massumi, Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Delors, J. (1996). *Learning: the treasure within - Highlights: A report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century.* Hamburg: UNESCO.

DoCS, & FONGA. (2006). *Working together for NSW: an agreement between the NSW government and NSW non-government human services organisations*: NSW Department of Community Services and the NSW Forum of Non-Government Agencies.

du Gay, P. (1996). *Consumption and identity at work.* London: Sage.

Ducie, V. (1994). *Opening doors: a report on community neighbourhood houses and learning centres' influence on personal development, skills development, learning outcomes.* Perth: Learning Centre Link.

Edwards, R. (1997). *Changing places: flexibility, lifelong learning and a learning society.* London: Routledge.

Edwards, R., Clarke, J., Harrison, R., & Reeve, F. (2002). Is there madness in the method? Representations of research in lifelong learning. *Adult Education Quarterly, February*, 128-139.

Edwards, R., Nicoll, K., Solomon, N., & Usher, R. (2004). *Rhetoric and educational discourse: persuasive texts?* London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Edwards, R., & Usher, R. (2000). *Globalisation and pedagogy: space, place and identity.* London: Routledge.

Edwards, R., & Usher, R. (2001). Lifelong learning: a postmodern condition of education? *Adult Education Quarterly, 51*(4), 273-287.

Eraut, M. (2004). Informal learning in the workplace. *Studies in Continuing Education, 26*(2), 247-272.

Escudeiro, P. (2003). Street cat's cradle. *Bulletin of the International String Figure Association, 10*, 200-225.

Evelyn, D. (2004). Telling stories of research. *Studies in the Education of Adults, 36*(1), 86-110.

Faigley, L. (1992). *Fragments of rationality: postmodernity and the subject of composition.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Flax, J. (1990). *Thinking fragments : psychoanalysis, feminism, and postmodernism in the contemporary West.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Flowers, R. (2005). *Informal and popular education in youth and community work: seeking insights for Australian practice from theories and practices in Germany and Singapore.* Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Technology, Sydney, Sydney.

Foley, G. (Ed.). (1995). *Understanding adult education and training.* St Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Forrester, K. (1997). Adult learning: a key for the twenty-first century: reflections on the UNESCO fifth international conference 1997. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 17*(6), 423-434.

Freadman, A. (1994). Anyone for tennis? In A. Freedman & P. Medway (Eds.), *Genre and the new rhetoric* (pp. 43-66). London: Taylor & Francis.

Garratt, D., & Li, Y. (2004). Foundations of experimental/empirical research methods. In C. Lewin (Ed.), *Research methods in the social sciences* (pp. 198-206). London: Sage Publications.

Gergen, K. J. (1999). Traditions in trouble. In K. J. Gergen (Ed.), *Invitation to social construction* (pp. 1-32). London: Sage.

Gibbons, M., Limoges, C., Nowotony, H., Scott, P., & Trow, M. (1994). *The new production of knowledge: the dynamics of science and research in contemporary societies.* Stockholm: Sage Publications.

Gilchrist, A. (2003). Community development in the UK - possibilities and paradoxes. *Community Development Journal, 38*(1), 16-25.

Giroux, H. (1993). *Border crossings: cultural workers and the politics of education.* United States of America: Routledge.

Glick, C. (2005). What is pagan. Retrieved June, 2005, from www.paganlibrary.com

Golding, B., Davies, M., & Volkoff, V. (2001). *Review of research: a consolidation of ACE research 1990-2000.* Leabrook: Australian National Training Authority.

Gore, J. (2001). Disciplining bodies: on the continuity of power relations in pedagogy. In C. Paechter, R. Edwards, R. Harrison & P. Twining (Eds.), *Learning, Space and Identity* (pp. 167-181). London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Grosz, E. (1990). *Jacques Lacan: a feminist introduction.* Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Hall, S. (1996). Introduction: who needs identity? In S. Hall & P. du Gay (Eds.), *Questions of cultural identity* (pp. 1-17). London: Sage.

Hall, S. (1997). Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices. In S. Hall (Ed.). London: Sage Publications.

Hall, S., & du Gay, P. (Eds.). (1996). *Questions of cultural identity.* London: Sage.

Haraway, D. (1994a). A game of cat's cradle: science studies, feminist theory, cultural studies. *Configurations, 2*(1), 59-71.

Haraway, D. (1994b). The ironic dream of a common language for women in the integrated circuit: science, technology, and socialist feminism in the 1980s. In S. Seidman (Ed.), *The postmodern turn* (pp. 82-118). New York: University of Cambridge.

Harman, K., Boud, D., Rooney, D., Solomon, N., & Leontios, M. (2003). *Co-producing knowledge: negotiating the political.* Paper presented at the Journal of Vocational Education and Training Fifth Annual Conference, July 16-18, University of Greenwich, London.

Harrison, L. (2003). A case for underestimated, informal side of lifelong learning. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning, 43*(1), 23-42.

Harrison, R. (Ed.). (2001). *Supporting lifelong learning: perspectives on learning* (Vol. 1). Florence, KY, USA: Routledge.

Hassard, J. (1995). *Sociology and organization theory: positivism, paradigms and postmodernity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hayward-Brown, H., Bragg, R., Leonard, R., & Onyx, J. (2003). *The gift: a report on women volunteers in NSW human services.* Sydney: Australian Research Council, NSW Premier's Department, Department for Women and NSW Council of Social Services.

Heron, J. (1999). *The complete facilitator's handbook.* London: Kogan Page.

Hodge, B. (1999). Monstorous knowledge: doing PHDs in the 'new humanities'. In A. Lee & B. Green (Eds.), *Postgraduate Studies: Postgraduate Pedagogy* (pp. 113-128). Sydney:

Centre for Language and Literacy, University of Technology, Sydney and University Graduate School, UTS.
Holstein, J., & Gubrium, J. (1997). Active interviewing. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative research: theory, method and practice* (pp. 113-129). London: SAGE Publications.
Hughes, V. (1997). Community Enterprise: building community in an age of deregulation and marketisation. *Community Quarterly*(44/45), 11-17.
Hunt, C. (2001a). Climbing out of the void: moving from chaos to concepts in the presentation of a thesis. *Teaching in Higher Education, 6*(3), 231-367.
Hunt, C. (2001b). Shifting shadows: metaphors and maps for facilitating reflective practice. *Reflective Practice, 2*(3), 275-287.
Hunt, C. (2006). Travels with a turtle: metaphors and the making of a professional identity. *Reflective Practice, 7*(3), 315-332.
Iedema, R., Rhodes, C., & Scheeres, H. (2005). Presencing identity: organizational change and immaterial labor. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 18*(4), 327-337.
International String Figure Association. (2004). About string figures. Retrieved January, 2005, from www.isfa.org
Johnston, R. (2000). Community education and lifelong learning: local spice for global fire? In J. Field (Ed.), *Lifelong learning* (pp. 12-28). Florence, KY, USA: Taylor and Francis.
Kearns, P. (2005). *Achieving Australia as an inclusive learning society: a report on future directions for lifelong learning in Australia*. Canberra: Adult Learning Australia.
Kenny, S. (1994). *Developing communities for the future: community development in Australia*. Melbourne: Thomas Nelson Australia.
Kidd, W. (2002). *Culture and Identity*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave.
Knights, S. (1995). Women and learning. In G. Foley (Ed.), *Understanding Adult Education and Training* (pp.240-252). Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
Lander, D. (2000). Mixed metaphors for reading and writing the qualitative thesis in adult education. *Studies in the Education of Adults, 32*(2), 148-166.
Lane, M. (1999). Community development and a postmodern of resistance. In J. Fook (Ed.), *Transforming social work practice: postmodern critical perspectives* (pp. 135-149). Florence, KY: Routledge.
Lather, P. (1991). *Getting smart: feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*. London: Routledge.
Lather, P. (1992). Critical frames in educational research: feminist and post-structural perspectives. *Theory into Practice, XXX1*(2), 87-99.
Lather, P. (2000). Drawing the line at angels: working the ruins of feminist ethnography. In E. St. Pierre (Ed.), *Feminist poststructural theory and methods in education* (pp. 284-331). London: Routledge.
Latour, B. (1993). *We have never been modern*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
LCL. (2003). Western Australia's report: Learning Centre Link. In L. C. S. Association (Ed.), *Annual state reports to National Link* (pp. 32-34). Sydney: Local Community Services Association.
LCSA. (1994). *We just grew like topsy: a resource manual for understanding and managing multi-purpose Neighbourhood Centres*. Sydney: Local Community Services Association.
LCSA. (1997). *Partnerships in ACE: A report to BACE*. Sydney: Local Community Services Association.
LCSA. (1998a). *Partnerships in ACE: A report to BACE*. Sydney: Local Community Services Association.
LCSA. (1998b). Telling stories. *Community Quarterly*(46), 25-31.
LCSA. (1998c). *This is what we do*. Sydney: Local Community Services Association.
LCSA. (1999a). *It takes two: adult community education provider and neighbourhood centre partnerships*. Sydney: Local Community Services Association.
LCSA. (1999b). *Partnerships in ACE: A report to BACE*. Sydney: Local Community Services Association.

LCSA. (2000). *Partnerships in ACE: A report to BACE*. Sydney: Local Community Services Association.
LCSA. (2001a). *LCSA 2001 census: neighbourhood and community centres in NSW: census facts, figures and stories 1996-2001*. Sydney: Local Community Services Association.
LCSA. (2001b). *Partnerships in ACE: A report to BACE*. Sydney: Local Community Services Association.
LCSA. (2002). *Odd socks: why the survival of small community organisations is critical*. Sydney: Local Community Services Association.
LCSA. (2004a). *Neighbourhood centres in NSW: 2003 facts and figures*. Sydney: Local Community Services Association.
LCSA. (2004b). *NSW neighbourhood and community centres: directory 2004*. Sydney: Local Community Services Association.
Lechte, J. (1994). *Fifty contemporary thinkers: from structuralism to postmodernity*. London: Routledge.
Lee, A. (1997). Textual collusions. *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education, 18*(3), 409-423.
Lee, A. (1998). Doctoral research as writing. In J. Higgs (Ed.), *Writing Qualitative Research* (pp. 121-133). Sydney: Hampden Press.
Lee, A. (1999). Research and knowledge in the professional doctorate. In Forthcoming, B. Green, A. Lee & M. Brennan (Eds.), *The rise of the professional doctorate: changing doctoral education in Australia*. Rockhampton: Central Queensland University Press.
Lester, S. (2004). Conceptualizing the practitioner doctorate. *Studies in Higher Education, 29*(6), 757-770.
Lewin, C. (2004). Elementary quantitative methods. In C. Lewin (Ed.), *Research methods in the social sciences* (pp. 215-225). London: Sage Publications.
Lindlof, T. (1995). *Qualitative communication research methods* (Vol. 3). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
Lockhart, J., & Stablein, R. (2002). Spanning the academy-practice divide with doctoral education in business. *Higher Education Research and Development, 21*(2), 191-202.
Lorde, A. (1993). The uses of the erotic: the erotic as power. In H. Abelove, M. A. Barale & D. Halperin (Eds.), *The lesbian and gay studies reader* (pp. 339-343). London, GBR: Routledge.
Luey, B. (2004). *Revising your dissertation: advice from leading editors*. Ewing, NJ, USA: University of California Press.
Lyons, M. (2001). *Third sector: the contribution of nonprofit and cooperative enterprises in Australia*. Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
Lyotard, J.-F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: a report on knowledge*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
Lyotard, J.-F. (1988). *The differend: phrases in dispute* (G. Van Den Abbeele, Trans.). United Kingdom: Manchester University Press.
Lyotard, J.-F. (1989). *The Lyotard Reader* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
Lyotard, J.-F., & Thebaud, J.-L. (1985). *Just Gaming* (W. Godzich & B. Massumi, Trans. Vol. 20). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
MacLure, M. (2003). *Discourse in educational and social research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
Malfroy, J., & Yates, L. (2003). Knowledge in action: doctoral programmes forging new identities. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 25*(2), 119-129.
Marginson, S. (1993). *Education and public policy in Australia*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
Marginson, S. (1997). *Markets in education*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
Marston, G., & Watts, G. (2003). Tampering with the evidence: a critical appraisal of evidence-based policy-making. *The drawing board: an Australian review of public affairs, 3*(3), 143-163.

Maxwell, T., & Shanahan, P. (1996). *Reconceptualising the doctorate: issues arising from comparative data on the Doctor of education in Australia.* Paper presented at the Which way for professional doctorate? content and cases, Coffs Harbour, 16- 18 October.

McArdle, J. (1999). *Community development in the market economy.* St Kilda: Vista Publications.

MCEETYA. (2002). *Ministerial declaration on adult community education.* Melbourne: Department of Education and Training.

McIntyre, J. (2001). The discursive construction of ACE in national policy. *Journal of Adult Learning, 41*(1), 56-71.

McIntyre, J., Brown, T., & Ferrier, F. (1996). *The economics of ACE delivery: a report on the financial operations of providers of adult and community education in New South Wales.* Sydney: University of Technology, Sydney.

McIntyre, J., & Kimberley, H. (1996). *Planning pathways: a resource for providers developing pathways for women from ACE to VET.* Sydney: Centre for Vocational Education and Training, University of Technology.

McIntyre, J., Morris, R., & Tennant, M. (1993). *The vocational scope of ACE: vocational education and training within the adult and community education sector in New South Wales.* Darlinghurst: New South Wales Board of Adult and Community Education.

McWilliam, E. (2000). Laughing within reason: on pleasure, women, and academic performance. In E. St. Pierre (Ed.), *Feminist poststructural theory and methods in education* (pp. 164-179). London: Routledge.

McWilliam, E., Taylor, P., Thompson, P., Green, B., Maxwell, T., Wildy, H., et al. (2002). *Research training in doctoral programs: what can be learned from professional doctorates?* Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Education Science and Training.

Medel-Anonuevo, C. (Ed.). (2002). *Integrating lifelong learning perspectives.* Philippines: COR-Asia, Inc.

Merriam-Webster. (2007). Online Dictionary. Retrieved July, 2007, from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/

Middleton, S. (1995). Doing feminist educational theory: a post-modernist perspective. *Gender & Education, 7*(1), 87-101.

Miller, N. (1993). *Personal experience, adult learning and social research: developing a sociological imagination in and beyond the T-group.* South Australia: CRAEHD Publications.

Miller, N., & Brimicombe, A. (2004). Mapping research journeys across complex terrain with heavy baggage. *Studies in Continuing Education, 26*(3), 405-417.

Morgan, D. (2007). Paradigms lost and pragmatism regained: methodological implications of combining qualitative and quantitative methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*(1), 48-75.

Morris, R. (2002). *Lifelong learning in the history of Australian adult education: the role of schools of arts and mechanics' institutes.* Paper presented at the Catch a Tiger By the Tail: Adult Learning Australia National Conference, Hobart.

Mowbray, M. (2004). Community development the third way: Mark Latham's localist policies. *Urban Policy and Research, 22*(1), 107-115.

Murphy, J. (2001). Using string figures to teach math skills - opening theory. *Bulletin of the international string figure association, 8*, 211-234.

Natlink. (2003). *Annual state reports to National Link* (Report presented at the annual general meeting and mini conference). Sydney: National Link and Local Community Services Association.

Natlink. (2004). Neighbourhood Houses and Community Learning Centres across Australia. Retrieved June, 2004, from http://home.vicnet.net.au/~natlink/

NCVER. (2001). *Scope of ACE in Australia and Implications for Improved data collection and reporting.* Leabrook, South Australia: NCVER.

Neumann, R. (2002). Diversity, doctoral education and policy. *Higher Education Research and Development, 21*(2), 167-178.
Neumann, R. (2005). Doctoral differences: professional doctorates and PhDs compared. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 27*(2), 173-188.
Newman, M. (1994). *Defining the enemy: adult education in social action.* Paddington, Sydney: Stewart Victor Publishing.
Newman, M. (1999). *Maeler's regard: images of adult learning.* Paddington, Sydney: Stewart Victor Publishing.
Nicoll, K. (2003). *Exploring flexibility and lifelong learning: the rhetorical work of policy discourse.* Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Technology, Sydney, Sydney.
Noble, P. (1995). The same knot? *Bulletin of the international string figure association, 2*, 189.
OECD. (2000). *Where are the resources for lifelong learning?* Paris: Organisation for Economic C0-0perationa and Development (OECD).
OECD. (2001). *The well-being of nations: the role of human and social capital.* Paris, France: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
OECD. (2004a). OECD Statistics and Civil Society. Retrieved August, 2004, from www.oecd.org
OECD. (2004b). Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development: Education home page. Retrieved March, 2004, from www.oecd.org
OECD. (2004c). Policy brief: lifelong learning. In OECD (Ed.), *OECD Observer* (Vol. February 2004). web: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.
Ophir, A. (1997). Shifting the ground of the moral domain in Lyotard's *le differend*. *Constellations, 4*(2), 189-204.
Otto, A., & Onyx, J. (2006). *Developing social capital among older ethnic communities* (Working paper no.73). Sydney: Centre for Australian Community Organisations and Management (CACOM).
Paechter, C., Edwards, R., Harrison, R., & Twining, P. (Eds.). (2001). *Learning, space and identity.* London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.
Parker, S. (1997). *Reflective teaching in the postmodern world: a manifesto for education in postmodernity.* Buckingham: Open University Press.
Peace, B. (1994). Evening and community colleges of NSW: a study of their history, provision and concerns - a 1990's perspective. *ECCA Newsletter, 2*, 1:16.
Petersen, E. (2004). *Academic boundary work: the discursive constitution of 'scientificity' among researchers within the social sciences and humanities.* Copenhagen: Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen.
Price, O., Rooney, D., Boud, D., & Scheeres, H. (2007). *That's (not) my job: inventing and developing work practice.* Paper presented at the 37th Annual Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA). Researching Adult Learning Communities and Partnerships in the Local and Global Context, The Queen's University of Belfast, Northern Ireland.
Putnam, L. (1992). Commentary: embedded metaphors and organizational ironies as research tools. In P. Frost & R. Stablein (Eds.), *Doing Exemplary Research* (pp. 105-110). London: Sage Publications.
Raymond, E. (2005). Neopaganism. Retrieved June, 2005, from www.paganlibrary.com
Readings, B. (1992). Pagans, perverts or primitives? Experimental justice in the empire of capital. In A. Benjamin (Ed.), *Judging Lyotard* (pp. 168-187). London, Great Britain: Routledge.
Reid-Smith, E. (2001). *Government and adult education in New South Wales: 1940-1990.* Unpublished Doctor of Education, University of Sydney, Sydney.
Rhodes, C. (2001). *Writing organization: (r)presentation and control in narratives at work.* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
Rhodes, C., & Brown, D. (2004). Writing responsibility: narrative fiction and organization studies. *Organization: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Organization, Theory and Society, 12*(4), in press.
Rhodes, C., & Pullen, A. (in press 2008). Dirty writing. *Culture and Organization.*

Richardson, L. (1994). Writing: a method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 516-529). London, New Delhi: Thousand Oaks.

Rojeck, C. (1998). Lyotard and the decline of 'society'. In C. Rojeck (Ed.), *Politics of Jean-Francois Lyotard* (pp. 10-19). London, Great Britain: Routledge.

Rooney, D. (2001) One is too few: two is only one possibility. Unpublished Honours Thesis, University of Technology, Sydney

Rooney, D. (2004a). Cinderella has balls?: other sites for adult learning. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning, 44*(2), 143-157.

Rooney, D. (2004b, March). *Desire in the impetus: needing to 'right'.* Paper presented at the University of Technology, Sydney Postgraduate Research Conference, Reflecting on the thesis: issues and stories, University of Technology, Sydney.

Rooney, D. (2006). *Cat's cradle: a promising (pagan) research game.* Paper presented at the Inter-Cultural Perspectives on research into adult learning: a global dialogues. Proceedings of the 36th Annual Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA). Lifelong Learning Institute, University of Leeds, United Kingdom.

Rooney, D. (2007). *Bridges: linking the work of NSW neighbourhood centres to education.* Paper presented at the 37th Annual Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA). Researching Adult Learning Communities and Partnerships in the Local and Global Context, The Queen's University of Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Rooney, D., & Boud, D. (2006). *Just another meeting: exploring inter/intra cultural tensions of researching everyday learning at work.* Paper presented at the Inter-Cultural Perspectives on research into adult learning: a global dialogues. Proceedings of the 36th Annual Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA). Lifelong Learning Institute, University of Leeds, United Kingdom.

Rooney, D., Boud, D., Harman, K., Leontios, M., & Solomon, N. (2003, July). *Negotiating the text: learning at work.* Paper presented at the 3rd International Conference of Researching Work and Learning, Tampere, Finland.

Rooney, D., Rhodes, C., & Boud, D. (2007). *Performing organization: an adult education college as drag king.* Paper presented at the 37th Annual Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA). Researching Adult Learning Communities and Partnerships in the Local and Global Context, The Queen's University of Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Rooney, D., & Solomon, N. (2006). Consuming metaphors: stimulating questions for everyday learning. *Studies in the Education of Adults, 38*(1), 64-73.

Rose, N. (1999). *Powers of freedom: reframing political thought.* Port Chester, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rose, N. (2000). Identity, genealogy, history. In P. du Gay, J. Evans & P. Redman (Eds.), *Identity: a reader* (pp. 311-324). London: Sage.

Ross-Smith, A., Kornberger, M., & Rhodes, C. (2004). *The feminist differend: conflict and legitimacy in organizational studies.* Paper presented at the Academy of Management Conference, New Orleans, USA, 9-13, August 2004.

Rule, J. (2005). Tracing discourses of social action: inner-city Sydney neighbourhood centres. *Studies in Continuing Education, 27*(2), 135-153.

Rundle, G. (2004, October 17th). Cappuccino minister's threat to academic freedom. *The Age, October 17th.*

Rychen, D. S., & Salganik, L. H. (Eds.). (2004). *Key competencies for a successful life and well-functioning society.* Cambridge, MA: Hogrefe & Huber Publishers.

Sandercock, L. (1998). *Towards cosmopolis.* West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons Ltd.

Scheeres, H., & Solomon, N. (2000). Whose text? Methodological dilemmas in collaborative research practice. In A. Lee & C. Poynton (Eds.), *Culture & Text: Discourse and methodology in social research and cultural studies* (pp. 114:131). St Leonards: Allen & Unwin.

Scott, D., & Usher, R. (1995). The rhetoric of crisis in higher education. In M. Betube & C. Nelson (Eds.), *Higher education under fire: politics, economics and the crisis of the humanities* (pp. 293:304). London: Routledge.

Senate Standing Committee. (1991). *Come in Cinderella: the emergence of adult and community education*. Canberra: Senate Printing Unit: Australian Government.

Shaw, M., & Martin, I. (2000). Community work, citizenship and democracy: re-making the connections. *Community Development Journal, 35*(4), 401-413.

Simons, H., & Usher, R. (2000). Introduction: ethics in the practice of research. In H. Simons & R. Usher (Eds.), *Situated ethics in educational research* (pp. 1-11). London: Routledge.

Simpson, L., Wood, L., & Daws, L. (2003). Community capacity building: starting with people not projects. *Community Development Journal, 38*(4), 277-286.

Smith, J. K. (1993). *After the demise of empiricism : the problem of judging social and education inquiry*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishers.

Solomon, N., Boud, D., & Rooney, D. (2003). *Room to move: spaces for learning.* Paper presented at the 11th Annual International Conference of Post-Compulsory Education and Training, Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia.

Solomon, N., Boud, D., & Rooney, D. (2004). *Space invaders: troubling learning spaces at work.* Paper presented at the 34th Annual Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults, University of Sheffield, United Kingdom.

Solomon, N., Boud, D., & Rooney, D. (2006). The in-between: exposing everyday learning at work. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 25*(1), 3-13.

Staples, J. (2006). NGOs out in the cold: the Howard Government policy towards NGOs (Vol. Discussion Paper 19/06 (June 2006)). Canberra: Democratic Audit of Australia.

Stronach, I., & MacLure, M. (1997). *Educational research undone: the postmodern embrace*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Stuart, M. (1995). Education and self identity: a process of inclusion and exclusion. In M. Stuart & P. Thompson (Eds.), *Engaging with difference: education and 'other' adults*. Leicester: NIACE.

Suhood, T., Marks, C., Waterford, M., & SONG. (2006). *Voice of SONG - the way forward: tackling the issues confronting small community organisations* (Issue paper): Voice of SONG.

TACH. (2003). Tasmania's report: Tasmanian Association for Community Houses. In LCSA (Ed.), *Annual state reports to National Link* (pp. 23-25). Sydney: Local Community Services Association.

Task Force on Education for the Twenty-first Century. (1999, 1999). UNESCO Task Force on Education for the Twenty-first Century. Retrieved October, 2006, from http://www.unesco.org/delors/

Taussig, M. (1993). *Mimesis and alterity: a particular history of the senses.* New York: Routledge.

Teasdale, G. (1999). Implications of the Delors' Report for Schooling in South Australia: a revised version of a presentation to a conference of DETE schools and children's services senior executives, Clare, 1 February 1999. Retrieved May, 2007, from www.ed.sturt.flinders.au/

Tebbutt, The Honorable Carmel (2004). Neighbourhood Centres, *NSW Legislative Council Article No. 28 of 11/05/2004.* Questions Without Notice.

Tennant, M., & Morris, R. (2001). Adult Education in Australia: shifting identities 1980-2000. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 20*(1/2), 44-54.

Traynor, G. (2004). *Funding and certainty in community based organizations.* Paper presented at the AAACE Conference, Louisville, Kentucky.

TuggLink. (2003). Canberra's report: Community and Neighbourhood Houses Australian Capital Territory. In Local Community Services Association (Ed.), *Annual state reports to National Link* (pp. 15-18). Sydney: Local Community Services Association.

UNESCO. (ny-a). Learning to know. Retrieved November, 2004, from www.unesco.org/delors/ltoknow.htm
UNESCO. (ny-b). Learning to do. Retrieved November, 2004, from www.unesco.org/delors/ltodo.htm
UNESCO. (ny-c). Learning to be. Retrieved November, 2004, from www.unesco.org/delors/ltobe.htm
UNESCO. (ny-d). Learning to live together. Retrieved November, 2004, from www.unesco.org/delors/ltolive.htm
University Graduate School. (2007). HREC policy for undergraduate and postgraduate students. Retrieved July, 2007, from http://www.gsu.uts.edu.au/policies/hrecpolicy.html
Usher, R. (1996). A critique of the neglected epistemological assumptions of educational research. In D. Scott & R. Usher (Eds.), *Understanding Educational Research* (pp. chapter 2). London: Routledge.
Usher, R. (1997). Telling a story about research and research as story-telling: postmodern approaches to research. In G. McKenzie, P. J & R. Usher (Eds.), *Understanding Social Research: Perspectives on Methodology and Practice*. London: Falmer Press.
Usher, R. (2000). Deconstructive happening, ethical moment. In H. Simons & R. Usher (Eds.), *Situated ethics in educational research* (pp. 162-185). London: Routledge.
Usher, R., Bryant, I., & Johnston, R. (1997). *Adult education and the postmodern challenge: learning beyond the limits*. London: Routledge.
Usher, R., & Edwards, R. (1994). *Postmodernism and education*. London and New York: Routledge.
Usher, R., & Solomon, N. (1998). *Disturbing the ivory tower? Educational research as performance and performativity*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Adelaide.
UTS. (2005a). *Application for admission - higher degree by research: Spring 2005*. Retrieved. August, 2005, from http://www.gradschool.uts.edu.au/prospective/application.html
UTS. (2005b). Doctor of education. Retrieved August, 2005, from http://datasearch.uts.edu.au/education/courses/course_details.cfm?spk_cd=C02042&spk_ver_no=3
UTS. (2005c). Notes for examiners of theses. Retrieved August, 2005, from http://www.gradschool.uts.edu.au/policies/policiesprocess/notesforexaminer.html
Vinson, T. (2004). Community Adversity and Resilience: the distribution of social disadvantage in Victoria and New South Wales and the mediating role of social cohesion. Retrieved March, 2004, from www.jss.org.au
Wadsworth, Y. (1997). *Do it yourself social research*. St Leonards, Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
Watson, L. (1999). Lifelong learning in Australia: analysis and prospects (pp. 1-23): Lifelong Learning Network.
Weiss, C. (1991). Policy research as advocacy: pro and con. *Knowledge and Policy: the international journal of knowledge transfer, 4*(1-2), 37-55.
Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Whitelock, D. (1974). *The great tradition: a history of adult education in Australia*. St Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press.
Whyte, A., & Crombie, A. (1995). Policy and provision in Australian adult education and training. In G. Foley (Ed.), *Understanding Adult Education in Australia,* (pp. 93-107). Sydney: Allen & Unwin,.
Williams, C., & Windbank, J. (2000). Helping each other out?: exchange in deprived neighbourhoods. *Community Development Journal, 35*(2), 146-156.
Winter, R., Griffiths, M., & Green, K. (2000). The 'academic' qualities of practice: what are the criteria for a practice-based PhD. *Studies in Higher Education, 25*(1), 25-37.
Yates, L. (2004). *What does good education research look like?* Berkshire: Mc-Graw-Hill Education, Open University Press.